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Iran: Reza Khandan began serving a three year and six months prison sentence issued in 2019

On 13 December 2024, human rights defender **Reza Khandan** was arrested in his house and taken into custody at a police station in Tehran. The following day, the human rights defender was transferred to Evin Court and then Evin Prison where he has been detained since.

[Reza Khandan](#) is a human rights defender and the husband of woman human rights defender [Nasrin Sotoudeh](#). He advocates against compulsory veiling rules and the death penalty in Iran. In 2019, he was sentenced to six years in prison on trumped up charges of “gathering and collusion with the intention of acting against national security” and “propaganda activities against state” for producing and distributing “no-to-obligatory-hijab” badges.

On 13 December 2024, Reza Khandan was arrested in his house and taken into custody at a police station in Tehran. The following day, the human rights defender was transferred to Evin Court and Evin Prison where he has been detained since. The woman human rights defender and Reza Khandan’s wife, [Nasrin Sotoudeh](#), was barred from visiting him during this time due to not wearing compulsory hijab. Reza Khandan was informed that his prison sentence of three years and six months from 2019 has come to effect.

On 22 January 2019, Reza Khandan was sentenced in absentia by Branch 15 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court to five years imprisonment on the charge of “gathering and collusion with the intention of acting against national security” and one year imprisonment on the charge of “propaganda activities against state.” He was additionally banned from leaving the country or engaging in online activities for two years for peacefully protesting the country’s compulsory hijab law. This sentence was reduced to three years and six months imprisonment by the Court of Appeals. The human rights defender’s legal team plans to apply for a retrial due to the arbitrariness of this legal process and its implementation.

Reza Khandan began serving his arbitrary sentence when [Farhad Meysami](#), the other human rights defender also sentenced on the common charge of “gathering and collusion with the intention of acting against national security” for co-producing “no-to-obligatory-hijab” badges, was released from prison in February 2023 after a general amnesty was announced by the Iranian judiciary system.

The implementation of Reza Khandan’s prison sentence occurs following the announcement that a new [law](#) is going to be operationalized that will impose a series of new penalties on women and girls who do not comply with wearing compulsory hijab in Iran. Front Line Defenders expresses its concern regarding the sentencing of Reza Khandan and the continued judicial harassment of his family as it believes the human rights defender is being targeted for his peaceful human rights activities which promote women’s rights via advocacy. The organisation is particularly concerned

about the situation of the human rights defender and his apparent lack of access to family visits whilst in detention.

Front Line Defenders urges the Iran authorities to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Reza Khandan and quash the convictions against him;
2. Ensure that Reza Khandan has access to timely medical care whilst in detention, as required by 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. Cease the targeting of human rights defenders in Iran and ensure in all circumstances that they can carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisal and free of all restrictions, including judicial harassment.

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