

18 February 2021

Iran: Woman human rights defender Zahra Mohammadi sentenced

On 13 February 2021, woman human rights defender **Zahra Mohammadi** was informed that Branch 4 of the Court of Appeal of the Kurdistan Province sentenced her to five years in prison for her human rights and cultural activities and membership of cultural associations in the Kurdish region of Iran.

[Zahra Mohammadi](#) is the director and a founding member of the Nozhin Socio-Cultural Association, which was established in 2011 and certified by the Iranian Ministry of Interior in 2013. The association raises awareness of the legal and cultural rights ethnic groups are entitled to exercise in Iran and has been active in promoting cultural education through the organisation and holding of Kurdish language classes in various cities in the region. The association also educates people on environmental protection.

On 13 February 2021, Zahra Mohammadi was informed that Branch 4 of the Court of Appeal of Kurdistan Province had issued a verdict on 9 February 2021 in which her sentence was reduced from ten years to five years in prison.

On 16 February 2020, the woman human rights defender had her last hearing in Branch 1 of the Islamic Revolutionary Court of Sanandaj and on 14 July 2020 her lawyer was informed that she had been sentenced to ten years in prison on the charge of “forming groups and association with the intention of disturbing the national security” by establishing Nozhin Socio-Cultural Association with the aim of overthrowing [the government].”

On 23 May 2019, Zahra Mohammadi was arrested by the security forces in Sanandaj and was released on 2 December 2019 on a bail of 7 billion IRR. During this arbitrary detention the woman human rights defender was denied access to necessary medication to treat her pre-existing gastrointestinal complications. While in detention security forces reportedly threatened to arrest Zahra Mohammadi’s family members and tried to pressure the woman human rights defender to give a televised confession.

Front Line Defenders condemns the sentencing of woman human rights defender Zahra Mohammadi, as it believes it is in retaliation for her peaceful and legitimate work defending and promoting human rights in Iran and raising awareness about the legal and cultural rights ethnic groups are entitled to exercise in the country according to article 15 of the Iranian Constitution.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Iran to:

1. Immediately quash the conviction against woman human rights defender Zahra Mohammadi as Front Line Defenders believes that she has been targeted solely as a result of her legitimate human rights work;
2. Immediately cease the judicial harassment of all human rights defenders in Iran and ensure their indiscriminate access to justice;

3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Iran are able to carryout their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions, including judicial harassment.

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