

URGENT ACTION

JAILED FOR REPORTING ON WORKERS' PROTESTS

Iranian journalists Amir Amirgholi, Sanaz Alahyari and Amirhossein Mohammadifar have been arbitrarily detained since January 2019 without access to a lawyer. They are facing trial on spurious national security charges solely in connection with their reporting on workers' rights protests in Khuzestan province, southern Iran. Amir Amirgholi and Sanaz Alahyari are being denied adequate medical care. All three must be released immediately and unconditionally.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

*Prosecutor General of Tehran Ali Alghasi Mehr
Office of the Prosecutor
Corner (Nabsh-e) of 15 Khordad Square
Tehran, Iran*

Dear Mr Alghasi Mehr,

*Iranian journalists **Amir Amirgholi, Sanaz Alahyari and Amirhossein Mohammadifar** have been detained in Tehran's Evin prison since January 2019, with no access to their lawyer. They are facing trial on spurious national security charges brought solely in connection with their reporting on the protests of workers at Haft Tappeh sugar cane company in Khuzestan province over grievances concerning unpaid wages and poor conditions. The journalists are all staff members of Gam, an online magazine, which reports on social justice issues, including labour rights. Their prosecution forms part of a wider crackdown on labour rights activists and journalists covering the protests at Haft Tappeh company in late 2018.*

Sanaz Alahyari and Amir Amirgholi are being denied access to adequate medical care. Sanaz Alahyari has been suffering from recurrent stomach pains, weight loss and severe shaking in her hands and legs for at least two months, and urgently requires medical treatment. Amir Amirgholi suffers from diabetes and has not been given the device he needs for the daily monitoring of his blood sugar levels.

The journalists were arrested by ministry of intelligence officials in January 2019 and transferred to section 209 of Evin prison where they were held in prolonged solitary confinement and interrogated without a lawyer present. On 29 April 2019, they were brought before the prosecutor's office in Evin prison and informed of their charges, which include "gathering and colluding to commit crimes against national security", "spreading propaganda against the system", "spreading lies" and "membership of a group formed with the purpose of disrupting national security". They are currently awaiting trial before branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran.

I urge you to release Amir Amirgholi, Sanaz Alahyari, and Amirhossein Mohammadifar immediately and unconditionally and drop the charges brought against them and all other labour rights activists targeted in connection with the protests at Haft Tappeh sugar cane company in Khuzestan province. Pending their release, please ensure that they can receive regular visits from their lawyers and families, as well as the urgent medical care they need.

Yours sincerely,

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Sanaz Alahyari and her husband, Amirhossein Mohammadifar, were arrested in Tehran on 9 January 2019 and transferred to section 209 of Evin prison, which is run by the ministry of intelligence. After spending a period in solitary confinement, Sanaz Alahyari was transferred to the women's ward of Evin prison and Amirhossein Mohammadifar to section 4 of Evin prison. During this period, they were subjected to interrogations without a lawyer present. Their families were told that they had to select a lawyer from a list of lawyers approved by the head of the judiciary, but they refused to accept this restriction.

According to information obtained by Amnesty International, in section 209 of Evin prison, Sanaz Alahyari was kept in a dark cell, deprived of access to natural light, and forced to sleep on the floor. The authorities also refused to provide her with new eyeglasses after her old ones broke in circumstances unknown to Amnesty International. Sanaz Alahyari's first family visit was 20 days after her arrest and took place behind a glass screen. When her family next visited her in March 2019, they saw that her eyes had severely swollen. Sanaz Alahyari has since developed other health problems, including recurrent stomach pains and severe shaking movements in her hands and legs. She has also lost about 10kg. Her family has repeatedly urged the prosecution and prison authorities to transfer her to a medical centre outside of prison for diagnostic tests and have written two letters in this regard to the prosecutor general of Tehran, Ali Alghasi Mehr, and the prosecutor general of the country, Mohammad Jafar Montazeri. Their pleas have gone unanswered.

On 14 January 2019, Amir Amirgholi was similarly arrested by ministry of intelligence officials in the city of Babolsar in Mazandaran province, northern Iran, and transferred to section 209 of Evin prison. He was held in solitary confinement for 40 days and subsequently transferred to Sheyban prison in Ahvaz, Khuzestan province. The transfer apparently took place at the request of ministry of intelligence officials and prosecution officials in Shush, Khuzestan province, who have arrested, since November 2018, several labour rights activists in connection with the peaceful protests of workers at Haft Tappeh sugar cane company. He was returned to Evin prison in 28 April.

On 29 April, Sanaz Alahyari, Amirhossein Mohammadifar and Amir Amirgholi were separately brought before the office of prosecution in Evin prison and informed of their charges, which include "gathering and colluding to commit crimes against national security", "spreading propaganda against the system", "spreading lies" and "membership of a group formed with the purpose of disrupting national security". The charges brought against these journalists stem directly from the peaceful exercise of their rights to freedoms of expression, association and assembly through reporting on the protests of workers at Haft Tappeh sugar cane company in Khuzestan province over unpaid wages and poor conditions. They are currently awaiting trial before branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran.

At least three other labour rights activists, Esmail Bakhshi, Sepideh Gholian and Ali Nejati, and one journalist, Asal Mohammadi, are facing criminal proceedings in connection with their involvement with the peaceful protests at Haft Tappeh Sugar Cane Company. Esmail Bakhshi and Sepideh Gholian have been in detention since 20 January 2019. They were arrested after they spoke out about the torture they said they suffered in custody during their first period of detention in November and December 2018 (see "Labour rights activists at risk of further torture", 29 January 2019, [MDE 13/9745/2019](#)). Ali Nejati, the former chair and a current member of Haft Tappeh labour syndicate, was arrested on 29 November 2018 and released on bail on 28 January 2019, pending his trial. Asal Mohammadi, another staff member of *Gam* magazine, was arrested on 8 December 2018 and released on bail on 5 January 2019, pending her trial. Amnesty International understands that the prosecution authorities have joined the cases of these individuals with those of Sanaz Alahyari, Amirhossein Mohammadifar and Amir Amirgholi and that they will likely face trial together.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Persian, English

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 14 August 2019

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Sanaz Alahyari (she/her); Amirhossein Mohammadifar (he/his); and Amir Amirgholi (he/his).

ADDITIONAL TARGETS

And copies to:

Prosecutor General of Tehran

Ali Alghasi Mehr

C/o Permanent Mission of Iran to the UN

Chemin du Petit-Saconnex 28

1209 Geneva, Switzerland

Salutation: Dear Mr Alghasi Mehr

The prosecutor general of Tehran may be reached via post at the address listed in the Urgent Action. We ask that you also send appeals to him via Iran's diplomatic mission in Geneva.

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. HIS EXCELLENCY Hamid Baeidinejad, Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 16 Princes Gate London SW7 1PT, Tel: 020 7225 4208-9 Fax: 020 7589 4440 Email: iranemb.lon@mfa.gov.ir www.london.mfa.ir Please check with your section before sending appeals after the above date.