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Iran: Ongoing detention of human rights defender **Amirsalar Davoudi**

On 16 April 2021, human rights defender **Amirsalar Davoudi**, currently imprisoned in Rajae Shahr prison, was transferred from solitary confinement to a public ward. The human rights defender had spent three days in solitary confinement following his transfer to the prison from Evin prison on 13 April 2021. The transferring of prisoners without notice or explanation, a tactic which the prison authorities in Iran have resorted to with increasing frequency in the first four months of 2021, continues to be used, despite official recommendations not to travel to some provinces due to COVID-19, and has reportedly exposed those prisoners being transferred to increased risk of contracting COVID-19.

[Amirsalar Davoudi](#) is a human rights defender and a member of the Human Rights Commission of the Iranian Bar Association. In his work as a human rights lawyer, Amirsalar Davoudi has represented many detained human rights defenders and political prisoners. The human rights defender is also the founder and director of a Telegram Channel, "Without Retouching," featuring a variety of critical content about the authorities' treatment of lawyers in particular and more generally, the human rights situation in Iran.

On 16 April 2021, Amirsalar Davoudi was transferred to a public ward in Rajae Shahr prison from solitary confinement, where he had been held for three days. The human rights defender was placed in solitary confinement following his transfer from Evin prison on 13 April 2021. When Amirsalar Davoudi was informed he was being transferred from Evin prison in Tehran to Rajae Shahr prison in Alborz province, he was not provided with an explanation by the prison authorities and was not given the opportunity to pack his belongings.

On 14 April 2021, Amirsalar Davoudi's lawyer announced that the human rights defender's request for a re-trial had been accepted by the Supreme Court, and that his case will be sent back to the Revolutionary Court. A date is yet to be set for the re-trial. Amirsalar Davoudi was initially arrested on 20 November 2018 by security agents in his law office and on 28 May 2019, he learned that Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran had sentenced him to a total of 30 years' imprisonment and 111 lashes, on account of six charges including "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. The charges are in connection to media interviews he had given and posts he had uploaded to his Telegram channel. According to Art. 134 of the Islamic Penal Code, Amirsalar Davoudi must serve the most severe single sentence, which in his case is 15 years for "forming a group with the purpose of disrupting national security".

From 17-23 March 2021, together with human rights defender [Baktash Abtin](#), also detained in Evin prison, Amirsalar Davoudi began a hunger strike to protest the recent trend of transferring detained human rights defenders and political prisoners from Evin prison to prisons in other provinces, over the course of the past four months. They announced their hunger strike as an act of protest against the limitation of the rights to family visitation and the exposure of the human rights defenders to higher risk of contraction of COVID-19 despite the general recommendations not to travel. In particular, Baktash Abtin and Amirsalar Davoudi were protesting the multiple transfers of fellow human rights defender Esmail Abdi, before he was ultimately transferred from Evin prison to the Central Prison of Alborz. The transfers occurred despite the official recommendations not to travel

to some provinces, and have reportedly exposed those being transferred to increased risk of contracting COVID-19.

Since the onset of the pandemic in March 2020, there have been reports of a vast number of COVID-19 cases in prisons throughout Iran, with severe overcrowding heightening the risk of contracting the virus. Additionally, the failure by prison authorities to implement sufficient prevention and protection measures in addition to discriminatory access to medical furloughs, have exposed human rights defenders to higher risk of contraction of COVID-19 in prison.

Front Line Defenders expresses its concern over the prison transfer of Amirsalar Davoudi. Front Line Defenders reiterates its belief that the imprisonment of the human rights defender is in reprisal for his peaceful and legitimate efforts to promote and protect human rights in Iran.

Front Line Defenders calls on the authorities in Iran to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Amirsalar Davoudi and quash his convictions as Front Line Defenders believes he has been targeted solely as a result of his legitimate human rights work;
2. Ensure that the treatment of Amirsalar Davoudi, while in detention, adheres to the conditions set out in the 'Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment', adopted by UN General Assembly resolution 43/173 of 9December 1988;
3. Ensure Amirsalar Davoudi is allowed sufficient access to his lawyer in advance of the re-trial for his case;
4. Cease targeting all human rights defenders in Iran and guarantee in all circumstances that they are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.