



Siamak Pourzand in Modares Hospital ©Kayhan (London)

Please sign the petition for his release.

Ask travel permission for him to come to Canada to his family members to get proper medical and health care.

pourzandcampaign@yahoo.ca

Siamak Pourzand

A 74 years old Iranian journalist in jail needs an urgent help.



Siamak Pourzand, 74 years old Iranian journalist, intellectual and manager of Majmue-ye Farhangi-ye Honari-ye Tehran (The Tehran Art and Cultural Centre), disappeared in Tehran on Saturday, 24 November 2001. On May 3, 2002 the Tehran Press Court reportedly sentenced him to 11 years in prison on charges of "undermining state security through his links with monarchists and counter-revolutionaries. Now Pourzand is in a hospital in Tehran after suffering a heart attack in last March and lapsing to coma for few days. He needs four different urgent surgeries on his spinal, kidney, leg and prostate.

SP00135

amnesty international

**-PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE APPEAL CASE -
Siamak Pourzand: a case study of flagrant human rights
violations**

May 2004 AI INDEX: MDE 13025/2004

Photo caption: Siamak Pourzand in Modarres Hospital (Kashan (London))

Siamak Pourzand, (aged 74), Head of *Al-Majma'iyeh Farhangiyeh Honariyeh Tehran* (The Tehran Artistic and Cultural Centre) and an occasional newspaper correspondent is a prisoner of conscience. He is serving an 11 year sentence imposed after a grossly unfair and politically motivated trial in connection with oral statements he allegedly made about Iran's political leaders. Amnesty International fears that the activities of his wife, Mehrnoosh Kar, a human rights defender currently outside Iran, may have exacerbated the treatment of Siamak Pourzand. He has urgent medical requirements for which he recently started to receive specialist care. It remains to be seen whether this will be adequate. Amnesty International (AI) is calling for his immediate and unconditional release with a view to a full review of the charges and sentence he faced.

Arrest and incommunicado detention

On 21 November 2001, Siamak Pourzand was arrested in central Tehran, at around 9 o'clock in the evening. He had just left his sister's apartment. The family initially thought that he had "disappeared" as there was no official acknowledgment that he had been detained. On 7 December 2001 one of his sisters, Milatin Pourzand, was reportedly requested to bring a change of clothes for him to an office of the *Edare-ye Amakbeh*, or Bureau of Prisons. The *Edare-ye Amakbeh* is reportedly responsible for the enforcement of accepted moral codes in places of work and other offices. When she asked where her brother was held and when he had been charged with, she was reportedly told that it was none of her business.

Place of detention unknown

On 12 or 13 January 2002, this sister was permitted to meet with him for the first time at the *Edare-ye Amakbeh*. The meeting reportedly lasted 10 minutes and Siamak Pourzand, who arrived by car from an unknown location, reportedly appeared afraid and weak. No further information about his whereabouts was disclosed until 16 May 2002, when according to reports Siamak Pourzand was transferred to Evin Prison. However, according to his family, he was only transferred to Evin Prison after his first temporary release.

Unfair trial

Siamak Pourzand reportedly made a "confession" in the first session of his closed trial on 7 March 2002. He was denied free and unfettered access to a lawyer of his choice, and he was reportedly ill-treated during his interrogation.

He was sentenced to 11 years' imprisonment.

On 9 July 2002 the Tehran Appeals Court upheld the sentence. In a televised "confession" broadcast by the state media on 25 July 2002, he reportedly looked frail and seemed to have lost at least 30 kg. He also "confessed" to a range of accusations including "having links with monarchists and counter-revolutionaries", "spying and undermining state security" and "creating disturbance among young people".

Siamak Pourzand was temporarily released from prison on 30 November 2002 due to his poor health. During his release, he stayed at his sister's residence where he reportedly confirmed that he was detained in solitary confinement in an unknown prison.

Return to prison

In March 2003, Siamak Pourzand was sent to Evin Prison, possibly by agents of *Edare-ye Amakbeh*. He was reportedly urged to implicate other individuals in acts about which he did not know and to take part in a television program reported to have been prepared to show which artists "had acted against Iran". He reportedly refused. He was later sent home. In April 2003, Siamak Pourzand was summoned to a court where he was reportedly asked again whether he would "cooperate" and appear in the television program referred to above. After having refused once again, he was sent with two guards to his sister's residence where he received personal effects - save for medicine he requires - and he was taken to Evin Prison.

Medical concerns

Around May 2003, Siamak Pourzand wrote to the Head of the Judiciary, Ayatollah Shahroudi, explaining his medical condition. Attached to his letter were reports supporting his need for an operation. These reports were supported by doctors working for the judiciary.

According to a diagnosis given on 30 July 2003 at the Imam Khomeini Hospital in Tehran Siamak Pourzand is suffering from spinal stenosis (a condition in which the spinal canal narrows and pinches the spinal cord and nerve root, possibly leading to paralysis) which requires a surgical intervention. He is unable to walk and to attend to his

This is an urgent appeal by Syamak Pourzand's immediate family to save his life. At 73 and suffering from a number of serious ailments, he has been sentenced by the courts of the Islamic republic of Iran to 11 years of imprisonment on groundless political charges. He is currently held in the underground cell of Detention Center no. 1, notorious for its harsh conditions and lack of minimum sanitary and medical facilities. By all indications, many of his progressive physical disabilities and psychological traumas have been directly or indirectly caused by the cruel treatment he has received in nearly two years of imprisonment including months of solitary confinement.

According to a medical report issued, on 30th July 2003, by the government-affiliated Imam Khomeini's Diagnostic Medical Center, Syamak Pourzand suffers from a number of serious ailments including "advanced severe degenerative changes in his spinal discs particularly cervical spine with clear evidence of nerve impingement that has caused constant refractory pain in his neck and lower back. He has limited mobility and is unable to sleep due to persistent pain."

Furthermore, an orthopedic surgeon has certified that he is in urgent need of "immediate spinal surgery." A copy of these reports on my husband's deteriorating physical state has been sent to the office of Mr. Shahroodi, the head of the judicial branch of the Islamic Republic of Iran. So far, his office has not responded to repeated appeals for a temporary release of Pourzand on medical grounds.

At present, he has lost nearly all mobility and is virtually unable to perform the most routine of physical functions on his own. His very survival depends on having access to extended medical and rehabilitative care that is denied him by the authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

I hope that Amnesty International, cognizant of the severity of Syamak Pourzand's ailments, will take up his case and impress upon the appropriate authorities in Iran to permit his access to proper medical care. I also hope that The Human Rights Watch and other international organizations engaged in promoting and safeguarding human rights across the globe would also act upon our plea and see to it that he receives the urgently needed treatment before it is too late.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Persian, English, French or your own language:

- expressing concern for the health and safety of Siamak Pourzand;
- urging the authorities to be grant him immediate and unconditional access to the medical treatment that he needs;
- asking them to give him regular access to his family;
- seeking assurances that Siamak Pourzand is not being ill-treated or tortured in custody;
- expressing concern that Siamak Pourzand appears to be a prisoner of conscience, arrested solely for the peaceful expression of his beliefs; and if this is the case, he should be released immediately and unconditionally;
- urging the authorities to end the practice of solitary confinement, in line with recommendations made by the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD) following its visit to Iran in February 2003 (UN document E/CN.4/2004/3/Add.2), which noted that "such imprisonment within imprisonment" is arbitrary in nature and must be ended";
- expressing concern that Siamak Pourzand appears to have been sentenced following a trial in which he did not enjoy effective defence, and in which he appeared to have been forced to testify against himself, in violation of Article 38 of Iran's Constitution, which states: "All forms of torture for the purpose of extracting confession or acquiring information are forbidden. Compulsion of individuals to testify, confess, or take an oath is not permissible, and any testimony, confession, or oath obtained under duress is devoid of value and credence. Violation of this article is liable to punishment in accordance with the law."

APPEALS TO:
 Head of the Judiciary
 His Excellency Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi
 Ministry of Justice, Park-e Shahr, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Telegram: Head of the Judiciary, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Fax: +98 21 537 8827 (number may be unreliable; a recorded message in English will indicate when to send fax- please send before it gives you the tone to leave a voice message)
 Or + 98 21 311 6567 (please mark 'For the attention of HE Ayatollah Shajhroudi')
Salutation: Your Excellency

Leader of the Islamic Republic
 His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed Ali Khamenei
 The Presidency, Palestine Avenue, Azarbaijan Intersection,
 Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Telegram: Ayatollah Khamenei, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Fax: +98 21 649 5880 (please mark 'For the attention of the Office of His Excellency, Ayatollah al-Udhma Khamenei, Qom)
webmaster@wilayah.org (on the subject line write: For the attention of the Office of His Excellency, Ayatollah al-Udhma Khamenei, Qom)

COPIES TO:
 Human Rights Office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 Ambassador Mehdi Danesh Yazdi
 Director General, International Legal Affairs
 Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 Sheikh Abdolmajid Keshk-e Mesri Avenue, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Fax: + 98 21 390 1989
 Islamic Human Rights Commission
 Mr Mohammad Hassan Zia'i-Far
 Secretary, Islamic Human Rights Commission
 PO Box 13165-137, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Fax: + 98 21 204 0541
 and to diplomatic representatives of Iran accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat on your section office, if sending appeals after 18 May 2004.

PUBLIC
 AI Index: MDE 13/022/2004
 06 April 2004
 Further Information on UA 298/01 (MDE 13/046/2001, 27 November 2001) and follow-up (MDE 13/014/2001, 12 December 2001; MDE 13/001/2002, 1 February 2002; MDE 13/007/2002, 10 May 2002; MDE 13/011/2002, 31 July 2002) - Health concern/ possible torture or ill-treatment and new concern: fear for safety

IRAN Siamak Pourzand (m), aged 74, Intellectual, Head of *Majmue-ye Farhangi-ye Honari-ye Tehran* (Tehran Artistic and Cultural Centre)

Siamak Pourzand was allowed out of Evin prison on leave in November 2002, but rearrested in April 2003. He has been held in solitary confinement since then, in appalling conditions, and is being denied medical treatment for a condition that will leave him confined to a wheelchair, if left untreated.

Around 31 March 2004, he fell into a coma. He was not treated until another prisoner went to the prison medical facility and insisted that someone examine him. The doctors allegedly told him they had given up on Siamak Pourzand over six months earlier, and would not take responsibility for anything that happened to him. When he insisted, they treated Siamak Pourzand, and after 36 hours in a coma he regained consciousness.

Siamak Pourzand is serving an 11-year sentence, handed down in 2002 after a closed trial that fell short of international standards. In a televised "confession" he admitted to a range of accusations including "having links with monarchists and counter-revolutionaries", "spying and undermining state security" and "creating disillusionment among young people". On 5 April 2004, Tehran's Chief Prosecutor visited him in prison and told him that he would not be released early, reportedly telling him that if he was released he would "make too much noise".

According to a diagnosis given on 30 July 2003 by the *Pazeshk-e Danesh* (a doctor employed by the Judiciary to carry out assessments of prisoners' health), at the Imam Khomeini hospital in Tehran, Siamak Pourzand is suffering from spinal stenosis, a narrowing of the spinal canal which causes pinching of the spinal cord; left untreated, it could lead to organ failure, notably of the bowels and bladder, and paralysis, leaving Siamak Pourzand dependent on a wheelchair. In October 2003, Siamak Pourzand's medical records were reviewed by a doctor in the US who concluded that he required immediate surgery on his spine. To date he has not received medical treatment for this condition.

When he was released on leave in November 2002, he was able to tell members of his family about the conditions he was held in. He was rearrested in April 2003 by agents of the *Ethare-ye Amnaker*, an organisation reportedly responsible for the enforcement of accepted moral codes in companies and other offices. During interrogation he was reportedly urged to implicate film critics detained at that time in unspecified "acts against Iran", to appear in "another television program" possibly a reference to his televised "confession", and to sign a book about singers, artists and film makers who had "acted against Iran". He reportedly refused, and was released. While he was in custody four of his ribs were reportedly broken. Approximately two weeks after his release he was summoned to a court, where he was reportedly asked again whether he would cooperate and appear in the television program. When he refused a second time, he was taken back to Evin prison, stopping first at his sister's house to collect his personal effects, but not the medicine he requires.