



## Nowruz Action

### کارزار نوروز

The Iranian holiday Nowruz نوروز (“new day”) is an ancient holiday celebrated on the first day of spring in the northern hemisphere to welcome in the new year. On this Nowruz we want to remember several courageous prisoners of conscience and prisoners held for politically motivated reasons in Iran with Nowruz greetings. We ask you to send cards with simple Nowruz greetings such as “Nowruz mobarak” نوروز مبارک. You can say “thinking of you at Nowruz time” or “hoping you are well.” You may send a greeting in either English or Farsi (Persian) but please do not mention Amnesty International or specifics of the recipient’s case. Please also refrain from mentioning the political situation, human rights or U.S.-Iran relations. We suggest sending cards with pictures of landscapes, spring flowers or the like, in keeping with the spirit of the holiday and the message of hope and renewal. Please do not choose cards that have pictures of people, and please do not use cards that depict bottles of wine or other alcoholic beverages or gambling.

Traditional Nowruz celebrations include the preparation of a Haft Sin table which literally means the seven s’s. Seven items beginning with the Persian letter Sin (equivalent to the English s) and which represent spring time are set out. To honor this tradition, this year Amnesty International has selected seven cases, prisoners of conscience and prisoners held for politically motivated reasons, who have been identified by Amnesty International as “individuals at risk” and are therefore targeted for intensified campaigning. Several of them have been sentenced to long prison terms for their peaceful activism and several are in poor health.

We are requesting that people take pictures of their Nowruz cards, or of themselves holding up their cards before putting them in the mail and sending the pictures to us (aiis@uchicago.edu or afandino@aiusa.org). Please post them on your social media , tagging Amnesty International’s Iran Twitter and Instagram accounts (@AmnestyIran and <https://www.instagram.com/amnestyiran/>) so that we can retweet and share your messages.

Our previous Nowruz actions have been very successful! Atena Daemi, featured in the 2019 Nowruz action, was released from prison in January 2022. Arash Sadeghi, featured in several recent Nowruz actions, including the one last year, was released in May 2021. Others featured in previous Nowruz actions who have been released from prison thanks to the persevering efforts of many committed activists include Omid Kokabee, Bahareh Hedayat, Atena Farghadani, Majid Tavakkoli, Mansour Ossanlu, Emadeddin Baghi, Abdolfattah Soltani, Mohammad Sadiq Kabudvand, and brothers Kamiar and Arash Alaei. Kamiar and Arash related how they were given a brief medical furlough from prison and went back to their parents’ house to find hundreds of Nowruz cards sent to them by Amnesty activists and how much that cheered them up and gave them the strength to go on. Omid Kokabee also received hundreds of Nowruz greetings and he and his family thanked Amnesty members profusely. This action really matters! Please see next pages.

## Zeynab Jalalian



Iranian Kurdish activist Zeynab Jalalian, aged 40, who is serving a life sentence following a grossly unfair trial, is being deliberately prevented from receiving specialized medical care despite her deteriorating health, including lung damage and respiratory problems as a result of having contracted Covid-19 in June 2020. Authorities have conditioned access to proper medical care and transfer back to a prison closer to her family on her making a videotaped “confession” and on agreeing to work with the Ministry of Intelligence.

Zeynab Jalalian was arrested in 2008 as a result of her work to empower Iran’s ethnic minority Kurds, particularly women; for supporting the Kurdish struggle for self determination, and for her association with the political wing of the Kurdish opposition group Party for Free Life of Kurdistan (PJAK) which also has an armed wing. She was sentenced to death in early 2009 by Branch One of the Revolutionary Court in Kermanshah Province after a grossly unfair trial that last only a few minutes. She was convicted of “enmity against God” (*moharebeh*)—a charge levelled against those accused of taking up arms against the state—based on her former connection with the political wing of PJAK. She was sentenced based on “confessions” she said were made after enduring months of torture and without any evidence linking her to armed activities. She was also denied access to a lawyer in solitary confinement during pre-trial detention. Her death sentence was commuted to life in prison in late 2011.

In addition to the after effects of Covid-19, Zeynab Jalalian suffers from the severe eye condition pterygium and urgently needs specialist surgery. She also suffers from blood pressure dips and spikes, heart, intestinal and kidney problems as well as an oral thrush condition. Authorities have transferred her to four different prisons in the last several months, and she is currently in Yazd Prison, nearly 900 miles from her family.

In April 2016 the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention urged the Iranian authorities to release Zeynab Jalalian immediately and accord her an enforceable right to compensation

Nowruz greetings to Zeynab Jalalian can be sent:

Yazd Prison  
Women’s Ward  
End of Imam Street, After Imam Reza Square, Opposite Imam Janab Terminal  
Yazd, Yazd Province  
Islamic Republic of Iran

## Narges Mohammadi



Narges Mohammadi is a distinguished and passionate defender of human rights. She was vice-president of the Center for Human Rights Defenders (CHRD) which reported on violations of human rights in Iran provided *pro-bono* legal representation to political prisoners and support to their families before it was forcibly closed by the Iranian authorities in December 2008. The Center was co-founded with prominent human rights attorneys, including Iran’s Nobel Peace Prize laureate Shirin Ebadi. Narges Mohammadi also founded the campaign Step by Step to Stop Death Penalty, a group advocating for abolition of the death penalty in Iran.

In November 2021 she was arrested while attending a memorial service for people killed by Iranian security forces during nationwide protests in November 2019. In January 2022, following a grossly unfair trial that lasted just five minutes, a Revolutionary court convicted her on charges including “gathering and colluding to commit crimes against national security” and “disrupting public order” and sentenced her to eight years and two months in prison, 74 lashes and bans on her activities. This sentence is in addition to a sentence imposed in May 2021--of 30 months in prison, 80 lashes, and a fine-- for “spreading propaganda against the system.” She was notified that she would be required to serve a sentence imposed on her in May 2021 of 30 months in prison and 80 lashes on charges of “spreading propaganda against the system.” On 19 January 2022 she was transferred to Qarchak Prison which is notorious for its poor conditions.

Narges Mohammadi had been imprisoned previously, including a stretch from May 2015 to October 2020; “evidence” that had been used to convict her included her media interviews about human rights; her participation in gatherings outside prisons before executions to support the families of death row prisoners; her connections with other human rights defenders including Shirin Ebadi; and her meeting with Catherine Ashton, the former European Union’s High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. For many years, Narges Mohammadi has not been able to see her fifteen-year-old twins or her husband Taghi Rahmani who live in Paris. She suffers from a number of serious health problems, including a condition that can cause seizures, for which she requires specialized treatment that she cannot receive in prison. In February 2022 she required hospitalization and surgery for a blockage in an artery.

You can send Nowruz greetings for Narges Mohammadi to her husband and children:

Mr Taghi Rahmani  
c/o Iran Team/Amnesty International/ International Secretariat  
1 Easton Street  
London WC1X 0DW, United Kingdom

## **Niloufar Bayani**



Wildlife conservationist Niloufar Bayani is a prisoner of conscience, sentenced to prison solely for her peaceful scientific and conservation activities, such as research on Iran's endangered wildlife. She is one of eight scientists who were convicted and sentenced to prison terms, ranging between four to ten years, on baseless charges of "cooperating with hostile states against the Islamic Republic."

Ms Bayani, aged 34, earned a Masters Degree in Conservation Biology from Columbia University and then worked as a consultant for the UN Environment Program in Geneva before returning to Iran in 2017 to work for the Persian Wildlife Heritage Foundation (PWHF), a non-profit organization that was operating in Tehran with the permission of the Iranian government.

Nine scientists who had worked with the PWHF and had been conducting research on Iran's endangered animals, including the Asiatic cheetah and Persian leopard were arbitrarily arrested by Iran's Revolutionary Guards in January 2018. One of them, Kavous Seyed-Emami, a Canadian-Iranian scientist and academic, died in custody under suspicious circumstances in Evin prison two weeks after his arrest. The eight scientists' closed trial in a Revolutionary Court in Tehran began on 30 January 2019 and was grossly unfair; the evidence against them was almost entirely "confessions they reported were made under torture and later retracted. Their prison terms were confirmed by an appeals court in February 2020.

Following their arrests, the conservationists were held incommunicado in Section 2-A of Evin prison, under the control of the Revolutionary Guards, without access to a lawyer and with very limited family contact. Niloufar Bayani told the court that she only made a "confession" after she was "broken" through physical and psychological torture and that she later retracted her "confession". She said interrogators threatened to beat her, inject her with hallucinogenic drugs, pull out her fingernails and arrest her parents.

The PWHF began using wildlife camera traps, deployed by researchers around the world, to track the intensely shy Asiatic cheetah amid concerns about its eroding natural habitat, which is threatened by Iran's expanding mining sector and growing road network. The cheetahs now number fewer than 50. The authorities accused the eight scientists of using scientific and environmental projects, such as tracking the Asiatic cheetah with cameras, as a cover to collect classified military information, even though the use of cameras is a standard tool used by conservationists to monitor rare and endangered species.

In May 2018, a governmental committee consisting of the ministers of intelligence, interior and justice and the president's legal deputy looked into detention of the conservationists and concluded that there was no evidence to suggest they were spies. A number of senior officials in

the Iranian government, including from the department of the environment, have called for the scientists' release citing a lack of evidence against them. The conservationists' imprisonment has been widely condemned by international environmentalist and human rights organizations including the UN and renowned primatologist Jane Goodall among 131 other conservationists.

Nowruz greetings to Niloufar Bayani can be sent to:

Niloufar Bayani  
c/o Andrew Fandino  
Amnesty International USA  
600 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE, 5th Floor  
Washington, DC 20003

## Ali Younesi and Amirhossein Moradi



Iranian university students Ali Younesi, 21 and Amirhossein Moradi,<sup>22</sup> have been arbitrarily detained in section 209 of Tehran's Evin prison since 10 April 2020, and are at risk of being convicted in a grossly unfair trial of spurious charges, including one that carries the death penalty. Following their arrests, Ministry of intelligence agents beat them and held them in prolonged solitary confinement in harsh conditions to extract forced “confessions”. They are prisoners of conscience targeted for exercising their right to family life.

Ali Younesi revealed to his family that he had been denied adequate healthcare for injuries to his left eye sustained during beatings by Military of Intelligence agents and that lights in his cell were turned on 24 hours a day, which left him with no sense of day or night and caused him distress and pain. Amirhossein Moradi reported being beaten harshly during his arrest. Ministry of Intelligence agents repeatedly interrogated them without their lawyers present and forced them to make “confessions” which were broadcast on state television in December 2021—a violation of their right to a fair trial. During a hearing before Branch 29 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran held on 3 July 2021, they were accused of “corruption on earth” (*efsad-e fel-arz*), which carries the death penalty, “gathering and colluding to commit crimes against national security” and “spreading propaganda against the system”. The authorities accused them of ties to “counterrevolutionary” groups apparently based on their families’ real or perceived association with the People’s Mojahedin Organization of Iran, an opposition group based outside of Iran. Authorities also made spurious accusations of having found “explosive devices” in their possession. Both students denied these accusations. Their interrogators also accused them of removing posters of Iranian officials and participating in peaceful protests in January 2020.

Ali Younesi and Amirhossein Moradi are award-winning students at Sharif University of Technology in Tehran. Ali Younesi is a silver and gold medal recipient in Iran’s National Astronomy Olympiad and the 2018 gold medal winner in the International Astronomy and Astrophysics Olympiad held in China. Amirhossein Moradi is the silver medal recipient in Iran’s National Astronomy Olympiad. Nobel laureates and scientific and human rights organizations including the Committee of Concerned Scientists have called for the release of the two students.

Nowruz greetings for Ali Younesi and Amirhossein Moradi can be sent to Ali’s sister:

c/o Aida Younesi  
5 Shelbourne Park Mews  
25 Ringsend Road  
Dublin D04CX37 IRELAND

## Farhad Meysami



Farhad Meysami is a physician and women’s rights defender who has been sentenced to six years in prison after being convicted of “spreading propaganda against the system” and “gathering and colluding to commit crimes against national security” for his support of the campaign against forced veiling. During his arrest in July 2018 security forces found badges that read “I am against forced *hijab*” in his possession. He was also charged with “insulting Islamic sanctities” because, according to the authorities, he “insulted” the *hijab*. In January 2019 his lawyer was notified that Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran sentenced him to six years imprisonment. He was also banned from social, political and internet activities, from contacting the media, and from travelling abroad for two years.

On 9 November 2019, Farhad Meysami was transferred to Raja’i Shahr prison in Karaj, where he has been subjected to punitive measures including being held isolated in a room equipped with multiple surveillance cameras and having his access to natural light and fresh air restricted to only one hour each day. This was done in apparent reprisal after he wrote an open letter, along with trade unionists Mohammad Habibi, on 21 October 2019, about what they described as a “new wave of abuse” in Evin prison targeting prisoners of conscience.

In a letter from prison, Dr. Meysami explained that he was not demanding anything for himself. “I would gladly accept any prison sentence even in exile or under any other difficult conditions,” he wrote. “My only strict demand for ending my hunger strike is [for authorities to] drop the charges against [co-defendant] Mr. Reza Khandan and restore the warmth of his presence to his home and to his children.” An op-ed in the *Washington Post* in December 2018 said, “Meysami is a modern-day Mahatma Gandhi, dedicated to nonviolence, courageous in his defense of transcendent moral values — human rights in Iran and particularly equality for Iranian women — and ascetic in his aversion to worldly profits.” In October 2020, VOA News reported that Dr. Meysami had tested positive for Covid-19, as had many other prisoners in Iran.

Nowruz greetings to Farhad Meysami can be sent to:

Farhad Meysami  
c/o Andrew Fandino  
Amnesty International USA  
600 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE, 5th Floor  
Washington, DC 20003

## Ahmadreza Djalali



Dr. Ahmadreza Djalali, an Iranian-born Swedish citizen and specialist in emergency medicine, was sentenced to death in October 2017 after a grossly unfair trial. He was convicted of “spreading corruption on earth” (*efsad-e fel arz*) for spying. He barely escaped an execution scheduled to take place on December 1, 2020 after an international outcry, including a letter signed by 153 Nobel science prize laureates. He is being held in Evin Prison and remains at risk of execution.

Dr. Djalali, was involved in improving hospitals’ emergency responses to armed terrorism and to radiological, chemical and biological threats and was a researcher at the Karolinska Institute of Medicine in Stockholm. He was on a trip to Iran at the invitation of Tehran University to speak about disaster medicine when he was arrested in April 2016 and subsequently held in Evin prison by Ministry of Intelligence officials for seven months, three of them in solitary confinement. He has said that during this period he did not have access to a lawyer and was subjected to torture and other ill-treatment to “confess” to being a spy. He was accused of providing information to Israel that was allegedly used in the assassination of several Iranian scientists. Iranian state television aired the forced “confession” in December 2017. His death sentence was confirmed by the Supreme Court the same month.

In an August 2017 letter written from inside Evin prison, Ahmadreza Djalali said he was held solely in reprisal for his refusal to use his scholastic and work ties in European academic and other institutions to spy for Iran. He wrote that he was asked by the Iranian authorities in 2014 to “cooperate with them to identify and gather intelligence from EU states...My answer was ‘no’ and I told them that I am just a scientist, not a spy.”

Dr. Djalali has suffered a number of severe health problems in prison. Amnesty International calls for Dr. Djalali’s conviction and sentence to be quashed, and for him to be immediately released and afforded an enforceable right to compensation, per the recommendation of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention. In a November 2017 letter, 175 Nobel Prize laureates called on Iranian authorities to release Dr. Djalali and in December 2018 Amnesty International distributed an open letter signed by 124 Nobel laureates to Iran’s supreme leader calling for his release at the Nobel Prize ceremony in Stockholm. Ahmadreza Djalali was honored with the Scholars at Risk 2021 Courage to Think Award in December 2021.

Nowruz greetings for Ahmadreza Djalali can be sent to his wife Vida Mehrannia:

Brunnsgränd 6  
Täby 18773  
Sweden

## **Saba Kordafshari**



Women’s rights defender Saba Kordafshari, aged 24, is serving a lengthy prison sentence for campaigning against Iran’s discriminatory and abusive forced veiling laws and other peaceful human rights activism. In August 2019 a Revolutionary Court sentenced her to 24 years in prison for “inciting and facilitating corruption and prostitution” through promoting “unveiling,” “gathering and colluding to commit crimes against national security,” and “spreading propaganda against the system.” In November 2019, her sentence was reduced on appeal to nine years, in May 2020 she learned that judicial authorities had unlawfully and secretly increased her prison sentence back to 24 years by altering the previous appeal court verdict, and then in March 2021 a Tehran Court of Appeals reduced her sentence to 15 years, of which she must serve half.

Saba Kordafshari’s lower court trial was grossly unfair – she was not permitted to meet with her lawyer for over two months after her arrest. She was also barred from adequately preparing her defense as her lawyer was not permitted to review the court file until the day of trial on 19 August 2019 and was provided just one day’s notice of her trial date.

Following her arrest in June 2019, Saba Kordafshari was held in prolonged solitary confinement for 11 days in Vozara detention center in Tehran where she was questioned about her communications with the Human Rights Activists News Agency. She was also put under repeated pressure to denounce on camera the White Wednesdays campaign against compulsory veiling laws and denounce Masih Alinejad, a US-based Iranian journalist and founder of the White Wednesdays campaign. In August 2019 she was moved to Shahr-e Rey (Qarchak) prison, where women convicted of serious violent crimes are held in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions.

While in prison, she was pressured to give forced “confessions” and interrogators threatened to arrest her mother, women’s rights defender Raheleh Ahmadi, if she did not “co-operate”. On 10 July 2019, the authorities carried out their threat and arrested Raheleh Ahmadi. Saba Kordafshari subsequently told her family that she had been held in an interrogation room with a sack over her head blocking her sight for much of the day when suddenly she could hear her mother being interrogated nearby. That is when she realized the Revolutionary Guards had carried through with their threat to arrest her mother, and she was forced to provide a “confession” before a camera. In August 2019 Saba Kordafshari was transferred to the women’s ward of Evin prison but was sent back to Shahr-e Rey in December 2020. She reportedly contracted Covid-19 in March 2021.

Nowruz greetings to Saba Kordafshari can be sent to:

c/o Andrew Fandino  
Amnesty International USA  
600 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE, 5th Floor  
Washington, DC 20003