

# URGENT ACTION

## ACTIVIST SENTENCED TO TWO DECADES IN JAIL

**Iranian activist Amir Amirgholi was sentenced in early 2016 to 19 years and six months in prison following an hour-long trial on charges that stem from his peaceful activism. He is held in Evin Prison in poor conditions and is awaiting the date of his appeal hearing.**

**Amir Amirgholi**, a 33-year-old civil society activist whose legal name is Ali Amirgholi, has been sentenced to 19 years and six months in prison following an unfair trial before Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran. The verdict was handed down in late January or early February 2016. He is now held in poor conditions in Section 8 of Tehran's Evin Prison. The court sentenced Amir Amirgholi, following a hearing that lasted just over an hour, to seven years and six months in prison for "gathering and colluding to commit crimes against national security" and "disturbing the public order" without clarifying the exact punishment for each charge. It also imposed seven years and six months for "insulting Islamic sanctities and the Imams", three years for "insulting Imam Khomeini and the Supreme Leader" and 18 months for "spreading propaganda against the system", including through images and materials on-line. Under Iranian law, if his sentence is upheld, he will be required to serve the lengthiest single prison term imposed on him that is seven years and six months, rather than the total sentence.

The charges stem from the peaceful exercise of Amir Amirgholi's human rights, such as gathering outside the UN building in Tehran in solidarity with the besieged people of Kobani in Syria and participating in gatherings at a grave site known as Khavaran to commemorate people summarily executed and buried in unmarked mass graves in 1988. The court also used as evidence against him his association with political prisoners. Amir Amirgholi has appealed the verdict and his case has been referred to an appeal court.

Amir Amirgholi was arrested in December 2014 by officials from the Ministry of Intelligence in a street in Tehran. He was then held in solitary confinement in Section 209 of Tehran's Evin Prison for 56 days without access to a lawyer or his family. He was first allowed to make a brief phone call to family members over a month after his arrest. In April 2016, he went on an 18-day hunger strike in protest at the authorities' disregard for regulations governing the separation of different categories of prisoners. Amnesty International understands that, due to a partially functioning pancreas, he needs regular blood tests to monitor his blood sugar levels but has been denied the care he requires.

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

- Calling on the Iranian authorities to release Ali Amirgholi, also known as Amir Amirgholi, immediately and unconditionally and to quash his conviction and sentence as they arise from the peaceful exercise of his rights;
- Calling on them to ensure that he is protected from torture and other ill-treatment and that he has regular access to a lawyer of his choice and to his family, and any medical treatment he might require;
- Reminding them that the UN Standard Minimum Rules on the Treatment of Prisoners (Mandela Rules) require, so far as possible, separate prisons or sections of a prison for the treatment of different categories of prisoners.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 21 JUNE 2016 TO:**

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

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

**And copies to:**  
President  
Hassan Rouhani

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

Amir Amirgholi was arrested on 1 December 2014 by men belonging to the Ministry of Intelligence after he left a restaurant in the Iranian capital, Tehran. He was subsequently driven to both his home and his workplace where the officials conducted searches and confiscated some of his belongings such as his laptop. The officials refused to explain to him and his family the reasons for his arrest and told them that he would be back home in a few days after answering their questions. He was then taken to Tehran's Evin Prison. His family members were only allowed to meet him briefly in the Office of the Prosecutor 56 days after his arrest. Amir Amirgholi's first meeting with his lawyer took place a week before his first court hearing in May 2015. This hearing was, however, adjourned twice, first to October 2015 and then to January 2016. Amnesty International understands that during the hearing, held behind closed doors on 20 January 2016, Amir Amirgholi was required to provide written answers to the court's questions. The whole session lasted just over an hour. Amir Amirgholi's verdict was communicated to his lawyer on 15 February 2016.

If the sentence is upheld on appeal, Amir Amirgholi will have to serve the lengthiest single prison term imposed on him that is seven years and six months, rather than the total sentence of 19 years and six months. This is because of new sentencing guidelines in Iran's 2013 Islamic Penal Code which stipulate that those convicted on multiple charges only have to serve the lengthiest single prison term.

Amir Amirgholi had previously been arrested in September 2008 after he participated in a gathering at a grave site known as Khavaran, an area in the south-east of Tehran, to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the "prison massacre of 1988", a wave of largely secret, summary mass executions of political prisoners carried out in 1988. Many of those executed were buried in unmarked mass graves throughout the country, including in deserted land in Khavaran. Amir Amirgholi was subsequently sentenced to six months' imprisonment, suspended for five years, and expelled from Qazvin Azad University, where he was studying industrial management.

Iran's Islamic Penal Code, adopted in May 2013, maintains vaguely worded "crimes" such as "spreading propaganda against the system", "creating unease in the public mind", "insulting Islamic sanctities", "insulting Imam Khomeini and the Supreme Leader" and "membership of an illegal group". These are frequently used to curb the peaceful exercise of the rights to freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly. Such laws and practices violate Iran's international obligations, including those under Articles 19, 21 and 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Article 19 states: "Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice". Article 21 states: "The right of peaceful assembly shall be recognized." Article 22 states: "Everyone shall have the right to freedom of association with others".

Name: Amir (Ali) Amirgholi

Gender m/f: m

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