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Iran: Arash Sadeghi sentenced to five years in prison for his advocacy work during the ongoing protests

On 26 January 2023, **Arash Sadeghi's** lawyer [announced](#) that Branch 26 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court sentenced the human rights defender to five years in prison on the charge of “gathering and collusion against national security” and seven months in prison on the charge of producing “propaganda against the state.” According to this verdict, the human rights defender has additionally been sentenced, in absentia, to a two year travel ban, a two year ban on living in Tehran and the northern provinces

[Arash Sadeghi](#) is a human rights defender and anti-death penalty activist working on the documentation of human rights violations, predominantly inside Iranian prisons. He has reported extensively on abuses and violations committed by the authorities against human rights defenders including torture, ill treatment and refusal of access to a lawyer. Most recently, he was engaged in the cases of death penalty sentences issued to protestors, whose right to due process was breached in the course of their trial. This took place in the context of the mass protests which are currently gripping Iran, ongoing since September 2022.

On 21 January 2023, Arash Sadeghi was released from Evin prison on bail after being arrested on 10 October 2022, in the context of the ongoing protests in Iran. On 26 January, his lawyer announced that Branch 26 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court sentenced Arash Sadeghi, in absentia, to five years in prison on the charge of “gathering and collusion against national security” and seven months in prison on the charge of “propaganda against state”. He has also been subjected to a two year travel ban, a two year ban on living in Tehran and the northern provinces, a two years ban on membership of a political or social group. Electronic devices, found in his house at the time of his arrest, have also been confiscated. According to Article 134 of the Islamic Penal Code, where multiple offences have been committed, the sentence served by the offender will correspond to the most severe penalty. In this case, the human rights defender will serve five years in prison.

The human rights defender has been transferred back and forth between detention centres, several times over the course of his detention. During that period, which now exceeds 70 days, Arash Sadeghi was denied access to his lawyer, as well as essential time-sensitive medication. On 19 December 2022, he was transferred to the Great Tehran Penitentiary from Evin prison and then transferred back to Evin Ward 4, after reporting from prison on the case of a protester's imminent execution on 12 December 2022. The defender suffers from Chondrosarcoma, a rare form of bone cancer. He was diagnosed in 2018, when he was previously in detention.

This is not the first time that Arash Sadeghi was targeted for his human rights work. On 1 May 2021, Arash Sadeghi was released from Rajaie Shahr prison after having served seven years and six months on the charge of “forming a group with the purpose of disrupting national security,” “insulting the supreme leader” and “insulting the sacred principles of Islam”. The human rights defender was convicted on a number of charges, in two separate cases, to serve concurrent prison sentences of fifteen years.

Front Line Defenders is concerned by the scale and gravity of the ongoing violations against human rights defenders in Iran in the context of the protests which started on 18 September 2022. Hundreds of human rights defenders have been arrested, charged and subjected to hefty prison sentences without adhering to due process of fair trials. Front Line Defenders is particularly concerned by the breaches of international human rights law in Iran's treatment of human rights defenders in detention. The Iranian government should be held accountable for attacks against human rights defenders who have been detained as a result of their legitimate and peaceful human rights work in Iran.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Iran to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally quash the convictions against Arash Sadeghi as Front Line Defenders believes he has been targeted solely as a result of his legitimate human rights work, especially in regard to his advocacy for protesters at risk of imminent execution;
2. Cease targeting all human rights defenders in Iran, especially in the context of the ongoing protests, and guarantee in all circumstances that they are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisal and free of all restrictions, including judicial harassment.