



## IRAN

# ARASH SADEGHI – GOLROKH EBRAHIMI IRAEE

## COUPLE REPEATEDLY SENTENCED TO LONG PRISON TERMS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVITIES

Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee and Arash Sadeghi were arrested on 6 September 2014. In an unfair trial consisting of two sessions of 15 minutes each, they were sentenced to long prison terms. After their release, both were arrested again in autumn 2022. Due to their political activities, Arash was again sentenced to 4 years and 3 months in prison and Golrokh to 7 years. Arash is still released on bail. Golrokh is imprisoned in Evin prison.

### POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AND FIRST CONVICTIONS

Arash Sadeghi, born on 29 September 1986, is a former philosophy student who was not allowed to finish his studies because of his participation in the protests against the 2009 presidential election, among other things. He was also arrested and sentenced back then. In July 2015, he was sentenced to 15 years in prison by the Revolutionary Court in Tehran in an unfair trial. He was accused of "spreading propaganda against the system", "assembly and conspiracy against state security" and "insulting the founder of the Islamic Republic". Amnesty International believes that Arash Sadeghi's Facebook posts about political prisoners and his interviews with the media about his time in prison were used as "evidence" against him.

He was detained for six months after his arrest without access to a lawyer. The court prohibited his legal counsel from inspecting the case file and stated that he would only be granted access to a court-appointed defence lawyer. However, as he refused this, he had no legal representation during his trial.

Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee, born on 30 June 1980, worked as a potter and author. She was sentenced to 6 years in prison for "spreading propaganda against the system" and "insulting Islamic sanctities". She was acquitted of the second charge on appeal on 30 March 2017 and the sentence was reduced to 3½ years. The charge is related to an unpublished story. In it, she describes the feelings of a woman who sees a film about the true story of the stoning of a young woman and is so upset about it that she burns a copy of the Quran. She also wrote Facebook posts about political prisoners.

Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee also had no legal representation in court. She also did not have the opportunity to defend herself because the hearing in June 2015 took place without her as she was in hospital for a major operation. She was therefore sentenced in absentia.

### FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN THEIR CASES

After their arrest on 6 September 2014, both were tortured and abused in prison. Golrokh Ebrahimi was subjected to long blindfolded interrogations and threatened with execution for "insulting Islam". During her interrogation, she could hear interrogators threatening and abusing her husband in the neighbouring cell.

Golrokh Ebrahimi was held until 27 September 2014, when she was released on bail. On 14 March 2015, Arash Sadeghi was also initially released from custody on bail. He was detained again in June 2016, followed by his wife on 24 October 2016. He went on a 72-day hunger strike in protest against her imprisonment. On 3 January 2017, Golrokh Ebrahimi was released again on bail of the equivalent of US\$ 125,000, but was returned to prison on 22 January 2017. On 8 April 2019, she was temporarily released again on a high bail equivalent to € 13,000.

On 7 September 2019, a further judgement from July 2019 against Golrokh and her friend and fellow detainee Atena Daemi was upheld on appeal. While in custody, they had protested against the prison

conditions in open letters and against the execution of Kurdish prisoners by singing a revolutionary anthem. They were sentenced to 2 years and 1 month in prison for "insulting the Supreme Leader" (to be served) and 2 years and 1 month in prison for "propaganda against the State". Golrokh was subsequently arrested again on 9 November 2019 and taken to Gharchak prison.

In mid-April 2021, she learnt that she had been sentenced in absentia by the Tehran Revolutionary Court to a further year in prison for "spreading propaganda against the system", a two-year ban on political activity and a travel ban. This was in response to the fact that she had written open letters about the mistreatment of a fellow prisoner and the suppression of labour protests, among other things. Neither she nor her lawyer had been informed of the trial date.

Arash Sadeghi was released from prison in May 2021, Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee was released on 16 May 2022.

### **RECENT RE-IMPRISONMENTS AND CONVICTIONS**

Arash Sadeghi was arrested again on 12 October 2022 for his participation in the protests against the government. He was released on bail on 21 January 2023. On 26 January, he was sentenced to 5 years and 8 months in prison; the sentence was reduced to 4 years and 3 months on appeal at the beginning of May 2023. He was sentenced to 3 years and 7 months for "assembly and conspiracy against national security" (to be served) and 8 months for "propaganda against the regime". However, he is not yet in prison again.

Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee was also imprisoned again in the course of the protests on 26 September 2022. She was offered a pardon in February 2023 if she showed "remorse". As she refused, she remained in custody in Evin Prison. In April 2023, she was sentenced to 7 years in prison on the same charges as Arash: 6 years for "assembly and conspiracy against national security" (which she must serve) and 1 year for "propaganda against the regime".

### **STATE OF HEALTH OF ARASH SADEGHI**

Arash Sadeghi's health deteriorated alarmingly during his time in prison. However, medical treatment outside prison was repeatedly blocked by the authorities.

Arash Sadeghi suffers from severe kidney disease and respiratory problems. He also developed a stomach ulcer that caused internal bleeding and digestive problems. For this reason, he was unable to eat solid food for a while.

It was not until September 2018, more than two years after his imprisonment, that he was allowed to stay in hospital to have a tumor removed from his right shoulder. The lack of care in prison had led to a post-operative infection in his arm. Golrokh reported: "His right arm was swollen and had become completely numb. Arash said he had lost the ability to move it from his shoulder to his fingertips." However, all requests for treatment in hospital had been rejected. His arm then had to be amputated, but the cancer had spread in the meantime.

After his re-imprisonment, Arash Sadeghi's father reported that he was again not being treated in prison for his cancer. UN experts called for his release in December 2022, which took place in January 2023.