**Iranian Artist Jailed For 12 Years For Drawing Satirical Cartoons Now Faces 'Indecency' Charges... Because She Shook Her Male Lawyer's Hand**

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http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3153315/Iranian-artist-jailed-12-years-drawing-satirical-cartoons-faces-indecency-charges-shook-male-lawyer-s-hand.html#ixzz3fJm89Eta

An Iranian woman sentenced to more than 12 years in prison for drawing satirical cartoons of politicians is now facing new charges - for shaking a man's hand.

Artist Atena Farghadani, 29, is currently serving a long stretch behind bars as punishment for depicting government officials, who decided to restrict women's access to birth control, as animals.

However, both Ms Farghadani and her lawyer Mohammad Moghimi have since been charged with having an 'illegitimate sexual relationship short of adultery' and 'indecent conduct' because they shook hands in prison following the trial, according to Amnesty International.

Ms Farghadani's was on trial in May at Tehran's so-called Revolutionary Court on charges of insulting members of parliament through paintings, gathering and colluding against national security, spreading propaganda against the system and insulting the president and the supreme leader.

She was sentenced to 12 years and nine months in jail last month. Experts believe this far exceeds the legal limit for such a crime, which currently stands at seven years and six months.

But **A[mnesty International](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/)** says she now faces new charges.

Mr Moghimi visited Ms Farghadani in prison after her trial and shook her hand, which has resulted in the two new charges being brought against them both, the human rights organisation has reported.

The lawyer was arrested on June 13 and he was released three days later after posting bail of around £40,000. They are set to be tried for those charges in due course.

Ms Farghadani was initially arrested during a Revolutionary Guard raid on her home last August.

It's claimed the guards burst into her home, blindfolded her, seized her personal belongings and then hauled her off to Tehran’s notorious Evin Prison.

She was kept in solitary confinement with no access to a lawyer or her family, according to Amnesty International.

The artist was bailed for a short time last November, but was quickly returned to jail after being accused of openly discussing the torture and beatings she suffered at the hands of the wardens.

Ms Farghadani even went as far as to publish a YouTube video discussing her treatment in prison, which included being interrogated for nine hours each day for six weeks and being beaten.

She also posted an open letter to Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei on her Facebook page upon being returned to her cell.

Three weeks after she was rearrested in January this year, Ms Farghadani went on hunger strike to protest the poor prison conditions.

Her lawyer said she suffered a heart attack and briefly lost consciousness in late February as a result of her strike.

Hassiba Hadj Sahraoui, Amnesty International's Middle East and North Africa deputy director,  said: 'No one should be in jail for their art or peaceful activism.

Atena Farghadani has effectively been punished for her cartoons with a sentence that is itself a gross caricature of justice.

'Such harsh and unjust sentences seem to be part of a disturbing trend in Iran, where the cost of voicing peaceful dissent is escalating.'

Ms Farghadani's relatives, who have received death threats since her initial arrest, last month said she plans to launch an appeal against the harsh sentence.

The judge who handed down the harsh prison sentence, Abolghassem Salavati, is known as 'Iran's hanging judge' or 'the judge of death' in his country thanks to his reputation for harsh punishments.

He is particularly notorious for handing out sentences to journalists, artists, bloggers and political activists, making his named in the aftermath of the street protests that were brutally crushed during Iran's 2009 general election.