

10 January 2020

## Iran: Ill-treatment of imprisoned women human rights defenders **Narges Mohammadi** and **Atena Daemi**

In late December 2019, following their participation in a peaceful sit-in protest in Evin prison, two women human rights defenders were subjected to ill-treatment by the prison authorities. **Atena Daemi** was put in solitary confinement, where she was physically abused and denied medical assistance. **Narges Mohammadi** was physically abused by security agents and transferred to Zanjan prison located over 300 km from Tehran.

[Atena Daemi](#) is a human rights defender who has advocated for the rights of children in Kobane and Gaza, for women's rights and against death penalty. [Narges Mohammadi](#) is the Deputy Director of the Defenders of Human Rights Centre (DHRC). She was elected as 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 death penalty in Iran, and was awarded the Per Anger Prize by the Swedish government for her human rights work in 2011.

On 21 December 2019, a group of prisoners, including the two human rights defenders, started a peaceful sit-in protest in Evin Prison Political Bureau against the violent state response to the recent protests in the country. On 25 December 2019, Narges Mohammadi was called by the prison guards to meet with her lawyer, but once she left the ward, 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 abused by the intelligence officers, while she kept bleeding from her wrists.

On 28 December 2019, Atena Daemi was transferred to an unknown location. After 4 days, on 31 December 2019, she was allowed to call her family and inform them that she had been put in solitary confinement in Evin prison's ward 2A, which is controlled by the Intelligence Organization of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. While in solitary confinement, Atena Daemi was physically abused by the intelligence officers, and was denied medical assistance. On 8 January 2020, she was transferred back to the ordinary prison ward.

Both women human rights defenders have faced restrictions on family and lawyer visits. Moreover, Narges Mohammadi had previously been threatened by the Evin prison director with physical abuse and solitary confinement, if she did not stop her human rights activism.

Atena Daemi was sentenced in May 2015 to 14 years' imprisonment for "insulting the Supreme Leader" and "assembly and collusion against national security". In September 2016, her prison term was reduced to seven years following an appeal.

Narges Mohammadi is currently serving a 16 year prison sentence for "membership in the Step by Step to Stop the Death Penalty group", "collusion and assembly against national security" and "spreading propaganda against the system". Her conviction is linked with her activities at the DHRC, interviews she conducted with foreign media outlets, establishing the Step by Step to Stop Death Penalty group (also known as LEGAM) and her work with Nobel Laureate Shirin Ebadi.

Front Line Defenders is deeply concerned about the ongoing imprisonment and ill-treatment of Atena Daemi and Narges Mohammadi, and it believes that they are being targeted solely as a result of their peaceful and legitimate human rights activities.

**Front Line Defenders urges the Iranian authorities to:**

1. Immediately release Atena Daemi and Narges Mohammadi, and quash their convictions;
2. Ensure that the treatment of the two women human rights defenders, 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 9 December 1988;
3. Allow the women human right defenders immediate and unfettered access to their families and lawyers;
4. Carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the ill-treatment of the two women human rights defenders, with a view to publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;
5. 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.

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