

Call for journalist's release after he has double heart attack in Evin prison-Reporters W/Borders

Iran | 28.12.2007 Reporters Without Borders is extremely worried about the health of journalist and human rights activist Emadoldin Baghi, who was rushed to hospital after suffering a double heart attack in Tehran's Evin prison on 26 December and was returned to a general wing of the prison yesterday evening. He has been held in Evin for the past 74 days. "The conditions in which Baghi is being held are unacceptable," the press freedom organisation said. "He has been in solitary confinement ever since he was first taken to Evin, as if imprisonment was not already enough punishment. As his state of health has worsened steadily during the past two months, it is inconceivable that he should be expected to convalesce in prison." Baghi was rushed to Tehran's Khamar Bani Hachem after his double heart attack. His lawyer, Saleh Nikbakht, and his family were finally able to visit him yesterday after spending 24 hours without any news of him. When he was taken back to Evin, he was put in a new cell in section 350 of the prison. Nikbakht told Reporters Without Borders that the deterioration in Baghi's health was mainly due to the appalling conditions in the prison and to the harassment to which he has been subjected during interrogation sessions. "Emadoldin Baghi will not survive another heart attack," he said. An active campaigner against Iran's death penalty, Baghi was awarded the French government's human rights prize in 2005. He was sentenced in 2000 to three years in prison for "violating to national security." Meanwhile, Ejlal Ghavami, a reporter for the weekly Payam-e Mardom-e Kurdistan who has been held in the prison of Sanandaj since 9 July, was finally given 10 days leave from the prison on 26 December for treatment to an eye infection that has worsened since his arrest. Iran's Supreme Guide, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad are both on the Reporters Without Borders list of "press freedom predators." Twelve journalists are currently detained in Iran. Reporters Without Borders defends imprisoned journalists and press freedom throughout the world. It has nine national sections (Austria, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland). It has representatives in Bangkok, London, New York, Tokyo and Washington. And it has more than 120 correspondents worldwide. © Reporters Without Borders 2007

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