



### Witness Statement of Saeed Pourheydar

**Name:** Saeed Pourheydar  
**Place of Birth:** Orumiyeh, Iran  
**Date of Birth:** 1981  
**Occupation:** Journalist

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**Interviewing Organization:** Iran Human Rights Documentation Center (IHRDC)

**Date of Interview:** 14 October 2012

**Interviewer:** IHRDC Staff

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This statement was prepared pursuant to an interview with Saeed Pourheydar. It was approved by Saeed Pourheydar on March 3, 2013. There are 60 paragraphs in the statement.

The views and opinions of the witness expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the Iran Human Rights Documentation Center.

## Statement

### Background

1. I am Saeed Pourheydar, I was born in Orumiyeh in 1981 and I was a resident of Tehran. I was a journalist in Iran for about 12 years. I was first arrested in 2000 when I was 19. Since [that first arrest] and up until the present day I have been detained five times. I worked at a couple of publications in West Azerbaijan Province from 1999-2000, when I became more active in political and social fields, up until I left Orumiyeh in 2006.
2. After the elections in Iran, I was arrested twice. [In the first of the incidents] I was arrested on February 5, 2010, and held in solitary confinement for a month in Section 240. When interrogations ended I was temporarily released. I was arrested again about seven or eight months later, in October 2010 and held in Section 350 of Evin prison for precisely 52 days.
3. I began working as a journalist in 2000. At the time I lived in Orumiyeh and worked for a number of weekly publications in West Azerbaijan, such as *Farday-e Ma*, *Navid-e Azerbaijan*, and others. I also worked as a journalist at the provincial branches of some national newspapers such as *Hambastegi*, *Mardomsalari*, *Sobh-e Emrooz* and others. Meanwhile I was also involved in journalism, politics and active with different organizations. For instance I cooperated with parties which had representative offices in the province such as the *Mosharekat* Party [The Islamic Iran Participation Front] and the *Hambastegi* Party [Islamic Iran Solidarity Party].<sup>1</sup> I was also active in social causes as a secretary and/or member of the board of directors of certain NGOs.
4. I came to Tehran in 2006 and I started working at newspapers. And I continued my cooperation with the political parties that I was connected with in Orumiyeh.
5. After the 2009 election, I, like many other people, participated in all the street protests. At the same time, I was also blogging and published all the news about the demonstrations. This had a good impact and media outside Iran welcomed my blog as a news source inside Iran. I also gave interviews with Voice of America television, BBC Persian Service, Radio Farda and a number of other media outlets to provide information about what was happening in the streets.

### First detention after the presidential election in 2009

6. On February 5, 2010, there was a gathering in Behest-e Zahra cemetery to mark the 40th day since the killings after the election. It was a Friday and I was supposed to meet a friend to go there together. I used to go to all the events with this friend. I made an appointment to pick my friend up in my car at 8 a.m. in the morning to go to Behesht-e Zahra.
7. Agents followed me from my house with the intention to arrest both of us. I arrived at my friend's home and when we drove to the next street, a car stopped in front of and another behind my car. It was as if they wanted to catch a fugitive killer. Eight armed plain-clothed agents of the Intelligence Ministry detained us with utmost violence. I was handcuffed immediately. My foot was injured as I was dragged on the ground.
8. My friend was put in one car and I was put in another. My car was left in the middle of the street.

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<sup>1</sup> These parties are reformist-leaning parties in Iran.

They took us to a parking lot at the Argentina Terminal before taking me to my house and conducting a search. Usually a couple of hundred cars are parked at the terminal but it was a Friday and not very busy. They parked in between the cars. I could see my friend in the other car from a distance. Right there in the Argentina parking lot, they started to beat us and curse at us.

9. One of the agents held a camera and they demanded a confession. They said I had to make a choice: admit I am working for the Mojahedin-e Khalgh [MEK] or the Monarchist Society. They said I must claim responsibility on behalf of one of these two groups and confess. I refused and I was severely beaten in the car and pistol-whipped. The beatings went on for ten minutes. I could see my friend was being treated the same way. Later on when we were released my friend told me the same things happened to them as well. Then someone got out of the other car and whispered something in the ear of the driver of the car I was in. I don't know what was said but they stopped filming and drove toward my house.
10. It was 8:30 or 9 a.m. in the morning when I was arrested. All of this took place within an hour or hour and a half. When we got out of the Argentina Terminal parking lot they took me to my house. Four armed agents searched my house for about an hour. They collected and took inventory of a lot of my books, writings, CDs and tapes, even my fax machine and everything else they could get their hands on—and took them away. They filmed all this. Then they put me inside the car again. They told my family not to tell anyone about my arrest. They said if I cooperate, and my family does not speak a word, I could go free sooner.
11. One of the four agents who arrested me was a young boy who wore glasses. He was tall and had a beard. He played the role of the “good guy” in this story.<sup>2</sup> He was also the first person to interrogate me. But after the interrogation I did not see him again. Another younger agent, who was well-built, made a lot of threats. He kept waving his gun. He made more threats when we were inside my house. He stood a certain way to make sure I could see his gun, so as to scare me. There were two other agents who seemed very experienced. They looked like they were 40-45 years old. One of them had lost most of his hair and had a round face. These two older agents looked very much alike.
12. They were so violent that it was impossible to speak to them before we reached my house. Inside the house they were a bit calmer. I asked if they had a warrant? They showed me a general order from the prosecutor's office to the Intelligence Ministry giving them permission to detain anyone taking part in protests. There was no name on it and they did not allow me to see the date. He held up the order in his hand. They had introduced themselves as agents of the Intelligence Ministry. Then they took me from the house to Evin prison.

### **Evin Prison, Section 240**

13. During the entire time [of transfer from my house to Evin] my eyes were open until we reached the Evin prison gate. As soon as we reached Evin two agents blindfolded me and told me to keep my head down. An iron gate opened and we entered the prison. They took me inside a building. From that point on I remained blindfolded until my release, with the exception of the time I spent

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<sup>2</sup> According to witnesses that IHRDC has interviewed about interrogations they were subjected to while in detention or imprisoned, many claim that interrogators took on “good cop”/“bad cop” roles—that is one interrogator would typically play the role of the understanding, caring and more reasonable questioner while the other interrogator would treat the detainee/prisoner more harshly with verbal and physical abuse and torture and a more brute style.

inside the cell.

14. Inside the prison I entered a building. They sat me on a chair for about two hours. My medication was in my pocket. (At my house I wanted to take my medication because of my heart problem. They said I could bring it but I would not be able to take the medication inside the cell.) Under the blindfold I could only see feet coming and going. I also saw a number of computer cases with the names of their owners who were arrested earlier. I precisely remember Mohammad Reza Moqiseh's computer because the case was right next to my chair.
15. After two hours someone came and took me inside a room to change my clothes. They gave me prison clothes, a towel, a pair of slippers, a toothbrush, toothpaste, soap and a small bottle of shampoo. I was blindfolded again and taken to another room where they took my photo. Then they took me back to the same room where the computer cases were. I sat there for another half an hour until an agent came and put me inside a Peugeot and drove away. On the way I asked the agent if I was being taken to Section 209 or 240? He said 240.
16. When I entered Section 240, they walked me up the stairs to the second floor and put me in cell number 24. I was in this cell for a month. The area of the cell was about 16 feet by 7 feet, or about 1.5 meters by 2 meters. There was a corroded metal toilet without a lid and a sink in the corner. The room had recently been painted and the fresh smell [of the paint] gave me a headache. I had three army blankets. I used one as a pillow and another as a bed cover.
17. I was only allowed to contact my family once and that was for just one minute on the first night. But they told me I am not allowed to say where I am. I could only tell my family that I am in prison and not to worry. An agent stood by as I was talking on the phone. After that I was not allowed any visits.
18. On one occasion during my detention, they took me to the Section 4 interrogator's office at Evin where I was charged and issued a standard arrest warrant which I signed. I was blindfolded there as well. This was on the day of my arrest or the next day. There were three charges against me: participating in gatherings with the intention of overthrowing the state, causing public disorder by participating in gatherings, and publishing lies in my blog and giving interviews to the media.
19. I spent 27 days in the solitary cell. The last three days was in a suite which was a room that measured 3 x 4 meters, or maybe 2 x 3 meters, with five people in it. One of them was Ehsan Abdoh Tabrizi<sup>3</sup> who had been given a ten-year sentence. Later on I also saw him in Section 350. One of the others was a student from Karaj who had been taken hostage. The Intelligence Ministry agents were looking for his cousin but could not find him so they arrested this man instead and told his family to hand over the cousin. He was held hostage for a month and a half. There was also another prisoner whose name was Hossein who had been sentenced to six months in prison. He had also participated in demonstrations. There was another person in this cell. He was not political at all. All he had done was send a text message to the BBC's sports program.

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<sup>3</sup> Ehsan Abdoh Tabrizi is a PhD candidate of political science in Durham University in England and the son of Hossein Abdoh Tabrizi, the former Secretary General of the Tehran Stock Exchange. He was arrested in 2010 in Imam Khomeini Airport in Tehran while coming back from England.

See: <http://www.dur.ac.uk/news/iran/>

### Phone tapping by the Intelligence Ministry

20. A month before the elections all phone conversations were tapped. I discovered this during interrogations. I had two SIM cards in my name, one was *IranCell* and the other one was *Hamrah-e Avval*. Both of my SIM cards had been tapped. I did not work in secret and I used those phones to give interviews. I also used the same phones to set up meetings. In other words I did not pay attention to security considerations. But I did not use email for any kind of communication.
21. My interrogator once brought up a subject and asked what sort of relationship I had with, let's say, Ms. X. I had never seen the person mentioned by the interrogator. She lived in another city and we only communicated by phone. They could not trace us except through the phone. The reason is that we did not have any internet communication by email, Facebook messages or anything else online. That's how I realized my phone conversations had been recorded. That woman had not been arrested so I don't think she had said anything about our conversations which took place a month or two after the elections.
22. Another example was the conversations I had with two Voice of America and BBC reporters. Those parts of the interviews that were published were available and accessible but my conversations with reporters before and after interviews could not have been known other than by phone surveillance. The reporters had asked to interview me about an Intelligence Ministry directive regarding the cooperation of 60 organizations with foreign countries. I did not agree to an interview but I recommended two others and said they could ask them for an interview and they might agree to talk about this topic. My interrogator mentioned all these conversations to me. The interrogator asked why I had not agreed to give an interview to that reporter and instead introduced this or that person? When he clearly asked me this question I understood that my phone conversations were under surveillance.
23. One specific case I would like to mention is regarding Abdolreza Ghanbari. The only thing they had against him, other than his own confessions which he gave after being tricked and threatened by promises made by his interrogator, was the interview he had given for a couple of minutes to Mojahedin-e Khalgh's Azadi TV. They didn't have anything else against him. He called this TV station on the day of Ashoura [a religious day for Shi'a Muslim]. He received the death sentence because of this interview.<sup>4</sup>
24. They had also told me about a number of phone conversations I had with my family. Unfortunately after the elections certain European companies, such as Nokia and Siemens as well as others whose names I cannot remember, had given the Islamic Republic the technology to easily control telephones.

### Interrogations

25. My first interrogation session lasted 11 hours. I was interrogated a total of five or six times. The second session began from 4-5 p.m. in the afternoon until 10-12 p.m. at night. Another was from 9 a.m. in the morning until 10-11 p.m. at night. Another session was in the morning. They would come from 7-8 a.m. in the morning until the afternoon.

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<sup>4</sup> Abdolreza Ghanbari was sentenced to death for alleged links with the banned opposition group MEK. See e.g., <http://www.amnesty.org/fr/library/asset/MDE13/020/2012/fr/7266c1e7-e08f-443e-be48-38e11fae3ef8/mde130202012en.html>

26. The interrogations had two parts. One concerned my activities before the elections and the other concerned my activities after the elections and the participation in gatherings and contacts with foreign media. They themselves claimed that these are not interrogation sessions. And in fact they were not. It was more like an inquisition, or in their words "clarifying ambiguities".
27. I had three interrogators. The first was part of the group who arrested me. When he came into the room his first question was, "Wherever you go you say you don't believe in *Velayat-e Faqih*.<sup>5</sup> Why is that?" I noticed his voice is very familiar and I told him so. He said I was mistaken and I had never seen him. I lifted the blindfold to write something. I turned around and saw him. He got angry and said I should not have turned around. He didn't come back for the next session. I don't know if it was because I recognized him or for some other reason.
28. I had two other interrogators. One of them only appeared for inquisition-like sessions. The other was very experienced. He had a handle on my case. He studied it and was well-informed about my activities. I could neither see him nor did I know his name. I asked him what name I should call him and he said "Anything you like... Haji, Seyed..." He was very professional. He said they had worked for 6-7 months on my case and a few other cases and eventually decided that I should be arrested. In fact I was more comfortable with this interrogator compared to the one in inquisition sessions. The other interrogator got into annoying theoretical discussions. But this interrogator mostly asked questions about my activities. Overall he wasn't a bad person, although once or twice he got angry and another person came along to help him and broke my teeth, albeit accidentally. Besides this I did not have a particular problem with him.
29. In one of the sessions where the professional interrogator and another one were present the first one asked which "disturbances" I had participated in. I said, "If you mean which gatherings, I was in all of them." He said "You have to put that in writing." They brought an interrogation paper and wrote down, "In which disturbances in Tehran were you present?" [The Persian word for "disturbances" had been misspelled with a "kh" instead of "gh."] They told me to write the answer. I wrote "None." I gave the piece of paper and he became very angry. He said, "You so and so! Didn't you just say you took part in all of them? Do you think this is a joke?" I said, "If you mean whether I was in disturbances with a 'gh' I was in all of them. But I wasn't in any disturbances with a 'kh'." He got very angry and pulled my hair from the back of my head and banged it against the chair handle two or three times. The chair was the type with a hand-rest used in schools. My lips and teeth struck the side of the chair and I broke four of my teeth. They then took me to my cell in that condition, with a bloody mouth, without taking me to the clinic. For two days I was given a painkiller every five or six hours but I was never taken to the clinic.
30. On the 21st day of my detention I went on a hunger strike and I kept it going for six days. I have a weak body and in any case solitary detention makes you lose weight because the meal portions are small and you are under a lot of psychological pressure. There was nothing left of me after the fifth day of the hunger strike.
31. Eventually on the night of the 27th day of my detention they came and asked if I would like to leave my cell and go to another where I would not be alone? I agreed. They came after an hour and a half and took me to the fourth floor inside a suite where I finally saw a few people after 27 days. That was the best night of my life when I saw a few people after 27 days. I was there for three days and then released.

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<sup>5</sup> *Velayat-e Faqih*, or "guardianship of the jurist", is the doctrine of rule in the Islamic Republic of Iran that endows the Supreme Leader with extraordinary powers.

## Freedom

32. My freedom came when a day before my release they came to take me at 8 or 9 p.m. at night. They opened the cell door and told me to contact my family and ask them to bring a property deed for bail. The prison had become very crowded at that time and a few people were set free almost every day. I was on the fourth floor at the end of Section 240 and from there we could see a few people being released every night. Usually they would release people at 10 or 11 p.m. at night. The day after my family bailed me out, they opened my cell at 11 p.m. at night and told me to get ready and wear my blindfold. My friends began to clap and cheer and I said goodbye to them. Then they brought me inside a hall. There were 10 or 12 of us. They put us inside cars and took us to the same place where we had changed clothes on the first day. They handed over my clothes. They said my laptop had to be analyzed. I was blindfolded at all times until we reached the prison gate.
33. After I was released I was summoned twice to the Intelligence Ministry's referrals office. On one occasion, they called me and said I should come to the Intelligence Ministry's referrals office at 2 p.m. in the afternoon. When I went there two agents of the Ministry introduced themselves. One of them was very rude. He was tall and wore glasses. The other was bearded, of medium height, and played the role of the "nice" guy. We talked for about four to six hours. They wanted to scare me. They said they had shown mercy by letting me go after a month and that they could keep me for a much longer time. They told me I should not take part in any activities and cooperate with them. What they really wanted from me was to write a letter of repentance and ask to be pardoned. I said I would not do it. They said they could have detained me but instead I had been summoned there nicely. Still I refused to repent and told them they can detain me if they want to.
34. The second time I was summoned was 20 days before my second detention in 2010. This time they told me I must repent in writing. I refused. They said if I don't they would open a new case against me.

## Second Detention

35. Fifteen days later, on October 4, 2010, I received a summons from the 4th branch of the Shaheed Moghaddas prosecutor's office located in Evin prison. I informed Dr. Dadkhah<sup>6</sup>, my lawyer. He said this was probably related to my first detention and they wanted me to give my final defense and send my file to the court. Since my release I had not done anything at all. My blog had been blocked and I had not given any interviews. I did not want to give them any excuse. My summons stated that I should present myself to provide explanations about certain things. This was my understanding. I did not even say goodbye to my family when I went to the 4th branch of the prosecutor's office on October 9, 2010.
36. The prosecutor's assistant told me there was a new charge against me. I asked—why? I had not taken part in any activities. He said when he studied my file he noticed he had forgotten to include another charge. At that point I realized this was related to the threat by the Intelligence Ministry agents to open a new case against me when I went to see them at the referrals office and

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<sup>6</sup> Mohammadali Dadkhah, a prominent Iranian lawyer, is currently serving a nine year prison sentence at Evin on charges that stem from his defense of clients in politically sensitive cases.

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/iran-must-release-human-rights-defender-mohammad-ali-dadkhah-2012-10-01>

they had demanded a written plea for pardon.

37. I asked the official: what is the charge against me? "Insulting the president," he said. In my blog I had referred to the president as "the head of the coup d'etat government" 52 times, he added. These people have nothing better to do than count each one, I said to myself. My file contained 100 to 150 pages from my blog and they had underlined parts that could lead to charges against me.
38. The official told me I should not be worried. Insulting the president carried a penalty of no more than 300,000 tomans [approximately \$ US 300 in 2010]. He then set bail at 50 million tomans [approximately \$ US 50,000 in 2010]. I said I had paid bail once before but he renewed it and said I could go if I paid the entire 50 million tomans. I said I could not come up with such a sum at that moment and would need at least a day. He said in that case I would be detained until bail was paid.
39. They first took me to the quarantine room at Evin prison. I spent the worst day of my life there. Quarantine is a place where all new prisoners, despite the nature of their crimes, have to spend a couple of nights. Afterwards, they are transferred to other wards. For this reason I spent one night among murderers, addicts, thieves, hustlers and other such prisoners which was the worst mental torture for me. I asked the guard to transfer me to a solitary cell but they kept me there for 24 hours. Political prisoners were usually not kept in quarantine and were taken to Section 350. But they kept three of us there and transferred us to Section 350 the day after.

### **Section 350**

40. When I was transferred to Section 350, I told my friends I probably would not be their "guest" for more than a couple of days and would be released after my bail was paid.
41. Three days later I heard my name and Majid Dorri's paged on the loudspeaker. They said I should wear nice clothes to go to the prosecutor's office. My friends said my bail had probably been paid and I would be freed. I kissed them goodbye and collected letters and messages for their families. I was going to wear shoes but the guard said I should go with slippers. I said my bail had been paid. He said I should go to court and if bail had been paid I would come back and take my belongings.
42. At the prosecutor's office I was told there was a new charge against me. I said how could there be a new charge when I had been in prison for three days? He said after closer examination of my file I had "committed blasphemy and questioned Islamic laws." On what basis? I asked. He said I had written a weblog against stoning. I said: keep me in prison if you want to but don't fabricate charges. He said my bail had been raised to 300 million tomans [approximately \$ US 300,000 in 2010]. I realized they don't want to let me go because I was not released even when the increased bail was going to be paid.
43. I was in Section 350 of Evin prison from October 10, 2010. At that time there were 150 or 160 people imprisoned there. We ran everything ourselves: the library, the store, as well as the sports hall which had been built by our guys. There was a table in this section which we named the "Page Table". Whenever they wanted to count the inmates or needed to call up the inmates for something else they would page them from this table. Three other inmates and I were put in charge of the Page Table a week after I came to the section. Every day the list of inmates arrived



at this table and we had it. I remember most of the names. When I was released there were about 160 inmates. The number always fluctuated between 150 and 160 because some went on furlough and some were released.

44. I was in Room 3. It had the highest number of deaths in those two years. All those who were executed or had died had been kept in Room 3. Mr. Hoda Saber was in this room.<sup>7</sup> His bed was above mine. Mr. Dokmehchi's bed was below mine when he was in Section 350.<sup>8</sup> He had cancer and died. Mr. Jafar Kazemi and Mr. Mohammad Haj Aghaie were both executed.<sup>9</sup> Ali Akbar Siadat was executed on charges of spying.<sup>10</sup> Abdolreza Ghanbari, who has been sentenced to death, was also in our room.
45. I remember Mr. Mohsen Dokmehchi. At the time we did not know he had cancer but he was in great pain and could not eat. He went through a lot. In the middle of the night he would wake up and ask me to give him some bread and cheese. He could not eat anything during the day. The prison authorities would not take him to the clinic unless he was in a lot of pain and even then they would only inject him with painkillers and send him back. If he had been checked in time preventive steps could have been administered and he would have at least lived longer.
46. At that time there was a doctor in our section named Dr. Faraji. There were two brothers, Hassan and Hossein Faraji who were in prison on charges of espionage. One of them was released but the other is still in prison. Without any medical equipment Dr. Faraji did a check up on Dokmehchi and thought that he may have a stomach problem.
47. Every day ten inmates from Section 350 went to the clinic to see a doctor. If they had a headache or a cold we would tell them to fake two other ailments so that they could get medicines for others to use. In Section 350 there was an inmate, Dr. Fardoust, who was in charge of medicine. He would collect all the drugs. With these drugs we could calm Mohsen Dokmehchi's pain a little. At the time we did not know he had cancer. After I had been released they took him to hospital and tests showed he had cancer. But it was too late and the cancer had progressed too far.
48. Of the 150 or 160 prisoners who were kept in Section 350, at least 50 of them were mentioned in the media and there was activity surrounding their cases. Many of the prisoners who had been arrested during demonstrations had no specific political activities. News about some of the prisoners would leak out and get published through their families. The complete list of Section 350 inmates leaked out a couple of times and got published in Kaleme web site. For instance I was in charge of the Page Table and I took the list of names with me when I was released and it got published. The media would not pay much attention to those prisoners who did not have a political background.

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<sup>7</sup> Hoda Saber was a 52-year-old political activist from the opposition Nationalist-Religious movement: See <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/jun/12/iran-opposition-figure-dies-heart-attack>

<sup>8</sup> Mohsen Dokmehchi was a political prisoner accused of involvement with the MEK and providing financial support to the families of political prisoners, see <http://ireport.cnn.com/docs/DOC-584456>

<sup>9</sup> Jafar Kazemi and Mohammad Haj Aghaie were both convicted to involvement with the MEK. See <http://persian2english.com/?p=19288>

<sup>10</sup> Ali Akbar Siadat was convicted of spying for Mossad, Israel's intelligence agency. See [http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/29/world/middleeast/29iran.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/29/world/middleeast/29iran.html?_r=0)

**Branch 26 of Tehran Revolutionary Court - Judge Pirabbasi**

49. My trial was held 52 days after my arrest. They took me from the cell to Judge Pirabbasi at Branch 26. Gholamreza Khosravi and I went together. Our hands were in handcuffs. Pirabbasi wore glasses. He had a short beard and dark skin. He was [seemingly] kind and gentle. He seemed to be 45 to 55 years old. He treated me well.
50. Pirabbasi's secretary's name was Sattari and he was very ill-tempered, so much so that I had heard he had been appointed by the Intelligence Ministry to keep an eye on Pirabbasi. He treated me, Gholamreza Khosravi and two other defendants, badly.
51. On that day Gholamreza Khosravi did not see the judge because his sentence had already been issued and they only had to announce it to him. When he came into the court Pirabbasi's assistant made a snide remark and said, "Here's your sentence. God willing you've been sentenced to death." Gholamreza looked at me and said, laughing, "After two or three years of confusion I finally know my fate."
52. Perhaps Pirabbasi had a guilty conscience that day for sentencing Gholamreza Khosravi to death. He took me inside the room, gave me a cup of tea and closed the door. He pulled up his pants and showed me his injured leg. I don't know if he had been hurt in the war with Iraq or what, but he said he had made his leg an excuse and skipped work for two months so that they would not give him new court cases. He swore to God that Gholamreza did not deserve the death penalty but "they forced me to sentence him to death." He told me that Gholamreza had already been sentenced in Rafsanjan Revolutionary Court to six years' imprisonment so it was not possible to issue a new sentence for him with the same accusation. Judge Pirabbasi added that for this reason his court had a lack of jurisdiction to review this case. But the *moharebeh* (or "warring against God") accusation had been added to Gholamreza's case so that he would be eligible to be sentenced to death. Then his case was brought to Judge Pirabbasi again and the Judge was forced to sentence Gholamreza to death for this new accusation.
53. Pirabbasi also said that 80 percent of the prisoners in Section 350 of Evin prison were innocent. These are the things he told me and I relayed them to Hoda Saber when I went back to my cell. Saber mentioned this in a letter he wrote to Mr. Sahabi and Dr. Zarafshan.
54. I asked Pirabbasi why he was doing this? Why didn't he go home and refuse to work? He said he sat home for two months and if he had not come to the court that day my case would have been decided by Judge Salavati or Judge Moghiseh. They would have sentenced me to nine or ten years instead of five. He showed me the Intelligence Ministry's report in my file which demanded a prison sentence of at least nine years. But he said he had sentenced me to five years and now he had to answer to the Intelligence Ministry. I realized he was right. They were all bad but it was better for Pirabbasi to be there because his sentencing was milder compared to Salavati or Moghiseh.
55. He read five charges against me. I could not deny them because they were all based on what I had written in my blogs and I had accepted responsibility for all of them. Also my interviews with the BBC and Voice of America were undeniable. Nevertheless I said none of the things I had said were against the law. They could only stick me with propaganda against the state and the maximum penalty for that was a year in prison. I said I accept this charge based on what I had written. "No! The punishment for that is one year. I will clear you of that charge but will sentence you to five years for participation and collaboration in protest gatherings," he said.

56. On that day Judge Pirabbasi sentenced me to five years in prison and asked whether I had any objections. I said I did not have any objections because I did not recognize the court or his judgment.
57. It was a bad day for me. First because Gholamreza had been sentenced to death and secondly when I was in Pirabbasi's room someone who apparently worked for another branch court knocked on the door and came inside. He went in front of Pirabbasi and said, "Do you know about Saeed Malekpour's sentence?" Pirabbasi said no, what was it? "Death sentence!" he said. When I heard the news I fell apart and forgot about my own case.
58. When I left the room Pirabbasi called me in again and said he would give me a five-year suspended sentence, "any objections now?" I said I object. A suspended sentence was really bad because I would be under constant stress for five years. "Let's say I would be free for four years and 364 days and then on the last day they accuse me of something and throw me in jail for five years." So on this basis I objected, hoping that the court of appeals would reduce the sentence. Judge Pirabbasi told me to contact my family to pay the bail so that I could be released from prison that day.
59. When I went back to my cell Saeed Malekpour had not yet been informed about his death sentence. I told him. It was a really bad day to hear that two of my friends had been sentenced to death. I was set free that night.
60. I was in Section 350 for 52 days. I was freed on bail until the appeal. My sentence in the appeals court was changed to four years' imprisonment plus a three year suspended sentence. So in fact the punishment was increased. When the sentence was finalized I received a summons to present myself to begin my four-year term but I left the country in February 2011.