

BAHAREH HEDAYAT

IRANIAN PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE



Bahareh Hedayat, age 34, is one of Iran's leading women rights defenders and student activists. She has been in prison for six years for her promotion of human rights and democracy.

WHAT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY CAN DO

- Urge Iranian authorities to end the arbitrary detention of Bahareh Hedayat
- Raise her case in bilateral meetings with the government, parliamentary and judicial official
- Raise her case from the floor of the United Nations General Assembly and Human Rights Council
- Urge Iranian authorities to grant Bahareh Hedayat access to medical care

HER STORY

Bahareh Hedayat is the spokesperson and the only female member of the central committee in charge of public affairs of the Office for Strengthening Unity, the largest university students' union in Iran. The union is one of the country's strongest voices for political reform and human rights. She was also a founding member of the One Million Signatures Campaign, a grassroots movement demanding changes to discriminatory laws. The Campaign was the largest women's rights initiative in post-revolutionary Iran.

Bahareh, whose activities were crucial in building bridges between the student movement and the women's rights movement in Iran, was arrested in December 2009, at age 28, in connection with protests following the disputed presidential elections. She has been in prison ever since.

HER CASE

In May 2010, Iran's Revolutionary Court convicted Bahareh Hedayat of "insulting the president," "insulting the supreme leader," and "assembly and collusion against national security" for her activism.

Under Iran's newly adopted penal code, Bahareh was due to be released from prison by June 2015. The penal code, which applies retroactively, mandates that detainees sentenced to prison for multiple related charges would only serve the sentence of the heaviest charge. Despite a court ruling in favor of Bahareh's release, judicial authorities continued to detain Bahareh in prison in absence of any legal decree.

Moreover, authorities subsequently reinstated, in violation of Iranian law, a two-year prison sentence for one of her previous arrests in 2006. Bahareh had been arrested four times prior to her latest arrest all for activism protected under international law and Iran's own legal framework.

In 2012, Bahareh was awarded Sweden's Harald Edelstam Prize for her "outstanding contributions and exceptional courage in standing up for active justice against violations of human rights in Iran."

Bahareh suffers from kidney complications and severe reproductive health issues, and has been denied access to proper health care multiple times while under detention.