

URGENT ACTION

IRANIAN HUNGER STRIKERS' HEALTH FAILING

Hunger striking Sunni men from Iran's Kurdish minority are in grave danger as their health deteriorates after 64 days on hunger strike. They have been on hunger strike in protest at their death sentences and the conditions in which they are held.

Jamshid Dehghani, his younger brother **Jahangir Dehghani**, **Hamed Ahmadi** and **Kamal Molayee**, who have been on a "wet" hunger strike (taking water but not food) since 4 November, are now in critical condition. All four men have repeatedly lost consciousness since 30 December. Because of this, they have been given intravenous fluids in the clinic in Ghezel Hesar Prison in Karaj, north-west Tehran. They have apparently refused to receive the intravenous fluids each time they have regained consciousness.

Sedigh Mohammadi and **Hadi Hosseini**, who had started a hunger strike along with the other four men, ended their hunger strike on 28 December, after their state-appointed lawyers told them their death sentences had been overturned. Amnesty International understands that the Supreme Court has overturned the sentences due to the mental health concerns of both men and has ordered a retrial by a lower court.

The four hunger strikers, Jamshid Dehghani, Jahangir Dehghani, Hamed Ahmadi and Kamal Molayee, were sentenced to death by Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran on 14 November 2010 after being convicted of vaguely-worded offences such as "enmity against God" (*moharebeh*) and "corruption on earth" (*ifsad fil-arz*). They were denied the assistance of a lawyer during their trial.

Please write immediately in Persian, English or your own language:

- Urging the Iranian authorities not to execute the four men (naming them) and to ensure that Sedigh Mohammadi and Hadi Hosseini receive a retrial in proceedings which comply with international fair trial standards, without recourse to the death penalty;
- Urging them to ensure that the hunger striking prisoners have access to any medical care they may require; and reminding the authorities that they must never require health professionals treating hunger strikers to act in any way contrary to their professional judgment or medical ethics;
- Calling on them to make sure the men are protected from torture and other ill-treatment;
- Urging them to establish a moratorium on executions and commute all outstanding death sentences.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 18 FEBRUARY 2014 TO:

Leader of the Islamic Republic

Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khanenei
The Office of the Supreme Leader
Islamic Republic Street – End of Shahid
Keshvar Doust Street
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: info_leader@leader.ir
Twitter: @khamenei_ir
Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani
c/o Public Relations Office
Number 4, 2 Azizi Street intersection
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

President of the Islamic Republic of Iran
Hassan Rouhani
The Presidency
Pasteur Street, Pasteur Square
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Twitter: @HassanRouhani (English) and
@Rouhani_ir (Persian)

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the second update of UA 258/13. Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE13/055/2013/en

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Brothers Jamshid Dehghani and Jahangir Dehghani were arrested on 17 June 2009 while they were at work. Kamal Molayee and Hamed Ahmadi were arrested on 15 and 30 July 2009 respectively. They were not allowed to contact their families to say they had been arrested. All four were arrested by men in plain clothes believed to be from the Ministry of Intelligence and were taken to a detention centre run by the Ministry of Intelligence in Sanandaj, Kordestan. They were held in solitary confinement in Sanandaj and Hamedan in west Iran until February 2011, when they were first transferred to Evin Prison in Tehran, then Raja'i Shahr Prison in Karaj near Tehran, and finally to Ghezel Hesar Prison, also in Karaj.

All four men said they were arrested for their peaceful religious activities, including holding religious classes for children and discussions at their local mosque.

The four men were accused, together with six others, of involvement in the assassination of a senior Sunni cleric close to the authorities on 17 September 2009. They have denied involvement in the assassination, saying they were arrested before it actually took place and were still in detention when the killing happened. Amnesty International understands that they were tortured or otherwise ill-treated in pre-trial detention, that they were threatened with arrest of family members and that they were forced to sign papers without being allowed to read them. The four men have been told that their death sentences have been upheld by the Supreme Court and their cases transferred to the Office for the Implementation of Sentences, the official body in charge of carrying out executions. The Prosecutor General of Tehran suspended their death sentences for one month around October 2013, following international pressure, but that period has ended and they are at risk of imminent execution.

The other six men who were arrested with them, Bahram Ahmadi, Asghar Rahimi, Behnam Rahimi, Mohammad Zaher Bahmani, Keyvan Zand Karimi and Hooshyar Mohammadi, were all executed over a year ago, on 27 December 2012.

The other two men who were also on hunger strike, Hadi Hosseini and Sedigh Mohammadi, had been arrested separately and sentenced to death on vaguely worded charges in a different case from that of the other four men.

Iran's Kurdish minority live mainly in the west and north-west of the country. They experience discrimination in the enjoyment of their religious, economic and cultural rights. Parents are banned from registering their babies with certain Kurdish names, and religious minorities that are mainly or partially Kurdish are targeted by measures designed to stigmatize and isolate them. Kurds are also discriminated against in their access to employment, adequate housing and political rights, and so suffer entrenched poverty, which has further marginalized them. Kurdish human rights defenders, community activists, and journalists often face arbitrary arrest and prosecution. Others - including some political activists - suffer torture, grossly unfair trials before Revolutionary Courts and, in some cases, the death penalty.

A hunger striker who continues to drink water with no other nutritional intake will usually begin to feel seriously ill at around the 40th day. Loss of hearing, unsteadiness, deteriorating vision and nausea are among the symptoms. Depending on their physical constitution, hunger strikers reach the critical phase after between 55 and 75 days, at which point hunger strikes are generally fatal. Taking minerals, vitamins or calories, could delay the symptoms but the risk of permanent damage is not reduced. However, none of the men are believed to be taking vitamins.

Medical ethics generally require that health professionals do not participate in force feeding.

Names: Jamshid Dehghani, Jahangir Dehghani, Hamed Ahmadi, Kamal Molayee
Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 258/13 Index: MDE 13/001/2014 Issue Date: 7 January 2014