

URGENT ACTION

PRISONER ON HUNGER STRIKE AGAINST HIS DETENTION

The health of Iranian prisoner of conscience Ali Shariati is rapidly deteriorating. He has been on hunger strike since 31 October to demand his freedom. He is serving a five-year prison sentence imposed on him for his peaceful activism after an unfair trial, including his participation in a peaceful protest to condemn acid attacks against women.

Prisoner of conscience **Ali Shariati**, a 30-year-old civil society activist, started a hunger strike on 31 October when he was arrested and taken to Tehran's Evin Prison to begin serving a five-year prison sentence. He stopped drinking water on 5 November. After a rapid deterioration in his health, he is experiencing breathing difficulties, a rapid heartbeat, severe drops in his blood pressure, high blood density, kidney pain, and slurred speech. He has lost consciousness several times. The Office of Prosecutor is persisting in its refusal to release him and has told his family "they do not care if he dies".

Ali Shariati was arrested on 18 February 2015. For the next five months, he was held in solitary confinement in Section 209 of Evin Prison, where he underwent intense interrogations and was denied access to a lawyer throughout. He met his lawyer for the first time at his trial, which was limited to two brief sessions, one on 20 June and another on 31 August 2015. In September 2015, he was sentenced by Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran to 12 years and nine months in prison. He was convicted of several charges including "gathering and colluding against national security", "spreading propaganda against the system", "insulting the revered Supreme Leader" and "insulting the President". The charges against him stemmed solely from his peaceful activism, including: participating in a peaceful demonstration outside parliament in 2014 to condemn a series of acid attacks against women in the city of Esfahan, central Iran; attending peaceful gatherings held outside Evin Prison in solidarity with political prisoners; distributing on the streets of Tehran packages that contained a chocolate and a green sheet of paper appealing for the release of opposition leaders Mehdi Karroubi and Mir Hossein Mousavi, and the latter's wife, Zahra Rahnavard; posting information about the suppression of peaceful protests and other human rights violations in Iran on his Facebook and Telegram accounts; and corresponding with the Persian service of the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) and human rights activists abroad. On 10 July 2015, he was transferred to Section 8 of Evin Prison and was held there until May 2016, when he was granted leave. In June 2016, he was informed that Branch 54 of the Court of Appeal in Tehran had acquitted him of all charges except "gathering and colluding against national security" and accordingly reduced his prison term from 12 years to five.

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

- Calling on the Iranian authorities to release Ali Shariati immediately and unconditionally, as he is a prisoner of conscience, held solely for the peaceful exercise of his rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly;
- Calling on them to ensure he has access to a qualified health professional who can provide health care in compliance with medical ethics, including the principles of confidentiality, autonomy and informed consent;
- Calling on them to ensure that he is protected from any punishment for his hunger strike.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 28 DECEMBER 2016 TO:

Head of the Judiciary
Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani

Prosecutor General of Tehran
Abbas Ja'fari Dolat Abadi

And copies to:
President
Hassan Rouhani

PLEASE SEND YOUR APPEALS FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE AUTHORITIES IN IRAN VIA THE EMBASSY 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

In June 2014, Ali Shariati was arrested for distributing on the streets of Tehran, during the religious festival of Mid Sha'ban (which commemorates the birthday of the final Imam of Twelver Shi'a Muslims), packages that contained a chocolate and a green sheet of paper appealing for the release of opposition leaders Mehdi Karroubi and Mir Hossein Mousavi, and the latter's wife, Zahra Rahnavard. The three have been held under house arrest without charge since 2011. He was detained for a week in Evin Prison. After his release, Ali Shariati was repeatedly harassed and intimidated by Ministry of Intelligence officials and summoned for interrogations via telephone, which is illegal. In December 2014, when he received another intimidating call from a Ministry of Intelligence official, he protested and said that he would no longer attend any interrogations unless he was served with a formal, written summons. The calls subsequently stopped for two months but, in February 2016, eight Ministry of Intelligence officials raided his mother's house, searched the place for about four hours, confiscated his electronic devices, and arrested Ali Shariati. The officials mockingly told him: "You asked for a written summons and here it is."

Prior to his June 2015 trial, the judge presiding over Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran told Ali Shariati's family that the lawyer appointed by him could not work on his case without giving any reasons. His family subsequently appointed a second lawyer to represent him but he was similarly told by the judge that he could not take up the case. After much back and forth, the judge finally allowed a third lawyer appointed by his family to take up the case. Ali Shariati was previously arrested in February 2011 and held for a month in solitary confinement in Section 209 of Evin Prison. He was subsequently sentenced by Branch 26 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran to two years' imprisonment and 26 lashes for his peaceful activities related to the 2009 post-presidential election protests. His sentence was later reduced to one year on appeal. Amnesty International understands that he served seven and a half months of his sentence before being pardoned in the first half of 2012.

Articles 19, 21 and 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Iran is a state party, protect the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association. 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". According to Article 22, "Everyone shall have the right to freedom of association with others".

Article 14 of the ICCPR entitles everyone charged with a criminal offence to several minimum fair trial guarantees, including the right to access a lawyer of one's own choosing at all stages of criminal proceedings, including the investigation stage.

Under international human rights law, every person who has been the victim of human rights violations, including violations of fair trial rights, has an enforceable right to remedy. In cases of unlawful detention, remedy can include release and compensation.