

12 January 2024

Iran- Human Rights Defender Mohammad Habibi charged

On 10 January 2024, the lawyer of Mohammad Habibi [announced](#) that the human rights defender has been charged by the Shahryar Revolutionary Court with “gathering and colluding against the national security” after publishing social media posts on X, formerly known as Twitter, protesting against the poisoning of school children in Iran.

[Mohammad Habibi](#) is a human rights defender who is the spokesperson and a board member of the Teacher’s Trade Union of Tehran. The human rights defender has been arrested and sentenced multiple times for his human rights and trade union activities since 2018. Moreover, he has been terminated from his job as a teacher as a result of his campaigning for teachers’ rights, children rights and playing an active role in Coordinating Council of the Iranian Teachers’ Trade Associations ([CCITTA](#)).

On 10 January 2024, the lawyer of Mohammad Habibi announced that the human rights defender has been charged by the Shahryar Revolutionary Court with “gathering and colluding against the national security” after publishing social media posts in X, formerly known as Twitter, denouncing poisoning of school children in Iran. Mohammad Habibi was arrested on 5 April 2023 in the context of protests against the poisoning of the school students.

In April and May 2023, peaceful protests broke out against a series of poisonings of school girls across the country. The poisonings are believed in reprisal against women and young girls vindicating their rights not to conform to Iran’s discriminatory veiling rules and participating in protests. As a result of their participation in the Woman, Life, Freedom protests, as well as their engagement in peaceful protests against this poisoning campaign, many university professors, teachers, students rights defenders, trade unionists were targeted by the Iranian authorities.

Following his arrest on 5 April 2023, Mohammad Habibi was assaulted and subsequently filed a complaint against the security agents believed to have been involved in the assault. On 21 May 2023, the human rights defender was released on one billion IRR after 47 days of arbitrary detention and having been subjected to a hearing on the charge of “gathering and colluding to act against the national security” at Branch 2 of the Shahryar Revolutionary Court. This charge was based on his social media posts protesting against the poisoning of school students and calling for accountability. The human rights defender and his lawyer were subsequently notified that the defender’s lawsuit has been dismissed as security agents reported he had allegedly intended to flee the security agents’ car. Additionally, the judge in charge of his case has been replaced without any explanation.

This is not the first time that Mohammad Habibi has been targeted for his human rights activities. In April 2022 and in advance of May day and teachers day in Iran, Mohammad Habibi was detained together with dozens of teachers rights defenders, including human rights defenders [Jafar Ebrahimi](#), and [Rasoul Bodaji](#). In the early hours of 30 April 2022, the human rights defenders were arrested, subjected to physical violence, house raids and had their electronic devices confiscated.

Previously in August 2018, the human rights defender was sentenced by Branch 26 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court to seven and a half years imprisonment on charges of “collusion against national security”, “propaganda against the state”, and “disrupting public order” for his peaceful involvement in trade union activities. In November 2020, the human rights defender was released

from the Greater Tehran Central Penitentiary after serving 30 months of his sentence as his sentence was reduced based on a new directive issued by the head of the Iranian judiciary.

Front Line Defenders is seriously concerned about the new charges being brought against human rights defender Mohammad Habibi and the physical assaults that he has been subjected to.

Front Line Defenders urges the Iranian authorities to:

1- Drop all the charges against human rights defender Mohammad Habibi immediately and unconditionally;

2- Conduct impartial investigations towards the allegations of physical assaults against the human rights defender Mohammad Habibi, with the view of publishing the results and holding those responsible accountable;

3- Cease targeting all human rights defenders in Iran and guarantee in all circumstances that they are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.