

URGENT ACTION

WOMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER AT RISK OF EXECUTION

Human rights defender Sharifeh Mohammadi is at risk of execution after a Revolutionary Court in Rasht, Gilan province, sentenced her to death in June 2024 solely in relation to her peaceful human rights activities. She supported women's and workers' rights as well as the abolition of the death penalty, and until 2011 was a member in a workers' committee in Iran, where independent trade unions are banned. Her trial was grossly unfair, and her allegations of torture and other ill-treatment were never investigated.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

*Head of judiciary, Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei, c/o Embassy of Iran to the European Union
Avenue Franklin Roosevelt No. 15, 1050 Bruxelles, Belgium*

Dear Mr Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei,

Human rights defender Sharifeh Mohammadi, 45, is at risk of execution in Lakan prison, Gilan province, after Branch 1 of the Revolutionary Court of Rasht, Gilan province, sentenced her to death in June 2024. She was convicted of "armed rebellion against the state" (baghi) solely in relation to her peaceful human rights activities, including supporting women's and workers' rights as well as the abolition of the death penalty, and her past membership with the Coordinating Committee to Help to Form Workers' Organizations, which advocates for trade unions. Her appeal is pending before the Supreme Court.

On 5 December 2023, Ministry of Intelligence agents arbitrarily arrested Sharifeh Mohammadi and transferred her to a detention centre in Rasht, where, according to an informed source, she was subjected to torture and ill-treatment, including repeated kicks to her legs. A few days later, she was transferred to solitary confinement in Lakan prison. On 28 December 2023, she was transferred to a Ministry of Intelligence detention facility in Sanandaj, Kurdistan province, about 500 km from Rasht. According to informed sources, there agents subjected her to torture and ill-treatment to compel her forced "confessions", including by repeatedly hitting her in the face and head while she was blindfolded, resulting in visible injuries. In late January 2024, upon her transfer to Sanandaj prison, she filed a complaint about her torture, but no investigation was conducted. Four weeks later, she withdrew her complaint after prosecution authorities threatened her with prolonged detention in Sanandaj prison, where she had been held incommunicado in solitary confinement. In late February 2024, she was transferred to Lakan prison.

Sharifeh Mohammadi's trial, which consisted of one 30-minute session on 9 June 2024, was grossly unfair. She was connected from prison via video conference and was denied the right to speak. The verdict lists her peaceful human rights activities as "evidence" against her, including possession of documents supporting women prisoners, her abolitionist position and ties to the Coordinating Committee to Help to Form Workers' Organizations.

Halt any plans to execute Sharifeh Mohammadi, quash her conviction and death sentence, and release her immediately and unconditionally, as she is held solely for her peaceful human rights activism. Pending her release, provide her with adequate healthcare and regular visits from family and lawyers; protect her from further torture and other ill-treatment; and order an independent, effective and impartial investigation into her torture allegations, bringing anyone suspected of criminal responsibility to justice in fair trials. Also, immediately establish an official moratorium on executions with a view to abolishing the death penalty.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 5 December 2023, agents arbitrarily arrested Sharifeh Mohammadi from her home in Rasht and seized her electronic devices and other personal items before taking her to a Ministry of Intelligence detention facility in Rasht. There, she was subjected to interrogations without access to a lawyer and denied contact with her family, while blindfolded and repeatedly questioned. Interrogations revolved around her human rights activism, including reasons for her stance against the death penalty and support for prisoners held for politically motivated reasons. After several days, she was transferred to solitary confinement in Lakan prison, where interrogations about her activism continued. On 28 December 2023, after her sudden transfer to a Ministry of Intelligence detention centre in Sanandaj, interrogations continued and according to an informed source, agents subjected her to further torture and other ill-treatment, including by repeatedly hitting her in the face. Agents sought to compel her forced “confessions” that she had ties to Komala Party of Kurdistan, a banned Kurdish opposition group based in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, which she repeatedly denied. About late January 2024, when Sharifeh Mohammadi was transferred to solitary confinement in Sanandaj prison, she filed a complaint about her treatment in the Sanandaj Ministry of Intelligence detention facility, but no investigations were conducted. Four weeks later, prosecution officials pressured her to withdraw her complaint. By that point, the visible injuries on her face had healed and prosecution officials told her that if she wanted an investigation to take place, she would continue to be held in Sanandaj prison rather than be transferred back to Lakan prison, closer to her relatives. In late February 2024, after she withdrew her complaint under pressure, she was transferred back Lakan prison, where she remains. Until she was transferred to the general ward of Lakan prison in early March 2024, she was permitted only a few very brief phone calls to her family. On 11 June 2024, after spending months of repeatedly following up on Sharifeh Mohammadi’s case, Sirous Fattahi, her husband, was arrested and released on bail from Lakan prison on 20 June 2024. Authorities have now opened two open cases against him – one before a Revolutionary Court and another before a criminal court – on spurious charges solely in relation to his advocacy for Sharifeh Mohammadi’s release, including “spreading lies with the intention of disturbing public opinion”.

Sharifeh Mohammadi’s trial before Branch 1 of the Revolutionary Court of Rasht was grossly unfair. Her lawyer was provided only 10 minutes to present a defence. The verdict, issued on 30 June 2024 and reviewed by Amnesty International, lists peaceful human rights activities as “evidence” of Sharifeh Mohammadi’s acts “against the foundations of the Islamic Republic of Iran”. The verdict cited as “evidence” against Sharifeh Mohammadi her support for the abolition of the death penalty in Iran, her documentation of cases of women prisoners held for politically motivated reasons in Gilan province, her possession of information on how workers participated in the “Woman Life Freedom” uprising of September-December 2022, and of the contact details of the Coordinating Committee to Help to Form Workers’ Organizations found in her electronic files. The verdict also purports that there is a connection between the Coordinating Committee to Help to Form Workers’ Organizations, of which she was a member until 2011, and the Komala Party of Kurdistan. The Coordinating Committee to Help to Form Workers’ Organizations, which continues to function as an independent organization advancing worker and trade union rights, has repeatedly stated they are a workers’ rights committee and not connected to Komala Party of Kurdistan.

According to international human rights law and standards, authorities are required to ensure independent, impartial and effective investigations into allegations of torture and other ill-treatment when information about such alleged crimes is available, even in the absence of formal complaints. Amnesty International has repeatedly [documented](#) how in Iran prosecution authorities routinely dismiss or deny allegations of torture and other ill-treatment instead of investigating them. They take no action to protect survivors from reprisals by intelligence and security forces and instead, in some cases, punish them for lodging complaints, which further entrenches impunity. When survivors consequently retract their complaints following reprisals, the prosecution authorities close the matter and presume that no crime has been committed.

In the aftermath of the “Woman Life Freedom” uprising, Iranian authorities have intensified their use of the death penalty to instil fear among the population and tighten their grip on power. This escalation includes the use of the death penalty against women on politically motivated charges. Kurdish civil society activist Pakhshan Azizi was convicted in July 2024 of “armed rebellion against the state” (*baghi*) and sentenced to death by Revolutionary Court solely due to her peaceful activism. At least two other women, Wrisha Moradi and Nasim Gholami Simiyari, also were tried for “armed rebellion against the state” (*baghi*) in separate cases. In 2023, authorities carried out at [least 853 executions](#), and the use of the death penalty has disproportionately impacted Iran’s persecuted Baluchi ethnic minority, who constitute about 5% of Iran’s population, yet accounted for 20% of all executions in 2023. In 2024, the Iranian authorities have continued executions, including of ethnic minorities and dissidents.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Persian, English, or your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 9 December 2024.

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Sharifeh Mohammadi (she/her).