

INTERNATIONAL PEN

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RAPID ACTION NETWORK

11 March 2008

RAN 12/08

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

The Writers in Prison Committee of International PEN has learned with alarm the threat of re-arrest of novelist Yaghoub Yadali. Sentenced on charges of “insult” in September 2007 to one year in prison, nine months of the term were suspended. However on 24 February 2008 an appeals court has ordered that he serve the term in prison. International PEN protests the sentence against writer Yaghoub 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.

Yaghoub Yadali was arrested on 15 March 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. Yaghoub 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.

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Born in 1970, Yaghoub 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. Yadali's case was featured in the 2007 Day of the Imprisoned Writer (15 November) Campaign:

<http://www.internationalpen.org.uk/index.php?pid=33&aid=716&query=day%20of%20imprisoned%20writer>

Please send appeals:

- protesting the one-year sentence against writer Yaghoub Yadali and demanding 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.
- calling for a lifting of the ban on his works.

APPEALS TO:

Leader of the Islamic Republic

His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed ~Ali Khamenei

The Office of the Supreme Leader, Islamic Republic Street - Shahid Keshvar Doust Street

Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: info@leader.ir

Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi

Howzeh Riyasat-e Qoveh Qazaiyeh / Office of the Head of the Judiciary

Pasteur St., Vali Asr Ave., south of Serah-e Jomhuri,

Tehran 1316814737,

Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: info@dadgostary-tehran.ir (In the subject line write: FAO Ayatollah Shahroudi)

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

President:

His Excellency Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

The Presidency,
Palestine Avenue,
Azerbaijan Intersection,
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Fax: Via Foreign Ministry: +98 21 6 674 790
(mark: "Please forward to H.E. President Ahmadinejad")
Email: dr-ahmadinejad@president.ir
via website: www.president.ir/email

If possible please send a copy of your appeal to the diplomatic representative for Iran in your country.

PEN Centres may consider electing Yaghoub Yadali as an honorary member. Please contact the WiPC at the address below.

*****Please check with this office if sending appeals after 31 March 2008*****

For further information please contact Cathy McCann at International PEN Writers in Prison Committee, Brownlow House, 50/51 High Holborn, London WC1V 6ER, Tel.+ 44 (0) 20 7405 0338, Fax: +44 (0) 20 7405 0339, email: cathy.mccann@internationalpen.org.uk