

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## Public Statement

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### Iran: End limitations on the work of human rights defenders

The confiscation of the passport of a leading member of the Society for the Defence of the Rights of Prisoners (SDRP), Emaddedin Baqi, on 4 October 2004, as he was about to travel abroad to take part in several conferences and meetings concerning human rights, is another blow to Iran's implementation of international human rights standards and part of an emerging pattern of harassment of independent human rights defenders.

The order to ban Emaddedin Baqi from travelling reportedly came from the Special Court for the Clergy (SCC), an extra-constitutional institution which Amnesty International and several United Nations bodies have urged be fundamentally altered or abolished on account of the Court's inherent incapacity of providing the basic guarantees of due process.

Preventing Emaddedin Baqi from taking part in human rights conferences, by the SSC, which has never sentenced, tried or even summoned him, is contrary to Article 7 of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders which states that "everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to develop and discuss new human rights ideas and principles and to advocate their acceptance".

Amnesty International urges the authorities to investigate allegations that Emaddedin Baqi has been harassed, for his passport to be returned and for the apparently arbitrary travel ban placed on him to be lifted.

Amnesty International calls on the Office of the Supreme Leader of Iran to grant recognition to those seeking to promote and protect human rights in Iran and to direct the judiciary, government and parliament to implement the provisions of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

#### Background

For more information about Emaddedin Baqi and the Society for the Defence of the Rights of Prisoners (SDRP), please see: <http://web.amnesty.org/wire/September2004/Iran>

For more information about the Special Court for the Clergy (SCC), please see the Amnesty International report, Human Rights Violations against Shi'a Religious Leaders and their followers (3 June 1997; AI Index: MDE 13/18/97): <http://web.amnesty.org/library/print/ENGMDE130181997>

