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Iran: The prison sentence of human rights defender Ahmadreza Haeri increased arbitrarily

On 12 November 2024, human rights defender **Ahmadreza Haeri** announced that Branch 36 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court had increased the human rights defender's prison sentence to four years on the charge of "gathering and collusion with the intention of acting against national security," one year for "propaganda against the state," and 15 months for "spreading disinformation."

[Ahmadreza Haeri](#) is a human rights defender and anti-death penalty campaigner. He has been advocating for prisoners' rights, including their right to life, through his involvement in the "Tuesdays No-to-Execution" campaign. This campaign was started by a group of prisoners to raise awareness about the executions in Iran and to bring to light the situation of prisoners on death row. The campaign has since grown momentum in Iran, outside of its prisons. The human rights defender has been targeted for his role in the campaign, including facing charges of "propaganda against state."

On 12 November 2024, Ahmadreza Haeri announced and criticised the decision of Branch 36 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court, which had increased the human rights defender's prison sentence during an arbitrary process under the revision of article 134 of the Islamic Penal Code. According to this provision, "in the cases of offences punishable by ta'zir, where the offences committed are not more than three, the court shall impose the maximum punishment provided for each offence... and only the most severe punishment shall be executed." Should article 134 apply, the human rights defender will serve four years in prison on the charge of "gathering and collusion with the intention of acting against national security."

This arbitrary decision to increase the prison sentence of Ahmadreza Haeri was delivered in October 2023, shortly after the human rights defender's lawyers had appealed the initial sentences and applied for a retrial at the Supreme Court. However, the verdict was not communicated with the human rights defender nor his lawyers until last week.

On 15 October 2022, the human rights defender was originally sentenced to three years in prison on the charge of "gathering and collusion with the intention of acting against national security" and eight months in prison on the charge of "propaganda against state", which was confirmed by Branch 36 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court of Appeals. On 17 June 2023, Branch 104 of Tehran Criminal Court II sentenced the defender to an additional 91 days in prison on the charge of "spreading disinformation."

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Ahmadreza Haeri began serving his prison term in Evin Prison in May 2023. He was then transferred to Ghezel Hesar Prison in Karaj in September 2023, along with 12 other political prisoners, where he is currently detained.

On 16 October 2024, the human rights defender appeared via video conference before Branch 1 of the Karaj Public and Revolutionary Prosecutor's Office, facing new charges of "propaganda against the state" and "spreading disinformation" through his role in the "Tuesdays No-to-Execution" campaign.

Front Line Defenders expresses its concern about the continued judicial harassment of Ahmadreza Haeri, as it believes the human rights defender is being targeted for his peaceful human rights activities against the death penalty and particularly for his advocacy for the rights of prisoners in Iran.

Front Line Defenders urges the Iran authorities to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Ahmadreza Haeri and quash the convictions against him;
2. Ensure that the treatment of Ahmadreza Haeri, 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. 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.