

URGENT ACTION

IRANIAN PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE CRITICALLY ILL

Prisoner of conscience Mohammad Nazari, who has been unjustly languishing in prison for over two decades, is critically ill and needs urgent medical care outside prison. He has been on hunger strike since 30 July, demanding his release from prison. He must be released immediately and unconditionally.

The health of prisoner of conscience **Mohammad Nazari**, 46, who has spent half of his life in prison, has seriously deteriorated as a result of his prolonged hunger strike. He has undertaken a hunger strike since 30 July in protest at his unjust imprisonment and the refusal of the authorities to review his conviction and sentence, which followed a grossly unfair trial and stemmed from his peaceful support of the political goals of the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI). He has lost about 25 kilograms in weight, his blood pressure has repeatedly dropped, and he has become so physically weak that he can no longer walk or talk. He also suffers from several general health problems including heart disease, for which prison doctors have long said he requires specialized medical care outside prison. The authorities have consistently ignored such advice. On 19 October, Mohammad Nazari was transferred to a hospital outside prison on an emergency basis but was returned to prison after one night without receiving adequate treatment. Despite his deteriorating health, Mohammad Nazari has said that he will continue his hunger strike until he dies, unless the authorities grant his repeated requests for a fair review of his case.

Mohammad Nazari was arrested aged 23 in May 1994 by Revolutionary Guards officials in Bukan, West Azerbaijan Province. He was held for over a month in solitary confinement, first by the Revolutionary Guards and then by the Ministry of Intelligence. He has said that, during this period, he was subjected to torture including beatings, kicking, and flogging on the soles of his feet, and threats made against his sister, in order to make him “confess” to being involved in an alleged assassination plot against a number of people affiliated with the Revolutionary Guards. No evidence of the plot or his involvement in any armed activities was presented in court. Amnesty International believes that the allegation was fabricated, and that the real reason for his arrest was related to his political beliefs. Following a grossly unfair 30-minute trial before a Revolutionary Court in the city of Mahabad in West Azerbaijan Province, Mohammad Nazari was convicted of “enmity against God” (*moharebeh*) and sentenced to death. The court issued its verdict based on his forced “confessions”, despite Mohammad Nazari repeatedly telling the court they had been made under torture and that Ministry of Intelligence officials had told him they knew the story of the alleged assassination plot had been fabricated. Mohammad Nazari’s death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment in 1999. He has since submitted numerous requests for retrial but apparently none of them have been considered by the authorities. At no point during his detention or trial did he have access to a lawyer. He has also never received an official copy of the verdict.

Please write immediately in English, Persian, or your own language, calling on the Iranian authorities to:

- Release Mohammad Nazari immediately and unconditionally as he is a prisoner of conscience targeted solely for the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression and association through expressing sympathy towards the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran;
- Ensure Mohammad Nazari is given immediate and regular access to specialized medical care outside prison, which complies with medical ethics, including the principles of confidentiality, autonomy and informed consent.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 4 DECEMBER 2017 TO:

Head of the Judiciary
Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani
c/o Public Relations Office
Number 4, 2 Aziz Street Intersection
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Salutation: Your Excellency

Prosecutor General of Tehran
Abbas Ja’fari Dolat Abadi
Office of the Prosecutor
Corner (Nabsh-e) of 15 Khordad Square
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Salutation: Mr.

And copies to:
Deputy for Human Rights and
International Affairs, Ministry of Justice
Mahmoud Abbasi, Number 1638, Vali
Asr Avenue, Tehran,
Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: dr.abbasi@sbmu.ac.ir

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. H.E. Hamid Baedinejad, Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 16 PRINCES GATE LONDON SW7 1PT, Tel: 02072254208 or 02072254209
Email: iranconsulate.lon@mfa.gov.ir Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Mohammad Nazari, from Iran's Azerbaijani Turkish minority, was arrested in May 1994 after a member of his family reported him to the Revolutionary Guards officials in Bukan. His arrest was related to his sympathetic stance towards the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran and came after he returned from a short trip to Iraq where the group is based.

The Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran is a banned political opposition group, which also has an armed wing. The group advocates for the attainment of Kurdish national rights within a democratic federal republic of Iran. From 1991, the group largely reduced its armed confrontations with the Revolutionary Guards and brought them to a complete halt by 1996. The group rejected the use of violence for the next two decades until it renewed armed opposition towards the Iranian authorities in March 2016. Mohammad Nazari has stated that he supports the overall political goals of the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran, but he has consistently maintained that he has never supported or been involved with their armed activities.

Following his arrest, Mohammad Nazari was held for five days in a detention centre run by the Revolutionary Guards where he was denied access to his family and a lawyer. He was forced to "confess" to an alleged assassination plot against a number of people affiliated with the Revolutionary Guards. He was then transferred to a Ministry of Intelligence detention centre in Bukan where he retracted his earlier "confession" and said that he was not involved in any armed or violent activities and did not possess a weapon. According to Mohammad Nazari, the interrogators did not accept his retraction and instead probed him for further details of the alleged assassination plot and subjected him to torture and other ill-treatment including beatings, kicking, and flogging on the soles of his feet. A month later, Mohammad Nazari was taken to the prosecution authorities before whom he once again retracted his "confession". He was then taken to another Ministry of Intelligence detention centre, this time in the city of Mahabad where he was held until 13 March 1995. Mohammad Nazari was subsequently transferred to Oroumieh Central Prison, West Azerbaijan Province. In 2001, the authorities told him that he would be granted conditional release if he posted a bail payment of five million Rial (around £1,100) but he could not afford this payment. In December 2007, he was transferred to Raja'i Shahr prison where he is currently imprisoned.

In a letter written from inside prison dated 18 October 2017, Mohammad Nazari wrote: "I am the loneliest prisoner in this city...I have spent [more than 23] years behind bars and, each day that passes, I become lonelier than the day before...I have nobody else apart from you, the public. Eighty-one days have passed since I began my hunger strike. My request is a simple one...for justice and the law to be applied to my case. I do not have anybody. My father, mother, and brother have been buried for years in the cemetery in Bukan. If anyone can help me, it is you, for you are my only support and hope. Help me. Help me so that my voice can be heard, for there is nothing left for me from this torment of prison and hunger strike other than death. Help me to get the justice and freedom that have been denied to me. I will not end my hunger strike for anything less."

Prior to the adoption of the 2013 Islamic Penal Code, individuals could be convicted of "enmity against God" if they were members or supporters of an organization that engaged in armed activities against the Islamic Republic, even if they did not personally take part in the armed activities of the organization. This definition changed under Article 279 of Iran's 2013 Islamic Penal Code which restricts the scope of the crime of "enmity against God" to situations when an individual personally resorted to the use of arms.