

RAN #10 March15 2008

IRAN: Novelist Yaghouh Yadali sentence increased; risk of re-arrest

BACKGROUND: Yaghouh Yadali was arrested on March 15, 2007 and detained for 41 days on charges of insult, libel and publication of false information in two of his fictional works: a collection of six short stories entitled Sketches in the Garden (Aasa Publications, Tehran, 1997) and parts of his novel Rituals of Restlessness (Niloufar publications, Tehran, 2004). Both had been granted approval for publication from Iran's Ministry of Guidance. An excerpt of the novel, Rituals of Restlessness, featuring a rural Lor woman who is described as an immoral person, is quoted by the prosecutor in the indictment. Yaghouh Yadali is himself a member of the Lor Ethnic minority, and is an award-winning writer in the region.

Yadali was tried at a court in the city of Yasuj, capital of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province, southwestern Iran, on 23 August 2007. He was convicted and sentenced in September 2007 to one years' imprisonment for 'insulting in order to agitate the general public'. Nine months of the sentence were suspended for two years, conditional on his writing four articles in local news papers on Lor art and cultural personalities, published at his own expense. It is feared that he could now be summoned to serve the remainder of his sentence.

Born in 1970, Yaghouh Yadali is a prominent writer, who has also worked as a television director, making documentaries and writing screenplays. In addition to the works for which he was sentenced, he has also published Probability of Merriment and Mooning (Nim-negah Publications, Shiraz, 2001), a collection of eight short stories for which he won the Press Critics Annual Prize in 2001, and many articles and cultural commentaries in newspapers and journals. Since his arrest Yadali has been banned from publishing, and his books have been withdrawn from the market. He has also been dismissed from his job, and is now unemployed and without financial support.

Appeal letter

Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic
His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei
The Office of the Supreme Leader
Shoahada Street, Qom, Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: info@leader.ir or istiftaa@wilayah.org

Your Excellency:

As a member of PEN Canada, the Canadian centre of the writers' organization International PEN, I write to tell you of my deep concern for the novelist **Yaghouh Yadali**.

The Writers in Prison Committee of International PEN is alarmed by the threat of re-arrest of novelist Yaghouh Yadali. He was sentenced on charges of "insult" in September 2007 to one year in prison, but nine months of the term were suspended.

However on February 24 2008, an appeals court ordered that he serve the term in prison.

International PEN protests the sentence against writer Yaghouh Yadali for his fictional writings, and demands that all charges against him are dropped in accordance with Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Iran is a signatory.

Writers around the world urge also that the ban on the books of Yaghouh Yadali be lifted immediately.

Sincerely

[your name and address here]

Please send copies to:

Head of the Judiciary
His Excellency Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi
Ministry of Justice, Park-e Shahr
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: via Judiciary website: Iranjudiciary.org/feedback_en.html
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Intelligence Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejeie
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Please send copies of your appeal to the following Canadian authorities:

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