

# URGENT ACTION

## PRISONER IN NEED OF URGENT MEDICAL CARE

**Afshin Sohrabzadeh, a member of Iran's Kurdish minority serving a 25-year prison term in "internal exile" at a remote prison in southern Hormozgan province, is in urgent need of specialized medical treatment outside prison. He suffers from a life-threatening gastrointestinal condition, exacerbated by prolonged lack of adequate treatment.**

**Afshin Sohrabzadeh**, aged 24, requires urgent specialized medical care for a life-threatening gastrointestinal health problem which has resulted in recurrent gastrointestinal bleeding and severe drops in his blood pressure. He is currently serving a 25-year prison sentence for "enmity against God" (*moharebeh*). In February 2012 he was put in "internal exile" (whereby prisoners are relocated to a remote part of the country) and transferred to Minab Prison, in Hormozgan Province. Since then he has been admitted numerous times as an emergency patient in hospitals in Minab and Bandarabbas, in Hormozgan Province, and returned to prison each time without receiving proper diagnoses and treatment, apparently due to lack of adequate medical facilities. As a result, his health has severely deteriorated, prompting even the prison officials to request the Prosecution authorities to allow him to serve his sentence in a province equipped with better medical facilities. These requests have been rejected to date.

Between August and November 2015 the authorities transferred Afshin Sohrabzadeh twice to Tehran's Evin Prison, purportedly with the aim of providing him with specialized medical care in the state-owned Imam Khomeini hospital in Tehran. However, he was denied the medical care that was promised on both occasions. The reason that the medical care was denied the first time is unknown. It appears that the second time his family, who are poor, could not pay the fee of 700 million Rials (around \$20,000) which was unlawfully demanded by the authorities in order to cover Afshin Sohrabzadeh's care. Prison authorities are legally required to protect the health of those in their custody and to bear their medical costs.

Afshin Sohrabzadeh was arrested on 8 June 2010, and held incommunicado for several weeks in a Ministry of Intelligence detention centre in Kamyaran, Kurdistan Province, where he said he was tortured: this included severe beatings that apparently fractured his nose and led to a hernia of the abdomen. In addition to his gastrointestinal illness, he is also believed to suffer from respiratory, renal and urinary tract health problems, which he says were caused by his torture, and have worsened due to conditions in prison.

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

- Calling on the Iranian authorities to ensure that Afshin Sohrabzadeh is immediately provided with the specialized medical treatment he requires, outside prison and free of charge, in line with international standards;
- Urging them to investigate his allegations of torture, and to ensure that he is protected from further torture and other ill-treatment, including denial of necessary medical care.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 11 MAY 2016 TO:**

Office of the Supreme Leader  
Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

Head of the Judiciary  
Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

**And copies to:**  
Prosecutor General of Minab  
Ebrahim Mohammadi

**Please send your appeals to the care of diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.**

H.E. Mohammad Hassan Habibollahzadeh, Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 16 PRINCES GATE LONDON SW7 1PT, Tel: 02072254208 or 02072254209 Email: iranemb.lon@mfa.gov.ir

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

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Afshin Sohrabzadeh is understood to have been placed in solitary confinement for a total of 13 months since his arrest in June 2010. He was sentenced to serve 25 years in September 2010 following an unfair trial before Branch 2 of the Revolutionary Court in Sanandaj, Kurdistan Province that apparently lasted less than 10 minutes and found him guilty of “enmity against God” (*moharebeh*) for membership in armed Kurdish opposition group, *Komoleh* and unlawful possession and carrying of firearms “for the purpose of assassinating individuals related to the holy system of the Islamic Republic of Iran.” The court verdict specified that the sentence must be served in Minab Prison. Article 282 of the 2013 Islamic Penal Code (article 190 in the previous Penal Code) provides for “internal exile”, which involves forced relocation to a remote part of the country, as a possible punishment for “enmity against God”. However, the Penal Code does not specify the punishment of prison sentences being served in “internal exile”. The court verdict in Afshin Sohrabzadeh’s case mentions, as the legal basis of this punishment, a “religious decree” (*fatwa*) from the Supreme Leader “prescribing imprisonment in internal exile for those sentenced to exile.”

Amnesty International has documented the cases of several political prisoners, including prisoners of conscience, who have been sentenced to serve lengthy prison terms away from their home province and in remote prisons known for their particularly harsh conditions. With long distances to travel for visitation, families of such prisoners are often unable to make frequent journeys, including because of the financial burdens and difficulties of travel for the elderly. “Internal exile” may constitute arbitrary interference in his family life, a violation of Article 17 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Iran is state party. Afshin Sohrabzadeh was arrested by Ministry of Intelligence officials on 8 June 2010. His family learned about his whereabouts after 70 days, when they were informed that he had been hospitalized at Tohid Hospital, in Sanandaj, apparently due to injuries sustained as a result of torture. It appears that he was kept in the hospital for about two weeks and then transferred to Sanandaj’s Prison. During this period, the authorities apparently allowed his mother to only visit him once, with security guards present and while he was handcuffed to the hospital bed.

In a letter written from prison in September 2015, Afshin Sohrabzadeh said, “As far as I recall, I was healthy before my arrest. In the Ministry of Intelligence office, I was severely tortured. My nose was fractured. I also developed a hernia due to the effects of the sharp blows inflicted by Ministry of Intelligence officials.... Today, I am nothing but skin and bones... [The authorities] have ping-ponged my elderly mother from the prosecution office in Kamyaran to Sanandaj, and from there to Minab and then back to Kamyaran to obtain permission for my medical leave and treatment.”

The denial of medical treatment may amount to a violation of the absolute prohibition of torture and other ill-treatment, under Article 7 of ICCPR. The UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Mandela Rules) state that prisons must provide adequate medical care to prisoners without discrimination (Rules 24-35). Rule 27(1) of the Mandela Rules provides that “Prisoners who require specialized treatment or surgery shall be transferred to specialized institutions or to civil hospitals.” The UN Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment provide that this care shall be provided free of charge.

Name: Afshin Sohrabzadeh  
Gender m/f: m