

URGENT ACTION

LAWYER SENTENCED TO OVER 29 YEARS IN PRISON

Human rights lawyer **Amirsalar Davoudi** has been sentenced to 29 years and three months in prison and 111 lashes on charges stemming from his human rights work. He was interrogated in detention without a lawyer present and was convicted and sentenced in his absence. Under Iran's sentencing guidelines, he is required to serve 15 years of this sentence. He is a prisoner of conscience.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Head of the Judiciary Ebrahim Raisi
C/o Permanent Mission of Iran to the UN
Chemin du Petit-Saconnex 28
1209 Geneva, Switzerland

Dear Mr Raisi,

On 20 November 2018, human rights lawyer **Amirsalar Davoudi** was arrested by agents from the intelligence unit of the judiciary at his place of work in Tehran. The agents searched his office and home, confiscating documents and personal belongings before transferring him to section 241 of Tehran's Evin prison, which is run by the intelligence unit of the judiciary. Here, he was held for several months in solitary confinement, during which he was frequently interrogated without a lawyer present, before being moved to a cell with other prisoners. He was moved to section 7 of the prison on 2 June 2019. Since his arrest, he has been allowed limited contact with his family through infrequent visits and telephone calls. He has been permitted only two visits with his lawyer.

Amirsalar Davoudi was formally informed of his charges during the second half of January 2019. Subsequently, on 28 May 2019, he learned that branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran had convicted him, in his absence, on six charges and sentenced him to a total of 29 years and three months in prison and 111 lashes. The charges included "insulting the Supreme Leader", "spreading propaganda against the system" and "forming a group with the purpose of disrupting national security" in relation to his human rights work. They related to media interviews he had given and posts he had uploaded to a channel he runs on the mobile messaging app Telegram, which raised concerns about the authorities' treatment of lawyers and, more generally, the human rights situation in Iran. Under Iran's sentencing guidelines, he has to serve the lengthiest single sentence imposed for the most serious charge, which in his case is 15 years for the charge of "forming a group with the purpose of disrupting national security".

Amirsalar Davoudi is planning to submit a request for a judicial review of his case to the Supreme Court.

I urge you to release Amirsalar Davoudi immediately and unconditionally as he is a prisoner of conscience, jailed solely for his human rights work. Pending his release, ensure that he has regular contact with his family and a lawyer of his choosing. Please ensure that Iran's justice system is not misused to target or harass human rights lawyers and refrain from bringing criminal charges or any other proceedings against them that stem solely from the peaceful exercise of their rights.

Yours sincerely,

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Between July and August 2018, Amirsalar Davoudi was summoned several times to the prosecutor's office in Evin prison to be questioned about a media interview he had given to the Persian-language service of Voice of America, a US broadcaster that has a wide viewing audience in Iran. The results of these interrogations formed the basis of his arrest on 20 November 2018. He was initially charged with five offences: "insulting the Supreme Leader", "spreading propaganda against the system", "gathering and colluding to commit crimes against national security", "spreading lies" and "insulting officials". However, when his case was sent to branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran around mid-January 2019, the authorities opened a second case against him. In this new case, he was charged with two offences: "forming a group with the purpose of disrupting national security" and "collaborating with hostile governments", the latter imposed specifically in relation to the Voice of America interview. After combining both cases, the judge acquitted him of the charge of "collaborating with hostile governments", but convicted him on the other six charges and sentenced him to 15 years in prison for "forming a group with the purpose of disrupting national security", seven years and six months for "gathering and colluding to commit crimes against national security", three years for "spreading lies", two years and three months for "insulting the Supreme Leader", one year and six months for "spreading propaganda against the system", and 111 lashes for "insulting officials".

Following Amirsalar Davoudi's arrest, the prosecutor's office in Evin prison summoned his wife, Tannaz Kolahchian, also a lawyer, and another woman for questioning on two separate occasions in December 2018 and January 2019, in relation to their involvement with running his Telegram channel, Without Retouch. Amnesty International understands they have not been charged.

Amirsalar Davoudi is a prominent human rights lawyer who has represented many prisoners of conscience including human rights defenders, other civil society activists and members of ethnic and religious minorities. He was the lawyer of Iranian Kurdish woman [Zeynab Jalalian](#), who was sentenced to death in early 2009 for the charge of "enmity against God" (*moharebeh*) after a grossly unfair trial. He played an instrumental role in the subsequent commutation of her death sentence. He has also persistently advocated for Zeynab Jalalian's access to medical care.

Amirsalar Davoudi's imprisonment falls into a pattern in which the Iranian authorities take [increasingly repressive measures against human rights lawyers](#) to silence them and stop them carrying out their legitimate work. Since January 2018, over a dozen lawyers have been arrested and detained and some sentenced to prison terms and flogging. They include Arash Keykhosravi, Ghassem Sholeh-Sa'di, Farokh Forouzan, Hoda Amid, Mohammad Najafi, Mostafa Daneshjoo, Mostafa Tork Hamadani, [Nasrin Sotoudeh](#), Payam Derafshan and Zeynab Taheri.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Persian, English

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 16 August 2019

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Amirsalar Davoudi (he; him)