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Iran - Sarvenaz Ahmadi and Kamyar Fakour denied amnesty

On 20 August 2023, the lawyer of human rights defenders **Sarvenaz Ahmadi** and **Kamyar Fakour** [announced](#) that the human rights defenders have been denied amnesty due to their alleged “membership in hostile groups with the intention of toppling the Islamic Republic.” In addition, another suspended sentence of two years in prison has come into effect for Kamyar Fakour from an indictment on the charge of “disturbing the public opinion” issued by Branch 26 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court in 2021.

[Sarvenaz Ahmadi](#) is a social worker and children's rights defender. She has volunteered and worked as a social worker with different grassroots NGOs working towards the protection of children's and women's rights in the most marginalised neighbourhoods in Tehran. [Kamyar Fakour](#) is a journalist working on environmental issues and a labour rights defender. He was previously arrested in March 2021 during a peaceful protest about labourers' wages. The human rights defender is additionally known for his music production on social media. They were both detained on 6 November 2022, only three weeks after their wedding, in the context of September 2022 nationwide protests in Iran. The human rights defenders were arrested twice after the 2022 nationwide protests broke out, as a reprisal for their human rights work. Sarvenaz Ahmadi and Kamyar Fakour are currently serving prison sentences in Evin prison.

On 20 August 2023, the lawyer of Sarvenaz Ahmadi and Kamyar Fakour announced that the human rights defenders' appeal request for amnesty was rejected on the grounds of their alleged “membership in hostile groups with the intention of toppling the Islamic Republic,” as per Article C of the amnesty directive. In addition, another suspended sentence to two years in prison has arbitrarily come into effect for Kamyar Fakour from an indictment on the charge of “disturbing the public opinion” issued by Branch 26 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court in 2021. The human rights defenders' lawyer has requested a retrial at the Supreme Court due to irregularities in the process and the exclusion of the human rights defenders from the amnesty scheme. In February 2023, on the occasion of 44th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, hundreds of prisoners, including [human rights defenders](#) who were detained on similar charges, were released from prison as part of a general amnesty announced by the Iranian judiciary.

On 25 October 2022, Branch 15 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court sentenced Sarvenaz Ahmadi to five years in prison on the charge of “gathering and colluding with the intention of acting against national security” and one year in prison on the charge of “propaganda activities against state.” According to the same verdict, Kamyar Fakour was sentenced to one year prison on the charges of “gathering and colluding with the intention of acting against national security” and “propaganda activities against state.” On 5 March 2023, the court of appeals had reduced Sarvenaz Ahmadi's prison sentence to three years and six months and that of Kamyar Fakour to eight months. However, according to their [lawyer](#), the verdict stated that the “aforementioned people are not entitled to the supreme leader amnesty,” a clause which the human rights defenders appealed. In addition, Sarvenaz Ahmadi requested a leave of absence from prison to work on her dissertation, which has also been rejected in August 2023. On 26 July 2023, eleven grassroots NGOs working on children's rights in Iran [raised](#) their concerns at the continuous judicial harassment facing the woman human rights defender, particularly highlighting the unfair arbitrary detention of a children's rights defender and social researcher.

Front Line Defenders has expressed its deep concern [several times](#) about the mass crackdown against human rights defenders in Iran in the context of the protests which broke out after 18 September 2022. Front Line Defenders condemns the unfair application of the amnesty scheme against human rights defenders who were arrested, charged and subjected to hefty prison sentences, in the context of the September 2022 protests, without adherence to due process of fair trials. Front Line Defenders remains concerned at the attacks, human rights abuses and criminalisation that human rights defenders have suffered in Iran, as it believes they are being detained as a result of their legitimate and peaceful human rights work in the country.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Iran to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Sarvenaz Ahmadi and Kamyar Fakour and quash the convictions against them as Front Line Defenders believes they have been targeted solely as a result of their legitimate human rights work, especially in regard to their advocacy for children's and labour rights;
2. Ensure that the treatment of Sarvenaz Ahmadi and Kamyar Fakour while in detention adheres to the conditions set out in the United Nations 'Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment', including non-discriminatory access to the amnesty scheme;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that human rights defender are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisal and free of all restrictions, including judicial harassment.