

## ***An Emergency Appeal***

# **The Lives of Iran's Political Prisoners Hang in the Balance—We Must ACT Now**

A brutal campaign of arrests, torture and executions is now taking place in Iran. This is an emergency. The lives and dignity of hundreds of political prisoners are in imminent, mortal danger.

**All those who stand for justice and yearn for a better world must rally to the cause of freeing Iran's political prisoners NOW.**

Beginning in October 2020, the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) launched a massive new wave of arbitrary arrests against labor, women's, and human rights activists; dissident intellectuals and artists; protesters and revolutionaries; and members of religious and oppressed minorities.

Many are now being tortured, held in solitary confinement, and denied legal rights, assistance or medical aid, as the IRI attempts to force “confessions,” conducts sham “trials,” and carries out brutal floggings.

Amnesty International (AI) warns of an “alarming rise in executions,” with 49 prisoners executed between December and February. This regime has a blood-stained record of attempting to violently crush any form of dissent or resistance—including sudden mass executions of political prisoners as happened in 1988.

**We cannot allow this to happen again.**

Importantly, this repression has been met with inspiring heroism. Many prisoners, their families, supporters and various Iranian organizations have been speaking out and demanding freedom for ALL Iran's political prisoners—at great risk to their own safety.

The Iranian Writers Association (IWA) has denounced the execution of prisoners of conscience, even as it is under extreme repression. Several members are imprisoned, including Arash Ganji, sentenced to 11 years for translating a book on the Kurdish struggle in Syria. Journalist and Defenders of Human Rights Center member Narges Mohammadi was imprisoned for eight and a half years. She is calling for protest against the solitary confinement of the two brothers of Navid Afkari, the Iranian wrestling champion executed last year for being part of the 2018 mass rebellion. The brothers are sentenced to 54 and 27 years.

The documentary film *Nasrin* (about imprisoned attorney Nasrin Sotoudeh) is an example of this nightmare of detentions and this implacable spirit of resistance.

**Iran's political prisoners face a dire, life-threatening, immediate emergency.** Here are just a few other examples:

A number of dual nationals from Europe, Australia and the U.S. are being held in the “political ward” of the notorious Evin prison in Tehran. Amnesty International (AI) recently sent out urgent action alerts on two of these prisoners:

- Nahid Taghavi, rights activist, retired architect, and Iranian-German citizen, suffers from diabetes and hypertension. Her daughter Mariam Claren reports that her mother was kept in solitary confinement for 151 days and was interrogated 80 different times for a total of 1,000 hours during her first 147 days of imprisonment.
- Mehran Raoof, a British-Iranian citizen and labor rights activist, is “being held in prolonged solitary confinement,” according to AI. Raoof has been denied access to his own lawyers in England, has no immediate family in Iran, and his safety has not been verified for five months.

Women prisoners are increasingly transferred to more remote prisons, limiting access by their family and lawyers. They include:

- Sepideh Gholian, a freelance journalist arrested for reporting and allegedly taking part in labor strikes. In early March 2021, she was suddenly transferred in chains from Tehran's Evin Prison to Bushehr Prison in southern Iran, more than 373 miles from her parents.
- Somayeh Kargar, a Kurdish activist and philosophy graduate of Tabriz University arbitrarily detained since October 16, was moved from Evin to the even filthier suburban prison of Quarchak outside Tehran. The regime is refusing to allow her to receive scheduled medical treatments in Paris which could save her from blindness.

**All of Iran’s political prisoners must be unconditionally and immediately released.**

The governments of the U.S. and Iran act from their national interests. And, in this instance, we the people of the U.S. and Iran, along with the people of the world, have OUR shared interests, as part of getting to a better world: to unite to defend the political prisoners of Iran. In the U.S., we have a special responsibility to unite very broadly against this vile repression by the IRI, and to ***actively oppose any war moves by the U.S. government that would bring even more unbearable suffering to the people of Iran.***

**We demand of the Islamic Republic of Iran: FREE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS NOW**

**We say to the U.S government: NO THREATS OR WAR MOVES AGAINST IRAN, LIFT U.S. SANCTIONS**

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***ENDORSE***

Emergency Campaign to Free Iran’s Political Prisoners

[FreelransPoliticalPrisonersNOW@gmail.com](mailto:FreelransPoliticalPrisonersNOW@gmail.com)

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