

26 May 2021

Iran: Narges Mohammadi sentenced to 30 months in prison and 80 lashes

On 22 May 2021, **Narges Mohammadi**, was informed that Branch 1177 of Tehran criminal court II of Quds Judicial Complex had sentenced her to 30 months in prison, 80 lashes and two fines. The woman human rights defender refused to take part in any of the court proceedings, stating publicly that the new charges are based on her continuous human rights work, including her work from inside Evin and Zanjan prisons where she had been detained, and a legal complaint she made regarding her treatment there. She stated that she will not comply to the court's sentence without a fair trial.

[Narges Mohammadi](#) is Deputy Director and Spokesperson of the Defenders of Human Rights Centre (DHRC) in Iran. Additionally, she is the President of the Executive Committee of the National Council of Peace in Iran, a broad coalition against war and for the promotion of human rights. She has campaigned for the abolition of the death penalty in Iran, and was awarded the Per Anger Prize by the Swedish government for her human rights work in 2011. The woman human rights defender continued her human rights activities while in detention and most recently has been campaigning against "White Torture" the cruel use of solitary confinement and other abusive treatment and conditions for prisoners in Iran. In March 2021, 23 people including 18 political prisoners currently in detention in different prisons in Iran have filed lawsuits against use of solitary confinement as a torture in the Iranian prisons.

On 22 May 2021, Narges Mohammadi, was informed that Branch 1177 of the criminal court II of Quds Judicial Complex had sentenced the woman human rights defender to 30 months in prison, 80 lashes and two fines. One of the fines amounts to 100 million IRR and the second is to be announced by the Iranian Organization of Prisons. The woman human rights defender is being charged for "propaganda activity against the state" for publishing statements against death penalty, staging a sit-in in the Evin prison's bureau, disobeying the prison's authorities to end the sit-in, breaking the windows and physical assault against the prison's authorities.

This is not the first time that Narges Mohammadi is facing judicial harassment and detention because of her human rights work in Iran. In May 2016 the woman human rights defender was sentenced to 16 years in prison for "forming and managing an illegal group" among other charges. According to Islamic Penal Code, she was to serve the conviction with the longest sentence, which stood at ten years. UN human rights experts made repeated calls for the release of Narges Mohammadi, most recently on 22 July 2020, after she fell ill with COVID-19. On 8 October 2020, woman human rights defender Narges Mohammadi was released from Zanjan prison, after serving a total of five years and six months. Her release came after the ratification of a law on 11 May 2020, reducing prison sentences for political prisoners as, according to the chief justice of the north-western Zanjan province, the woman human rights defender was eligible for release under the newly ratified law.

On 27 February 2021, Narges Mohammadi refused to appear in court for this new charge of "disturbing prison order", which was filed against her after she made a complaint regarding sexual harassment and physical assault while she was in detention. Narges Mohammadi stated publicly that she had been summonsed to court twice in December but had refused to attend. A third summons called her to court on 27 February for a trial to begin.

The new case against the woman human rights defender is based on her human rights activities while in detention. On 21 December 2019, a group of prisoners, including Narges Mohammadi, staged a three day sit-in protest in Evin Prison Political Bureau against the violent state response to the November 2019 protests in the country. On 23 December 2019, Narges Mohammadi was called by the prison guards to meet with her lawyer. However instead of meeting her lawyer, several agents from the Ministry of Intelligence violently handcuffed her, causing her wrists to bleed. She was then forcibly put in a vehicle and taken to Zanjan prison located over 300 km from Tehran. During the transfer, the human rights defender was physically and sexually harassed by the intelligence officers.

On 27 February 2021, after receiving the third court summons related to the new charge, Narges Mohammadi published a [video](#) explaining how prison officials and the then-head of Evin Prison, Gholamreza Ziaei, beat her, touched her inappropriately and sexually harassed her during her forced transfer to Zanjan prison on 23 December 2019. Immediately following the sexual harassment and physical assault, the woman human rights defender reported it, and filed a legal complaint against Gholamreza Ziaei and the prison's authorities. However, not only has the complaint not been heard, but the judiciary filed a new case against the woman human rights defender in an apparent reprisal for her filing her complaint.

Front Line Defenders is seriously concerned by the judicial harassment, physical assault and sexual harassment against Narges Mohammadi. It is particularly concerned by the latest charges brought against the defender, seemingly in reprisal for her attempts to hold the prison's authorities accountable for mistreatment. Front Line Defenders believes that Narges Mohammadi has been targeted solely as a result of her peaceful and legitimate human rights work and in an apparent reprisal for her defense of prisoners' rights in Iran.

Front Line Defenders urges the Iranian authorities to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally quash the convictions against Narges Mohammadi;
2. Carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the physical assault and sexual harassment against Narges Mohammadi during her forceful transfer from Evin prison to Zanjan prison, with a view to publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with national and international standards;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Iran are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.