Attorney, Rights Defender Sentenced To 30 Years, Flogging In Iran

June 3, 2019

Radio Farda

<https://en.radiofarda.com/a/attorney-rights-defender-sentenced-to-30-years-flogging-in-iran/29978496.html>

An Iranian lawyer has been jailed for 30 years after setting up a channel on the popular social media platform Telegram, highlighting human rights abuses in the Islamic Republic.

Amir Salar Davoudi was convicted by a revolutionary court for “propaganda against the state” and “insulting officials” and is set to be flogged 111 times.

According to his lawyer Vahid Farahani, Davoudi was also accused of “collaborating with an enemy state” after giving an interview to Voice of America Persian-language television.

Speaking to the New York-based Center for Human Rights in Iran in April, Farahani warned his client was accused of “forming a group to overthrow the state.”

Davoudi’s wife, Tannaz Kolahchian, who is also a lawyer, tweeted that his sentence was “unfair” but added that her husband would not be appealing.

The Islamic Penal Code would require a 15-year mandatory sentence for having started the Telegram channel.

Called “Without Retouch”, Davoudi used the channel as a platform to highlight human rights abuses.

Exiled Iranian lawyers have signed an open letter denouncing Davoudi’s “outrageous ruling that completely derides all principles of the legal counsel in Iran”.

The letter called Davoudi “one of the most honorable lawyers across Iran”.

“He has been convicted merely for defending victims of the judiciary and security agents, political prisoners and the oppressed, as well as audaciously criticizing the corrupt, cruel and inefficient political and judicial system in Iran,” the letter said.

It was signed by Hossein Ahmadi Niaz, Massoud Akhtari Tehrani, Mohammad Mostafaei and Mehrangiz Kar.

Agents of the judiciary’s security and intelligence center arrested Davoudi, who counted a number of political prisoners among his clients, in November.

Security agents also searched Davoudi’s home and office and confiscated his belongings. He had been taken in for questioning on previous occasions and warned not to inform the public about politically sensitive cases, according to the Center for Human Rights in Iran.

Davoudi is the third renowned defense lawyer currently behind bars in Iran for performing his legal work.

Prominent defense attorney Nasrin Sotoudeh is currently serving a 38-year prison sentence that has received international condemnation.

Fellow defense attorney and civil rights activist Mohammad Najafi is serving a three-year prison sentence but faces a total sentence of 19 years.

In addition to defense attorneys being detained in Iran for peacefully doing their jobs, other detainees held on politically motivated charges are being forced to choose their counsel from a list of state-approved lawyers.