

THE OBSERVATORY - PRESS RELEASE

IRAN: Grave concern over health status of human rights defender Hossein Ronaghi Maleki

Paris-Geneva, August 23, 2013. *The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint programme of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), expresses its deep concern about the hunger strike initiated by Iranian blogger and human rights activist Hossein Ronaghi-Maleki, whose health status has been deteriorating.*

On August 9, 2013, Mr. **Hossein Ronaghi-Maleki** started a hunger strike to protest the authorities' ongoing refusal to allow him to continue his medical treatment out of Evin prison in Tehran. His mother, Ms. Zolaykha Mousavi, also started a hunger strike on August 20, 2013 to draw attention to his plight.

Mr. Ronaghi-Maleki has been suffering from kidney and heart problems and bladder inflammation. Since the beginning of his hunger strike, he has suffered kidney bleeding, blood pressure oscillations and arrhythmic heart beats. He has already undergone several operations on his kidneys that were damaged after being repeatedly tortured during his detention, including 13 months in solitary confinement.

While on sick leave from prison, Mr. Ronaghi-Maleki was arrested on August 22, 2012, along with dozens of other activists who had travelled to East Azerbaijan province to help the victims of an earthquake (see Press Release of the Observatory dated September 11, 2012).

He has been serving a 15-year prison sentence after being arrested on December 13, 2010 and convicted on charges of "membership of Iran-Proxy Internet Group", "spreading propaganda against the system", "insulting the Iranian Supreme Leader and the President".

The Observatory firmly denounces the appalling disregard for the health conditions of Mr. Ronaghi-Maleki and urges his immediate transfer to appropriate medical facilities.

The Observatory also calls upon the authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Mr. Ronaghi-Maleki and all human rights defenders arbitrarily detained, and to conform with the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights instruments ratified by Iran.

For further information, please contact:

- **FIDH: Arthur Manet: + 33 1 43 55 25 18**
- **OMCT: Delphine Reculeau: + 41 22 809 49 39**