**Iran Court Sentences ‘Happy’ Dancers to 6 Months and 91 Lashes**

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By IranWire

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The sentences faced by the young people who answered Pharrell Williams’s call are suspended for the moment, but could be carried out any time in the next three years.

It’s been a tense, worrying time for Iran’s “Happy” group, the seven young men and women arrested in May for posting their version of Pharrell Williams’ music video on YouTube. Over the last few days, they’ve been pacing up and down the hallways of the Tehran courthouse where their trial was due to take place, making sure all their legal papers were in order.

Today their lawyer, Farshid Rofugaran, told IranWire that six of his clients had been sentenced to six months in prison and 91 lashes. One of them was given a sentence of one year in prison and 91 lashes. “Fortunately,” said Rofugaran, “the sentences were suspended.” But he was quick to point out that, until he received official notification, he could not be 100 percent sure of his clients’ situation.

“A suspended sentence becomes null and void after a certain period of time,” Rofugaran said. For the Happy Group, that period will be three years. “When it’s a suspended sentence, the verdict is not carried out, but if during this period a similar offense is committed, then the accused is subject to legal punishment and the suspended sentence will then be carried out as well.”

The group was [arrested](http://en.iranwire.com/features/5778/) in May 2014, a month after their [video](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tg5qdIxVcz8)—part of a global campaign launched by pop star Pharrell Williams—was viewed by more than 100,000 people on YouTube. During their incarceration, they were [humiliated](http://en.iranwire.com/features/5780/) and forced to confess on national television. They apologized for making the video, and said they had been tricked into doing it. After the confession they were released on bail.

Will the group appeal? “We can accept the verdict or appeal,” says Rofugaran. “I will do what my clients want me to do. We are happy that both the prison sentences and the lashes are suspended.”

“They are not banned from leaving the country,” the lawyer said when asked by IranWire about the terms of their sentence. “Some of them have even travelled abroad during this time.”