

URGENT ACTION

JAILED HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER IN POOR HEALTH

Following 31 days of hunger strike in Tehran's Evin prison, Iranian human rights defender Atena Daemi is in poor health, and requires immediate hospitalization. She has been unjustly imprisoned for her human rights activities since November 2016.

On 8 April, Iranian human rights defender **Atena Daemi** started a hunger strike in Evin prison in protest at the suspended prison sentences imposed on her sisters Hanieh and Ensieh for “insulting public officers on duty”. Both were sentenced to suspended prison terms of three months and one day by a criminal court in Tehran on 13 March. According to her family, Atena’s health has seriously deteriorated. She is believed to have lost about 12 kg of her weight. She is suffering from sustained nausea, vomiting, blood pressure fluctuations, and severe kidney pain. She briefly lost consciousness on 2 May. She was briefly transferred to a hospital outside prison on 8 May where some medical tests were carried out but she was returned to prison before even the test results came in. Doctors have warned that her kidney infection has reached critical levels and she needs immediate hospitalization.

Prison officials are failing to provide her with adequate medical care. On 29 April, Atena Daemi told her family that prison medical doctors keep writing in their reports that her health is normal and that she is “faking” her illness. In late April, she was transferred to the prison medical clinic to receive an electrocardiogram (ECG) test but the nurse, who was a male, refused to administer the test. The “justification” was that it is “inappropriate” for male medical staff to carry out these tests as patients are required to remove garments covering their chests. Women political prisoners often face additional layers of gender-specific discrimination when seeking access to medical care. On several occasions, women prisoners, who have experienced heart problems in the evening or at night, have been denied emergency ECG tests because the prison authorities have insisted that these tests must be carried out by female staff as patients are required to remove garments covering their chests.

Atena Daemi and her sisters’ lawyer is awaiting the Court of Appeals’ review of the convictions and sentences issued against them. The lawyer is concerned that the appeal may be rejected. Amnesty International considers that the trial that led to their convictions was unfair and that Hanieh and Ensieh Daemi would be prisoners of conscience if imprisoned, targeted simply on the basis of their family relationship with Atena Daemi.

1) TAKE ACTION

Write a letter, send an email, call, fax or tweet:

- Release Atena Daemi immediately and unconditionally, as she is a prisoner of conscience targeted solely for peacefully exercising her rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly;
- Ensure, pending her release, that she has access to a qualified health professional who can provide health care in compliance with medical ethics, including the principles of confidentiality, autonomy and informed consent;
- Quash the convictions and sentences of Hanieh and Ensieh Daemi, which were issued after an unfair trial;
- Investigate Atena Daemi’s allegations of torture or other ill-treatment, including being subjected to violence during her November 2016 arrest, and ensure that those responsible are brought to justice in fair trials.

Contact these two officials by 20 June, 2017:

Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani
c/o Public Relations Office
Number 4, Deadend of 1 Azizi
Above Pasteur Intersection
Vali Asr Street, Tehran, Iran

Salutation: Your Excellency

Office of the Supreme Leader

Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations
622 Third Avenue, 34th Floor
New York, NY 10017
Fax: (212) 867-7086 | Phone: (212) 687-2020
Email: iran@un.int

Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei
Salutation: Your Excellency

2) LET US KNOW YOU TOOK ACTION

[Click here](#) to let us know if you took action on this case! *This is Urgent Action 127.15*

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In March, Atena Daemi, aged 29, was transferred to Evin prison medical clinic after she experienced a temporary loss of vision in her right eye. However, she was returned to her cell the same day as the medical clinic did not have the necessary facilities to diagnose her condition. She vomited repeatedly for the next two days and was transferred to a hospital outside prison. Doctors told her family that she needed to receive a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan of her brain. However, the authorities have failed to provide her with the MRI telling the family the procedure is expensive and the family must cover its costs. This violates international law, which requires that states provide medical care for all prisoners, free of charge and without discrimination.

Atena Daemi and her sisters' convictions are in connection with the confrontation that they had with three Revolutionary Guards officials on 26 November 2016 when they raided her parents' house to arrest her. The security forces, who wore face masks, failed to present IDs or an arrest warrant. Atena Daemi has said that they beat and pepper sprayed her, and punched her sister Hanieh in the chest. Following her arrest, Atena Daemi filed a complaint against the Revolutionary Guards with the Office of the Prosecutor in Evin prison, but was eventually told by the authorities that "her complaint letter has been lost". The authorities subsequently started criminal proceedings against Atena Daemi and her sisters, seemingly in reprisal.

In an open letter dated 1 May, Atena Daemi wrote that the head of Evin prison had acknowledged to her that the case involving her and her sisters was marred with procedural irregularities and he promised to follow it up with the office of the Prosecutor. However, there has been no progress since then. Recently, the Associate Prosecutor of Evin prison told her family that nothing could be done to help her and that she must wait for the Court of Appeals to review the convictions and sentences.

In January 2017, the authorities charged Atena Daemi and her sisters with "insulting the Supreme Leader", "intentional assault", "obstructing public officials in the performance of their official duties" and "insulting public officers on duty". In February 2017, Atena Daemi and her sisters received an official letter from the Office of the Prosecutor indicating that the first two charges had been dropped. However, the other two charges remained open and Atena Daemi's sisters were required to pay bail of 400 million rials (around US\$12,000) to remain at liberty pending further investigation of the charges. On 22 March, they were summoned to appear before Branch 1162 of the Criminal Court in Tehran the next day to stand trial. The court issued its verdict the next day, giving them each a prison term of three months and one day for "insulting public officers on duty". The court suspended Hanieh and Ensieh Daemi sentences for a period of one year conditional on their "good behaviour". Atena Daemi's sentence was added to her current seven-year sentence.

Atena Daemi was first arrested in October 2014. She was held in Section 2A of Evin prison for 86 days, including 51 days in solitary confinement. During this period, she was denied access to a lawyer even though she was repeatedly interrogated. In April 2015, she was sentenced to 14 years in prison after a grossly unfair trial before Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran. She was convicted of "gathering and colluding to commit crimes against national security", "spreading propaganda against the system", and "insulting the Supreme Leader". In September 2016, Branch 36 of the Court of Appeal in Tehran reduced the sentence to seven years. Atena Daemi's conviction stems solely from her peaceful human rights activities including: writing posts on Facebook criticizing the authorities' execution record; distributing anti-death penalty leaflets; participating in a peaceful protest against the 2014 execution of a young Iranian woman called Reyhaneh Jabbari; visiting the gravesite of those killed during the protests following the 2009 presidential election; and sending information about abuses against political prisoners to human rights groups based outside Iran. In her court verdict, which has been reviewed by Amnesty International, these peaceful activities are cited as "evidence" of criminal activity.

Name: Atena Daemi, Hanieh Daemi, Ensieh Daemi
Gender m/f: All f

Further information on UA: 127/15 Index: MDE 13/6189/2017 Issue Date: 9 May 2017