

URGENT ACTION

ACTIVISTS JAILED AFTER UNFAIR TRIAL FOR PROTEST

Iranian civil society activists Omid Alishenas and Asou Rostami have been sentenced to long prison terms after grossly unfair trials on national security charges for their peaceful activism. They are prisoners of conscience, now held in Tehran's Evin Prison.

Civil society activists **Omid Alishenas** and **Asou Rostami** were sentenced in May 2015 to 10 and seven years, respectively, by Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran. The court convicted them of charges including "gathering and colluding to commit crimes against national security" and "insulting the Supreme Leader". According to the verdict, seen by Amnesty International, the court used the men's participation in a gathering in front of the United Nations office in Tehran in solidarity with the people of Kobani in Syria, gatherings in solidarity with families of death row prisoners, their association with human rights defenders and their postings on social media as "evidence" against them. They have appealed against their sentences.

The men had been arrested in September and October 2014 and held in Section 2A of Evin Prison for several months without access to lawyers. Amnesty International understands that their hearing on 7 March lasted no more than half an hour. Both men are now held in Section 8 of Evin prison, where the cells are infested with beetles and other insects. This section also has too few beds and sanitary facilities for the number of prisoners held there. Asou Rostami is understood to have suffered a stroke in August, but the prison officials refused to take him to a hospital outside prison and only treated him in the prison's medical clinic. He had been transferred to a hospital in July with a lung infection.

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

- Calling on the Iranian authorities to release Omid Alishenas and Asou Rostami immediately and unconditionally as they are prisoners of conscience, held solely for the peaceful exercise of their rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly;
- Calling on them to ensure that the men are protected from torture and other ill-treatment, have regular access to their families and lawyers of their own choosing, and to any medical attention they may require;
- Reminding them that Articles 19, 21 and 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Iran is a state party, protect the right to freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 20 NOVEMBER 2015 TO:

Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei
The office of the Supreme Leader
Islamic Republic Street – End of Shahid
Keshvar Doust Street
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: (via website)
<http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/index.php?p=letter>
Twitter: @khamenei_ir (English),
@Khamenei_ar (Arabic),
@Khamenei_es (Spanish).

Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani
c/o Public Relations Office
Number 4, Deadend of 1 Azizi
Above Pasteur Intersection
Vali Asr Street
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: info@humanrights-iran.ir
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

President of the Islamic Republic Iran
Hassan Rouhani
The Presidency
Pasteur Street, Pasteur Square
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Twitter: @HassanRouhani (English),
@Rouhani_ir (Persian)

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

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

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Omid Alishenas was arrested in his home in Tehran on 4 September 2014 by men believed to belong to the Revolutionary Guards. The men searched his house and seized his personal belongings, including his computer, mobile phone and CDs before taking him to Section 2A of Evin prison, which is under the control of the Revolutionary Guards. Amnesty International understands that the authorities gave his family no information about his whereabouts for about 10 days. Omid Alishenas's mother has said that the authorities approved his release on bail about two weeks after his arrest but then refused to release him. Omid Alishenas was held in Section 2A for several months, then transferred to Section 8 where he is now. He was permitted to meet his lawyer only half an hour before his court hearing, in blatant violation of his right to be given adequate time and facilities to prepare a defence. Now he is not allowed to meet his lawyer in prison and can only communicate with him by phone.

The court also sentenced Omid Alishenas to a fine for "possession of a satellite dish" and CDs that the authorities deemed "inappropriate" (*Mobtaza*). The verdict also refers to "distributing a film called *To Light a Candle* in support of the deviant sect of Baha'ism and [in relation] to the deprivation of this sect from higher education" and "distributing false information about [those] executed [in the 1980s]" (see <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2013/08/iran-still-seeks-erase-prison-massacre-memories-years/>) as "evidence" of the charges against him.

Asou Rostami was arrested on 8 October 2014 in Tehran, after a solidarity gathering with the people of Kobani in Syria that day outside the United Nations Office in Tehran. He was held in Section 2A of Evin prison for several months, with no access to a lawyer. In May the court convicted him of "gathering and colluding to commit crimes against national security" and "insulting the Supreme Leader" and sentenced him to seven years in prison. The "evidence" against him included "participation in a gathering outside Raja's Shahr Prison in protest at Reyhaneh Jabbari's execution" and "distributing leaflets in support of a *nefagh* convict [a prisoner convicted of having connections with People's Mujahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI)] Arzhang Davoudi".

Another young activist, Ali Nouri, was also arrested after the Kobani solidarity gathering and tried along with Omid Alishenas and Asou Rostami. He has also been sentenced to seven years in prison for "gathering and colluding to commit crimes against national security" and "insulting the Supreme Leader". He was released on bail in February, and is still at liberty. Trials before Revolutionary Courts are generally unfair as they routinely rely on forced "confessions" extracted under torture and in denial of detainees' access to lawyers, and allow interference from non-judicial bodies such as the Revolutionary Guards and the Ministry of Intelligence.

Articles 19, 21 and 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Iran is a state party, protect the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association. Article 19 states that "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 that "The right of peaceful assembly shall be recognized" and Article 22 grants that "Everyone shall have the right to freedom of association with others".

Names: Omid Alishenas, Asou Rostami
Gender m/f: m

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