

URGENT ACTION

IRANIAN IN BELARUS AT RISK OF IMMINENT DEPORTATION

Iranian citizen Mehrdad Jamshidian, who suffers from acute ill-health, was detained on 14 June in Belarus. He is at imminent risk of deportation to Iran, where he may be subjected to torture and the death penalty for 'apostasy' and murder accusations.

On 14 June, Iranian citizen **Mehrdad Jamshidian** was detained at the Temporary Detention Centre in Minsk for residing in Belarus without appropriate documents. He is at imminent risk of deportation to Iran where he could be subject to torture, ill-treatment and the death penalty, due to 'apostasy' and murder accusations.

Mehrdad Jamshidian has lived in Belarus since 1993 with his wife and three children, but since 2016 has been without legal status as his Iranian passport has expired. He has not applied for a new one due to well-founded fears of persecution in Iran – he was not able therefore to apply for residency status in Belarus. Since 2013 he has made numerous requests for asylum and protection in Belarus, all of which have been rejected.

In 2012, at the request of the Iranian authorities, Mehrdad Jamshidian was put on Interpol's wanted list for allegedly murdering his mother and brother during a visit to Iran; although he had been in Belarus at the time of their deaths. The daughter of the deceased brother (his niece) and another brother submitted a written notarised statement to the Iranian police stating that they did not suspect him of murder. Mehrdad Jamshidian was arrested for extradition in December 2012 and again in May 2013, and each time he was released by Belarusian authorities who claimed that the Iranian authorities' documentation was insufficient justification for his extradition. Simultaneously, however, the Belarusian authorities began the process to deport him. On 8 December 2013, the Department for Citizenship and Migration of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Belarus ordered Mehrdad Jamshidian's deportation. Following this order, between 2013 and 2016 Mehrdad Jamshidian was twice detained on deportation grounds and held for extended periods before being released due to extenuating circumstances.

On 8 July, Mehrdad Jamshidian suffered a heart attack and was transferred to a civilian hospital for three days before being returned to the detention centre. Amnesty International is concerned about the standard of health care provided at Temporary Detention Centre, which is not equipped to provide the essential health care that Mehrdad Jamshidian needs.

Please write immediately in Belarusian, Russian or your own language urging the Belarusian authorities to:

- Immediately release Mehrdad Jamshidian and halt his deportation to Iran – where he would be at grave risk of torture and other ill-treatment, the death penalty, and other serious human rights violations – in accordance with the principle of non-refoulement;
- Ensure that Mehrdad Jamshidian receives appropriate and timely medical treatment following his heart attack on 8 July.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 31 AUGUST 2018 TO:

Minister of Internal Affairs

Igor Shunevich
Ul. Gorodskoi Val. 4
220030 Minsk
Republic of Belarus
Fax: +375 17 226 02 26
Email: ums@mia.by
Salutation: Dear Minister

Chief of the Department of Citizenship
and Migration

Mr. Aleksey Begun
Ul. Gorodskoi Val. 4
220030 Minsk
Republic of Belarus
Fax: +375 17 226 02 26
Email: dcm@mia.by
Salutation: Dear Mr. Begun

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. HIS EXCELLENCY MR SERGEI ALEINIK Embassy of the Republic of Belarus, 6 Kensington Court W8 5DL, 020 7937 3288, Fax 020 7361 0005, uk.london@mfa.gov.by, www.uk.mfa.gov.by

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Born a Muslim, Mehrdad Jamshidian converted to Christianity in 2002 while living in Belarus. While initially only his family were aware of the conversion, it later became known to the Iranian authorities. In Iran, the religious 'offence' of apostasy, the renunciation of religion (specifically Islam), is a crime for which people can be sentenced to death. In recent years, Iranian courts have repeatedly imposed the supreme penalty for apostasy, based on their interpretation of religious fatwas.

Since 2012, several human rights organisations and public figures inside and outside of Belarus have spoken out in defence of Mehrdad Jamshidian. On 8 November 2017, the UN Committee on Human Rights stated that if Mehrdad Jamshidian was extradited to Iran he would be at risk of torture and the death penalty, and without the guarantee of a fair trial. A complaint was filed with the Committee on October 28, 2014, by Elena Jamshidian, Mehrdad Jamshidian's wife. The Committee requested, in accordance with its urgent measures procedure, that the state not expel Mehrdad Jamshidian before the Committee had given the case its full consideration. The Belarusian authorities did not respond to the Committee's request but they did refrain from expelling Mehrdad Jamshidian. His recent detention, however, again puts him at risk of deportation.

The binding international legal principle of non-refoulement means that countries cannot transfer anyone to a place where they are at real risk of serious human rights violations or abuses. Sending Mehrdad Jamshidian to Iran, where he is at risk of grievous harm and possibly death, would be a violation of international law.

Name: Mehrdad Jamshidian

Gender m/f: m

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