



## **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 because of his human rights activities, his combating of Internet censorship, and his promotion of free expression and the free flow of information. He was held in solitary confinement before his trial in October 2010. He is currently serving a 15 year sentence in Evin Prison. Hossein is in urgent need of medical attention as he has been diagnosed with kidney problems and needs surgery. In the past, the authorities have repeatedly refused him treatment. On April 21, 2011 it was reported that Hossein was transferred from prison to Hashemi Nejad Hospital in Tehran for medical attention.

In recent months, his 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 was issued for Hossein’s mother.

Hossein was sentenced on October 5, 2010 by the 26th Branch of the Revolutionary Court to 15 years in prison after a show trial conducted without regard for due process. The sentence is made up of: 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.

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.