



PRESS RELEASE

THE IRAN HUMAN RIGHTS DOCUMENTATION CENTER CONDEMNS IMPRISONMENT OF ALI GOLCHIN

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JUNE 14, 2010

NEW HAVEN - The Iran Human Rights Documentation Center (IHRDC) denounces the detention of Ali Golchin who has reportedly been held in solitary confinement at Evin prison for his religious beliefs since April 29, 2010. He has not been charged.

Golchin, age 29, converted to Christianity several years ago. He has never evangelized, and friends and relatives believe he was detained purely because of his religious beliefs. Golchin holds a B.A. in Chemistry and works with his father in the field of animal husbandry.

On April 29, 2010, agents from the Iranian National police entered Golchin's home in Varamin and confiscated several bibles, his computer, identification cards, and other personal belongings. The police did not allow Golchin to call his father before taking him to an undisclosed location. On April 30, the Intelligence Office in Varamin summoned Golchin's father, a Christian minister, to the local intelligence office. The intelligence agents interrogated him for several hours and threatened to further harm his son if he spoke publically about Golchin's detention. The intelligence agents similarly threatened Golchin's wife.

The authorities have refused to provide any information about Golchin's condition or the reasons for his arrest despite repeated requests by his father and lawyer. Golchin has been allowed only three brief phone calls with his family. During one of these calls, he told his family that he was being held in Evin prison in Tehran. In his latest call, he informed his father that he is suffering from severe stomach pain.

Golchin has been denied legal representation and until recently he was allowed no visitors. After numerous requests his father received permission to visit on June 17.

The Iranian government agreed to respect freedom of religion of all Iranian citizens when it ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. While the government purports to respect religious freedom, it continues to severely mistreat religious minorities. IHRDC is deeply concerned by the prolonged and arbitrary detention of Ali Golchin in the notorious Evin prison and urges the Islamic Republic of Iran to release him immediately.

IHRDC is a nonprofit organization based in New Haven, Connecticut that was founded in 2004 by a group of human rights scholars, activists, and historians. Its staff of human rights lawyers and researchers produce comprehensive and detailed reports on the human rights situation in Iran since the 1979 revolution. The Center has reported on the Iranian government's persecution of Baha'is, another religious minority in Iran. The Center's goal is to encourage an informed dialogue among scholars and the general public in both Iran and abroad. The human rights reports and an archive of documents are available to the public for research and educational purposes at www.iranhrdc.org.

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