

14 June 2016

## **Iran – Arrest and imprisonment of human rights defender Arash Sadeghi**

On 7 June 2016, human rights defender Mr **Arash Sadeghi** was arrested by Verdict Execution officers after the Appeals Court of Tehran upheld the nineteen year prison sentence against him over charges including “insulting the Founder of the Islamic Republic”. He is currently detained in Ward 8 of Evin prison.

[Arash Sadeghi](#) is an Iranian student rights activist and human rights defender working alone on the documentation of human rights violations inside Iranian prisons. He has extensively reported on abuses and poor prison conditions, as well as violations committed by the authorities including torture, ill treatment, lack of visitation rights and access to a lawyer, and lack of medical treatment for prisoners. Arash Sadeghi was also involved in several campaigns and gatherings protesting against the unlawful detention of human rights defender Narges Mohammadi and against the execution of human rights defender Gholamreza Khosravi.

On 7 June 2016, Verdict Execution officers of Tehran arrested Arash Sadeghi on an order by Branch 54 of Tehran Appeals Court to uphold the decision of a nineteen year prison sentence. He was on his way to Shahid Moghadasi Court at Evin Prison to follow up on his sentencing status when he was arrested. The human rights defender was charged with “insulting the Founder of the Islamic Republic Ayatollah Khomeini” due to social media posts reporting on historical events during the 1980’s in Iran, “disseminating false news and rumours”, “gathering and colluding against the state” and “propaganda against the system”. He was sentenced to fifteen years imprisonment by Branch 15 of the Islamic Revolutionary Court with the addition of a previous four year suspended sentence. He was denied access to a lawyer while on trial. Arash Sadeghi was directly transferred to Evin prison, Tehran where he is currently detained, and where prisoners are reported to be exposed to extreme ill treatment and abuses.

On 6 September 2014, Arash Sadeghi was rearrested and detained on the above-mentioned charges, in the Intelligence Organisation-controlled Ward 2-A of Evin Prison. He was later released on seven billion Iranian rials (approximately US\$230,000) bail, seven months later on 14 March 2015. The hearing sessions at Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court occurred in May and July 2015, and verdicts were upheld by the Appeals Court on 22 February 2016. Reports have shown that he had been subjected to torture and suffered a broken rib and shoulder.

Earlier on 5 December 2009, the human rights defender was arrested near Allameh University in Tehran and received his first sentence in June 2010 over charges of “gathering and colluding against the state and propaganda against the system”. In total, he was sentenced to 6 years imprisonment and 74 lashes by Branch 26 of Tehran’s Revolutionary Court which on appeal was reduced to one years imprisonment and four years suspended. In spite of this, he was kept in solitary confinement for eighteen months in Evin prison until 12 October 2013, when he was released.

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Front Line Defenders is deeply concerned about the confirmation of the sentence and the imprisonment of human rights defender Arash Sadeghi, as it believes that his sentencing is solely motivated by his legitimate and peaceful work in the defence of human rights.

**Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in the Islamic Republic of Iran to:**

1. Immediately and unconditionally release human rights defender Arash Sadeghi and quash the sentence against him;
2. Ensure implementation of the provisions in Article 134 of the 2013 Islamic Penal code, which limits a prison term to the heaviest sentence of the most serious charge in cases of multiple charges, and which would reduce his current prison sentence;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in the Islamic Republic of Iran are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.

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