

President of the Islamic Republic of Iran
Hassan Rohani
Pasteur Street, Pasteur Square, Teheran
The Islamic Republic of Iran

Copenhagen, 15. July 2020

Your Excellency,

It is with great concern that Danish PEN has received the news that our honorary member, the prominent journalist and human rights defender **Narges Mohammadi**, has been suffering from suspected COVID-19 symptoms, including shortness of breath, coughs, muscle pain and loss of smell since 29. June. Despite her worsening condition, the authorities continue to deny her health care, and refuse to inform her of the results of a test taken on 8 July. This is putting her health and life at risk, particularly considering her pre-existing lung disease, and weakened immune system following surgeries in 2018 and 2019.

Since her transfer from Tehran's Evin prison to Zanjan's prison on 24 December 2019, Narges Mohammadi has been deliberately denied health care, which may amount to torture or other ill-treatment. The prison and prosecution authorities have refused to transfer her for specialized care outside prison. As a result, her prescriptions for medication to prevent the formation of blood clots in her lungs have not been renewed since her removal from Evin prison. The authorities have not allowed her to call her children for nearly a year and are denying her access to reading materials, clothes and vitamins brought by her family.


On 22 February 2020, prosecution and intelligence officials visited Narges Mohammadi in Zanjan's prison, and informed her that she is facing several national security-related charges in connection to her human rights activism inside prison. The activities cited as "evidence" included issuing statements condemning the death penalty, prolonged solitary confinement, and other forms of torture or ill-treatment and the killings of protesters in November 2019. The authorities also informed her that they have opened a second criminal case against her for "causing disruption in prison" and "libel against the head of Evin prison". The former charge is for holding a sit-in with other prisoners in Evin prison between 21 and 24 December 2019 to protest the killings of protesters in November 2019. The latter charge is in relation to a complaint that she filed in December 2019 against the head of Evin prison, alleging that, he and several other prison officials subjected her to verbal abuses, death threats, and beatings during her transfer to Zanjan prison, resulting in bruises on her body.

Danish PEN has repeatedly been calling on the Iranian authorities to release Narges Mohammadi as we believe she is imprisoned for the peaceful exercise of her right to freedom of expression. We urge you to release her immediately and unconditionally. Pending her release, we urge to immediately provide her with the health care she needs outside prison, end her unsafe placement in Zanjan prison, and return her to the

Evin prison. While imprisoned, please ensure that she is granted access to her family, including telephone calls with her children, and that she is protected from torture and other ill-treatment. Her allegations of torture and other ill-treatment must be promptly investigated by an independent and impartial body.

We wish to see this brave woman set free, along with all those detained for exercising their right to freedom of expression, and to see that the right to freedom of expression in Iran is fully respected in law and practice as provided for under Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to which Iran is a state party.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Per Øhrgaard', with a large, sweeping initial 'P'.

Per Øhrgaard, President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Mille Rode', written in a cursive style.

Mille Rode, general secretary