

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 13/040/2005

27 July 2005

Further Information on UA 181/03 (MDE 13/015/2003, 20 June 2003) and follow-ups (MDE 13/021/2003, 15 July 2003; MDE 13/020/2004, 26 March 2004) – Torture and ill-treatment/Fear for safety/Medical concern

**IRAN Manuchehr Mohammadi (m), aged 37, student activist and political prisoner
Akbar Mohammadi (m), aged 35, student activist (his brother)**

Manuchehr Mohammadi has reportedly gone into a coma. He had been on hunger strike since 6 July, in protest at the authorities' refusal to grant him leave from prison to receive medical treatment. His life is in grave danger.

His family visited him on or around 20 July, and reported that his health was deteriorating rapidly: he was unable to walk, could barely talk or see, his skin had turned yellow, and his eyes were sunken. On 24 July it was reported that he had fallen into a coma.

Manuchehr has suffered serious health problems in prison, some reportedly caused by torture and ill-treatment, and the conditions in which he has been held. At one point he was reportedly chained in a crouching position with his mouth gagged, in a vermin-infested cell, and was frequently beaten. He suffers from gingivitis, which causes chronic, severe bleeding from the gums, and causes him pain when he speaks or eats. He has allegedly been denied adequate medical treatment, although prison doctors have recommended it. In about April 2005, a prison doctor reportedly told him that his gingivitis had advanced to the point that, in order to cure it, he would need to have all his teeth removed and dentures fitted. He is not known to have received any treatment.

He was permitted two periods of leave from prison in 2004, most recently in September to seek medical treatment for his gingivitis. While out on leave he gave interviews to foreign journalists. Upon his return to prison he was kept in solitary confinement before being returned to a shared cell. This contact with journalists may be the reason he is not being allowed to leave prison for further treatment.

Following the news of the deterioration in Manuchehr's health, members of his family went to Tehran to protest, and held a demonstration outside Tehran University with his supporters. The demonstrators were reportedly attacked, and some of them badly beaten, either by the police, or possibly by members of the semi-official organization Ansar-e Hezbollah, which opposes political dissent against the state. Up to 40 people were reportedly arrested, including Manuchehr's mother, aunt, uncle and cousin.

Manuchehr Mohammadi was accused of having a leading role in the July 1999 student-led protests known as the *18 Tir* demonstrations after the Iranian date. He was shown on television "confessing" to involvement with "counter-revolutionary agents". He was charged with offences reportedly relating to national security, and following a manifestly unfair trial was reportedly sentenced to 13 years' imprisonment, which was later reduced on appeal to seven years. (See UA 160/99, MDE 13/14/99, 4 November 1999.) At the end of November 2003, Manuchehr Mohammadi's seven year prison sentence was extended by two years: one year for having had interviews with foreign media while on leave from prison and another for issuing 'political statements' while in prison.

His brother Akbar, initially sentenced to death, had his sentence reduced on appeal to 15 years' imprisonment, and is now known to be on extended medical leave. He was released in July 2004 and

hospitalised immediately: he has reportedly undergone at least three major operations, and is still receiving medical treatment, in his home town of Amol.

Manuchehr and Akbar Mohammadi have been the subject of several campaign actions, including Urgent Actions, an appeal case, and AIUK's "UA of the month" in March 2004. During a 12-day period of leave from prison in June 2004 the brothers asked their sister to pass on their good wishes to UA network members. She said that the network's campaigning action had "very much supported them. It strengthened their spirits."

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Persian, French, English or your own language:

- expressing grave concern at reports that Manuchehr Mohammadi has fallen into a coma, having been on hunger strike since 6 July, and urging the authorities to ensure that he receives all necessary medical attention;
- urging them to allow him medical leave to seek treatment for his gingivitis, as has reportedly been recommended by Evin prison doctors;
- expressing concern at reports that up to 40 of his relatives and supporters have been arrested, some of whom were reportedly beaten, including his mother, aunt, uncle and cousin, solely for taking part in a peaceful demonstration in support of Manuchehr Mohammadi, and urging the authorities to release them immediately and unconditionally.
- calling on the authorities to order a judicial review of the case against Manuchehr Mohammadi, and to release him immediately and unconditionally if the review finds that he was imprisoned solely for the expression of his conscientiously held beliefs.

APPEALS TO:

His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei
The Presidency, Palestine Avenue, Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: + 98 21 649 5880
+ 98 251 774 228 (please mark 'For the attention of the Office of His Excellency, Ayatollah al Udhma Khamenei)

Email: info@wilayah.org
info@wilayah.net

Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary

His Excellency Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi
Ministry of Justice, Park-e Shahr, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: irjpr@iranjudiciary.org (mark 'Please forward to HE Ayatollah Shahroudi')

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

Speaker of Parliament

Gholamali Haddad Adel
Majles-e Shoura-ye Eslami (Parliament)
Imam Khomeini Avenue,
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: + 98 21 646 1746

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 7 September 2005.