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Iran: Jafar Ebrahimi and Kamyar Fakour face new charges while Jafar Ebrahimi's health condition worsens in detention

On 3 September 2023, the lawyer of human rights defenders **Jafar Ebrahimi** and **Kamyar Fakour** [announced](#) that they have been charged with “disturbing the public order” and “insulting the prison authorities” at Branch 3 of Evin prison court. Both human rights defenders were forcibly transferred to Qezel Hesar prison from Evin prison on the same day, as part of a group of at least ten prisoners.

[Jafar Ebrahimi](#) is a teacher, human rights defender and inspector at the Coordinating Council of Iranian Teachers' Trade Associations (CCITTA). In the early hours of 30 March 2022, the house of the human rights defender was raided and he was arrested without being shown an arrest warrant.

[Kamyar Fakour](#) is a journalist working on environmental issues and a labour rights defender. He was previously arrested in March 2021 during a peaceful protest about labourers' wages. In October 2022, Branch 15 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court sentenced the human rights defender to one year in prison on the charges of “gathering and colluding with the intention of acting against national security” and “propaganda activities against the state.” In March 2023, this sentence was reduced to eight months in prison in the court of appeals.

On 3 September 2023, the lawyer of Jafar Ebrahimi and Kamyar Fakour [announced](#) that the human rights defenders have now been charged with “disturbing the public order” and “insulting the prison authorities” at Branch 3 of Evin prison court. Both human rights defenders were forcibly transferred to Qezel Hesar prison from Evin prison on the same day. It is believed their transfer may be related to the prisoners' organisation of a statement or demonstration in advance of the first anniversary of the September 2022 “Woman, Life, Freedom” protests. The transfer of the human rights defenders occurred after the CCITTA raised concerns about the severe deterioration of Jafar Ebrahimi's health condition while in detention in Evin prison. Furthermore, Kamyar Fakour's transfer means he is no longer being held in the same prison as his wife, detained woman human rights defender [Sarvenaz Ahmadi](#), and may be prevented from having weekly meetings with her.

On 1 September 2023, the CCITTA [reported](#) that Jafar Ebrahimi had been diagnosed with diabetes. According to his lawyer and based on the reports of inmates, he requires assistance to move as a result of a significant deterioration in his vision. Therefore, according to the CCITTA, immediate access to medical treatment outside of the prison is necessary given the failure of the authorities of Evin prison to address Jafar Ebrahimi's health situation. Over the past two months, the human rights defender has been complaining of inflammatory bowel disease and has reported a weight loss of eight kilograms. Additionally, he has developed pain in his hands, feet and mouth. Despite multiple transfers to Evin clinic and being prescribed medical treatments that require isolation for effectiveness, the human rights defender was held in the public ward 4 of Evin prison.

On 1 September 2023, the human rights defender Jafar Ebrahimi's application to pursue a PhD in Philosophy of Education was rejected despite him obtaining a high mark in the national doctorate entrance exam. According to the [Iranian United Students Associations](#), the human rights defender had been invited to twelve universities for doctorate interviews but could only attend four as he was

denied leave of absence from Evin prison to attend the others. Sanjesh, the Iranian organisation in charge of evaluating the candidates and announcing the results of the doctorate exam, did not give any explanation for the rejection of the human rights defender's application in their portal. However, they said during a telephone call that the applicant was found not eligible under the country's "general eligibility criteria" despite his high academic qualification, which has raised speculations that there may have been interference by intelligence agents.

On 20 August 2023, Jafar Ebrahimi's lawyer [announced](#) on X (formerly Twitter) that the human rights defender's five-year prison sentence on the charge of "gathering and collusion with the intention of acting against the national security" was confirmed by Branch 36 of the court of appeals. The court of appeals convened at the request of the human rights defender's lawyer to aggregate the multiple indictments against Jafar Ebrahimi based on Article 134 of the Islamic Penal Code, where the most severe single sentence is applicable if (a) multiple criminal outcomes resulted from a single criminal conduct and (b) the number of convictions does not exceed three. Therefore, Branch 36 of the court of appeals sentenced Jafar Ebrahimi to five years in prison on the charge of "gathering and collusion with the intention of acting against the national security," five years in prison on the charge of "inciting people to riot and waging war against each other," and one year in prison on the charge of "propaganda activities against the state." After the application of Article 134 of the Islamic Penal Code, the most severe single sentence of five years in prison on the charge of "gathering and collusion with the intention of acting against the national security" will be applicable. Furthermore, after taking into account the prison sentence already served and given a by-law ratified on May 2020, which grants political prisoners conditional release after serving one third of their prison sentence, the human rights defender should normally be released from prison in March 2024. However, after the new charges were brought against Jafar Ebrahimi while in detention, the expected time of release is no longer clear for the human rights defender, whose health situation has been described as alarming by doctors.

Previously, on 7 June 2022, Jafar Ebrahimi was sentenced to three years and six months in prison on the charge of "inciting people to riot and waging war against each other," and one year in prison on the charge of "propaganda activities against the state." Additionally, on 31 January 2022, Branch 2 of the Karaj Revolutionary Court sentenced him to four years and six months in prison on the charges of "propaganda activities against the state" for publishing official statements for the CCITTA, and "gathering and collusion with the intention of acting against the national security" for attending a memorial service for those killed in the November 2019 fuel price protests, which resulted in the killing of hundreds of protesters in a few days.

On 20 August 2023, the lawyer of human rights defender Kamyar Fakour [announced](#) that the human rights defender, alongside his wife Sarvenaz Ahmadi, was [denied amnesty](#) due to his alleged "membership in hostile groups with the intention of toppling the Islamic Republic." In addition, another suspended sentence of two years in prison has come into effect for Kamyar Fakour from an indictment on the charge of "disturbing the public opinion" issued by Branch 26 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court in 2021.

Front Line Defenders is extremely concerned by the failure of the authorities in Evin prison to respond efficiently and effectively to Jafar Ebrahimi's deteriorating health. It believes that the ongoing judicial harassment, as well as denial of the rights to medical leave and access to education, faced by human rights defenders Jafar Ebrahimi and Kamyar Fakour is a direct result of their legitimate and peaceful human rights work in the country. Front Line Defenders continues to remain concerned at the broader pattern of attacks, human rights abuses and criminalisation that human rights defenders are facing in Iran.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Iran to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Jafar Ebrahimi and Kamyar Fakour and quash the convictions against them as Front Line Defenders believes they have been targeted solely as a result of their legitimate human rights work, especially in regard to their advocacy for teachers' and labour rights;

2. Ensure that the treatment of Jafar Ebrahimi and Kamyar Fakour while in detention adheres to the conditions set out in the United Nations 'Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment';
3. Ensure that Jafar Ebrahimi is granted immediate access to appropriate medical care;
4. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defender in Iran are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions, including judicial harassment.