



Iranian political prisoner

Hossein Ronaghi-Maleki

Born July 5, 1985 in Tabriz, Iran

A student of computer programming, Hossein Ronaghi-Maleki became a blogger and human rights activist in 2004. He was one of the earliest and youngest bloggers to begin challenging regime Internet censorship. He later helped establish the anti-censorship organization known as “Iran Proxy.” His anti-filtering efforts were especially important during the unrest in Iran following the June 2009 elections, when the Iranian regime began to dramatically increase its Internet censorship.

Hossein was arrested on December 13, 2009 and sentenced on October 5, 2010 by the 26th Branch of the Revolutionary Court to 15 years in Evin Prison after a show trial conducted without regard for due process. His sentence includes 11 years for working with “Iran Proxy”, 2 years for insulting Iran’s “Supreme Leader” Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and 2 years for insulting President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Branch 54 of the appeal court upheld the sentence on December 1, 2010. Hossein is in urgent need of medical attention as he has been diagnosed with kidney failure. In the past, the authorities have repeatedly refused him treatment.

According to Hossein’s father, Ahmad Ronaghi-Maleki, Hossein has received two surgeries at Hasheminejad Hospital in Tehran and is still in need of medical attention. In an interview, Ahmad Ronaghi-Maleki also explained that his son’s left kidney has lost 80 percent functionality and his right kidney has lost 20 percent. While Hossein was in the hospital, the nurses were not allowed to do their work freely and Hossein’s hands and feet were tied to the bed with three guards next to him. Hossein returned to prison immediately following his operations, despite the request of his doctors for furlough.

In recent months, Hossein’s family has been summoned to the Ministry of Intelligence and Security after they gave interviews to journalists about Hossein’s deteriorating health. On February 25, 2011, the government issued an arrest warrant for Hossein’s mother. The Iranian Government’s latest abuse occurred in August 2011, when Hossein was attacked and brutally beaten by members of the Revolutionary Guard. His injuries were severe enough to cause him to lose consciousness, and though he was transferred to Taleghano Hospital, he remained for only a matter of hours before being sent back to prison. He continues to lack access to adequate medical attention and nutrition essential to recovery.

At just 19 years old, Hossein became one of the main promoters of Iranian blogs as avenues for citizen journalism and democratic activism. His blog, which became famous under his pseudonym “Babak Khorramdin,” disseminated vital information to Iranians, foreign media, and activists about human rights abuses and political prisoners. In addition, his anti-censorship group “Iran Proxy” created circumvention tools that allowed activists and other Iranian citizens to communicate the news of regime human rights abuses to the outside world.

