

Press release

Iran

Death of Iranian blogger while in custody : call for immediate and independent investigation

The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the Iranian League for the Defense of Human Rights (LDDHI) firmly denounce the death in custody of Omidreza Mirsayafi, a blogger writing about traditional Persian music and culture.

Mirsayafi died in a Tehran prison on March 18, 2009, reportedly for lack of medical care.

The blogger had been summoned to Tehran's revolutionary court for interrogation on February 7, 2009, and had remained in detention since then.

Mirsayafi had been arrested a first time on April 22, 2008, before being released on June 2, on payment of a 100 million tomans bail (72,000 euros). He had then been tried on November 2, on the basis of Articles 500 and 514 of the Criminal, which provide that « anyone who insults the Supreme Guide Khomeini, founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, or the country's leaders, is liable for six months to two years in prison » (Art 514) and « anyone making propaganda against the state is liable to three months to one year in prison » (Art. 500). He was facing a two-year imprisonment sentence, and his blog, *Rooznegar*, which contained cultural articles – two or three of satirical nature – was no longer accessible.

« We are shocked by this tragic event, and urge the Iranian regime to open an immediate, effective and independent investigation into this death, so that those responsible be brought to justice and sentenced » said Karim Lahidji, President of the Iranian League for the Defense of Human Rights.

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