

URGENT ACTION

IRANIAN HUNGER STRIKERS IN CRITICAL CONDITION

Two men imprisoned in Adel Abad Prison in Shiraz, south-west Iran, are in critical condition after a prolonged hunger strike protesting the harsh treatment of dervishes, including lawyers, in Tehran's Evin Prison. They have been beaten, have lost consciousness several times, and are being kept alive by intravenous drips in prison.

Saleh Moradi and **Kasra Nouri**, are Gonabadi dervishes from the Nemattolah Gonabadi order, one of Iran's largest Sufi orders. They started a "wet" hunger strike (taking water but not food) on 15 January in protest at the illegal transfer of seven dervishes, including lawyers, imprisoned without trial, to solitary confinement in Tehran's Evin Prison. On 21 March, both men intensified their protest by entering into a "dry" hunger strike (refusing water as well as food). They have reportedly each lost 35 kilos and are thought to be in critical condition. A source close to the men said that on 25 March, prison security officials and officials from the Ministry of Intelligence bound their hands and feet and force-fed them bread in an attempt to break their hunger strike. This was reportedly filmed by the authorities to 'prove' they had ended their hunger strike. On 1 April, Kasra Nouri was transferred to a Ministry of Intelligence facility and reportedly severely beaten before being taken back to Adel Abad Prison. Both men have been moved to the prison infirmary where they are receiving fluids through intravenous drips.

Saleh Moradi, journalist and a manager of Majzooban-e Nour website (a Sufi news agency that reports on human rights violations against dervishes) and Kasra Nouri, a network member of the website, were detained in September 2011 and January 2012 respectively, during a wave of arrests of Gonabadi dervishes. They were arrested in connection with their activism and accused of "spreading propaganda against the system" and "acting against national security" but have yet to stand trial. They have been denied access to lawyers since their arrest.

Please write immediately in Persian, Arabic, English or your own language:

- v Calling on the Iranian authorities to allow Saleh Moradi and Kasra Nouri regular access to adequate medical care from medical professionals acting in accordance with medical ethics, including in civilian hospitals with specialized facilities, and not to coerce them to end their hunger strike, and to ensure that they are treated humanely at all times and not punished in any way for their hunger strike;
- v Calling on them to release the men unless they are to be promptly charged with internationally recognizable criminal offences and tried according to international fair trial standards and to immediately grant them access to lawyers of their choosing;
- v Urging them to investigate allegations that they were tortured. Anyone found responsible for abuses should be brought to justice in accordance with international fair trial standards.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 23 MAY 2013 TO:

Governor of Adel Abad Prison

Ghassemi Eskandari
Adel Abad Prison
Shahrak-e-Shahid Motahari
Edalat Boulevard
Shiraz
Iran

Salutation: Dear Sir

Head of Judiciary in Fars Province

Doctor Khodaiyan
Shohada Square
Central Judicial Compound
Shiraz
Fars Province
Email: khodaiyan@dadfars.ir

Salutation: Dear Sir

And copies to:

Secretary General High Council for Human Rights
Mohammed Javad Larjani
c/o Office of the Head of the Judiciary
Pasteur St, Vali Asr Ave
South of Serah-e Jomhuri
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: larjani@ipm.ir

Salutation: Your Excellency

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Kasra Nouri and Saleh Moradi were both detained during a wave of arrests when over 60 Gonabadi dervishes were detained in the Iranian cities of Kavar, Shiraz and Tehran between September 2011 and January 2012. On 10 September 2011 Saleh Moradi was arrested by security officers during a raid on his home in Shiraz, Fars Province, south-west Iran. Security officials presented no arrest warrant at the time but transferred him to the Shiraz Ministry of Intelligence Detention Centre, known simply as No.100, where he was reportedly tortured for two months until he was transferred to Adel Abad Prison. Kasra Nouri was arrested on 11 January 2012 but released on 26 February after making a bail payment of 500 million Rial (\$14,164 at the time of writing). He was re-arrested on 14 March 2012 and reportedly held incommunicado in the Shiraz Ministry of Intelligence detention centre before being transferred to Adel Abad Prison. His family were not informed of his whereabouts and were only permitted to visit him four weeks after his arrest.

On 9 April 2013, the Head of Adel Abad Prison, Ali Mozafari, visited Kasra Nouri and Saleh Moradi in the prison infirmary, hugged them, and broke down in tears. He immediately resigned from his position in protest, stating that it was beyond his powers to alter their “unjust” situation. He has since been replaced by Ghassemi Eskandari.

The men are on hunger strike in protest at the deteriorating health and illegal transfer of seven dervishes, lawyers and managers of Majzooban-e Nour website from Tehran's Evin Prison's general ward, Section 350, to solitary confinement in Section 209, which is under the control of the Ministry of Intelligence. The seven dervishes, four of whom are lawyers, Afshin Karampour, Amir Eslami, Farshid Yadollahi, and Mostafa Daneshjoo, and three others, Hamid-Reza Moradi Sarvestani, Omid Behrooz, and Reza Entesari, were all detained around the same time in September 2011. Since their arrests, formal charges have not been brought against the men but they have been accused of “spreading propaganda against the system” and “acting against national security”. Despite this, in January 2013, Judge Abolghasem Salavati from Branch 15 of Tehran's Revolutionary Court summoned them to court. The men complained about the illegality of their imprisonment and the lack of due process in their case and refused to take part in a trial when they were summoned. In a punitive act, the authorities transferred the men from the general ward to solitary confinement. Under international law, individuals must be promptly charged and brought before a court to hear their charges.

Members of religious minorities in Iran, including dervish communities, suffer discrimination, harassment, arbitrary detention, and attacks on community property. Gonabadi dervishes, who in Iran consider themselves to be Shi'a Muslims, have faced rising harassment in recent years. The arrests in September 2011 followed weeks of rising tension after the Supreme Leader gave a speech in Qom, the main centre for religious study, denouncing “false mysticism” and encouraging his audience to speak to the public about the “dangers” of religious minorities in Iran, including Sufis (see UA: 280/11 Index: MDE 13/080/2011, <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/080/2011/en>).

Several prominent clerics in Iran have issued fatwas attacking Sufis. Ayatollah Lankarani said in 2006 that Sufis were “misleading Iranian youth” and that “any contact with them was forbidden”. Hundreds were arrested in Qom in February 2006 following protests over the destruction of their place of worship (*hosseinieh*); see UA 43/06 (Index: MDE 13/018/2006, <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/018/2006/en>). *Hosseiniehs* in other towns and cities have been destroyed or closed. At least four teachers were dismissed from their employment in 2008 on account of their participation in Sufi practices. In October 2008, seven were arrested in Esfahan, and five in Karaj, near Tehran, apparently on account of their affiliation to the order.

Name: Kasra Nouri and Saleh Moradi

Gender m/f: m

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