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### Iran: prison sentences for four members of The Call of the Iranian Women NGO

On 21 August 2022, three women human rights defenders **Akram Nasirian**, **Maryam Mohammadi** and **Esrin Derkale** were transferred to Evin prison in Tehran to begin prison sentences. Together with **Nahid Shaghaghi**, the three women human rights defenders have been sentenced to two years and three months in prison because of their advocacy for women's rights.

[Nahid Shaghaghi](#), [Akram Nasirian](#), [Maryam Mohammadi](#) and [Esrin Derkale](#) are women human rights defenders and members of The Call of the Iranian Women NGO, which focuses on empowering women in disadvantaged situations, such as at times of natural disasters. The NGO has been active in capacity building of women in different provinces in Iran, including through literacy classes and public advocacy.

On 4 December 2019, the Branch 26 of Tehran Revolutionary Court sentenced each woman human rights defender to three years in prison on the charge of “gathering and colluding against national security;” six months in prison for “propaganda against the state;” and eight months in prison for “not wearing a hijab in public”. After the application of Article 134 of the Islamic Penal Code, the most severe single sentence of three years in prison on the charge of “gathering and colluding against the national security” was applied. The sentence was reduced to two years and three months in prison after it was appealed.

Akram Nasirian was arrested in Tehran on 29 April 2019 and released on bail of 2 billion IRR from Evin prison on 26 May 2022. Maryam Mohammadi and Esrin Derkale were arrested respectively in Garmsar, Semnan province on 8 July 2022 and 28 July 2022, and transferred to ward 209 of Evin prison before being released on bail on 17 September 2019. Additionally, Nahid Shaghaghi was arrested on 15 May 2019 in her house in Tehran and released on bail on 22 June 2019. The women human rights defenders were denied access to a lawyer during their detentions and were summoned to Evin Prison despite having posted bail. The women human rights defender stated that those who had posted the women human rights defenders' bail had been threatened last week with the confiscation of their properties, had the four woman human rights defenders not presented themselves to prison.

Akram Nasirian, Maryam Mohammadi and Esrin Derkale were transferred to Evin prison, where there are [worrying reports](#) about the spread of a new wave of COVID-19 and prison authorities are refraining from testing and quarantining the inmates showing symptoms.

In a statement published on Instagram, the four wrote: “While we are imprisoned, Mafiosi and embezzlers who have endangered the lives of millions of people remain free... We have only sought to be a voice of protest over the pain of discrimination against Iranian women. In the eyes of thieves and dictators, defence of equality is interpreted as a crime. Nevertheless, no prison walls can silence the call for women's equality.”

Front Line Defenders is gravely concerned by the imprisonment of the women rights defenders especially amidst the failure of prison authorities in Evin prison to respond efficiently and effectively to the display of COVID-19 symptoms. Front Line Defenders is particularly concerned, given the recent [escalation](#) of the violent enforcement of the hijab on the Iranian women in the streets and prosecution of the anti-obligatory-hijab campaigners.

**Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Iran to:**

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Akram Nasirian, Maryam Mohammadi and Esrin Derkale, and quash convictions against Nahid Shaghaghi, Akram Nasirian, Maryam Mohammadi and Esrin Derkale as Front Line Defenders believes that they have been targeted solely as a result of their legitimate and non-violent human rights work;
2. Ensure that the treatment of Akram Nasirian, Maryam Mohammadi and Esrin Derkale 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. Ensure protection and hygienic conditions for all detained human rights defenders, and provide the necessary medical treatment for the imprisoned human rights defenders and other prisoners who are at risk of being infected by COVID-19;
4. Cease targeting all human rights defenders in Iran and guarantee in all circumstances that they are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.