

# URGENT ACTION

## FILM PRODUCER TO FACE TRIAL IN IRAN

**Iranian writer and film producer Mostafa Azizi, a permanent resident of Canada, will stand trial before Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran on 1 June on national security-related charges, apparently stemming from his posts on social media. Amnesty International fears that he is a prisoner of conscience.**

Mostafa Azizi, former chair of the Iran chapter of the International Animated Film Association, has been detained in Tehran's Evin prison since 1 February 2015, when he was summoned to the Prosecutor's Office at Evin Prison. A permanent resident of Canada, he had travelled to Iran in late December 2014 to visit his ailing father and consider the possibility of moving back to his home country. Mostafa Azizi is facing charges of "insulting Iran's Supreme Leader", "insulting the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran", "spreading propaganda against the system" and "gathering and colluding against national security" for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression including through his posts on Facebook and other social media sites.

Mostafa Azizi spent 33 days in Section 2A of Evin Prison, which is under the control of Iran's Revolutionary Guards, 14 days of which were in solitary confinement with no access to his family and lawyer. He was moved to Section 8 of Evin Prison after the completion of his interrogations, which took place without the presence of a lawyer. Section 8 houses hundreds of prisoners, including prisoners of conscience, who are believed to be held in severely overcrowded, poorly ventilated, filthy cells infested with insects and lacking adequate sleeping and sanitation facilities. Such conditions of detention are aggravating Mostafa Azizi's pre-existing health conditions, which include asthma, eczema, rheumatism and high blood sugar. On 13 April, he was transferred to the prison's medical clinic for a day after a brief loss of consciousness caused by a drop in his blood pressure.

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

- Calling on the Iranian authorities to release Mostafa Azizi immediately and unconditionally if he is held solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression;
- Urging them to provide him with any medical care he may require, including specialized care outside prison;
- Reminding them of their obligation to treat all persons deprived of their liberty with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person, as required under Article 10 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Iran is a state party.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 8 JULY TO:**

Leader of the Islamic Republic

Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei

The Office of the Supreme Leader

Islamic Republic Street – End of Shahid

Keshvar Doust Street,

Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Twitter: @khamenei\_ir (English) or

@Khamenei\_fa (Persian)

Email: info\_leader@leader.ir

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani

c/o Public Relations Office

Number 4, 2 Azizi Street intersection

Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

**And copies to:**

President of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Hassan Rouhani

The Presidency

Pasteur Street, Pasteur Square

Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: media@rouhani.ir

Twitter: @HassanRouhani (English) and

@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

Mostafa Azizi's son told Amnesty International that after his father was removed from solitary confinement, "he came out shaking and unable to talk to anyone for a few days." His son added that Mostafa Azizi's psychological health has since improved and he is now allowed to have regular visits with his family.

In November 2013, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Consular, Parliamentary, and Iranian Expatriate Affairs Hassan Qashqavi announced the formation of a committee in Iran's Ministry of Intelligence to encourage the return of Iranians living abroad as per the electoral promises of President Hassan Rouhani. Linking the reluctance to return among Iranian expats to "the fear-inducing messages of foreign opposition groups", he said "many of these fears are self-inflicted and have no base." In August of the same year, Iran's Minister of Intelligence Mahmoud Alavi said, "we guarantee that any individual who has not committed an offence would not face problems [upon return to the country]." Previous to that in July 2013, Iran's Spokesperson for the Judiciary, Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejehi, had said that "Iran's judiciary never bans any Iranian who has committed an offence from entering the country... However, his or her charges will be dealt with as soon as he or she enters the country."

Since President Rouhani took office in August 2013, many individuals with dual nationality or foreign residency status, have been detained or imprisoned after their return to Iran. These have included but are not limited to Iranian-British women's rights activist, Ghoncheh Ghavami; University of Liege (Belgium) Ph.D. student Hamid Babayee; and journalists Sajedeh Arabsorkhi, Serajeddin Mirdamadi and Hossein Nourani Nejad. For further information, see Amnesty International briefing *Jailed for being a journalist* (Index: MDE13/044/2014). See also Amnesty International's latest urgent action on Jason Rezaian (Index: MDE 13/1522/2015).

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" and "defamation of state officials". These ill-defined "crimes" are frequently used to curb the peaceful exercise of the right to freedom of expression. Such laws and practices violate Iran's obligations under Articles 18, 19, 21 and 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Iran is a state party, guaranteeing freedom of thought, expression, assembly and association respectively.

Article 9 of the ICCPR provides that no one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention. Depriving a person of their liberty because they have exercised their rights and freedoms guaranteed in the ICCPR is a form of arbitrary detention.

Serious overcrowding, unsanitary environment and absence of sleeping facilities, when combined with the length of the period during which a prisoner detained in such conditions, can amount to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, contrary to Article 7 of the ICCPR which prohibits torture and other ill-treatment.

Name: Mostafa Azizi

Gender m/f: m