

PUBLIC

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UA 171/07 **Fear of torture/ Possible prisoner of conscience**

IRAN **Mohammad Sadiq Kabudvand (m), Human rights defender and journalist**

Iranian Kurdish journalist and human rights defender Mohammad Sadiq Kabudvand is detained in an unknown place, possibly Section 209 of Evin Prison. He was arrested on 1 July 2007 at his place of work in Tehran by plain-clothed security officers. Amnesty International is concerned that he may be at risk of torture and ill-treatment and believes he is very likely to be a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for the peaceful exercise of his rights to freedom of expression and association.

Upon his arrest, Mohammad Sadiq Kabudvand was initially taken to his house in Tehran, where the security officers confiscated three computers, books, photographs, family films and personal documents, before taking him away to an unknown destination. He is believed to have had no contact with his family since his arrest.

Chair of the Kurdish Human Rights Organization (RMMK) based in Tehran, Mohammad Sadiq Kabudvand, is also the editor of *Payam-e Mardom-e Kurdistan* (Kurdistan People's Message) a weekly published in Kurdish and Persian, which was banned on 27 June 2004 after only 13 issues for "disseminating separatist ideas and publishing false reports". Convicted of "disseminating tribal issues and publishing provocative articles" and "spreading lies with the intention of upsetting public opinion" by a Revolutionary Court in Sanandaj, western Iran, Mohammad Sadiq Kabudvand received on 18 August 2005 a suspended prison sentence of 18 months, and a five-year ban on working as a journalist. His conviction was reportedly upheld on appeal, but the suspended prison sentence was increased to one year's actual imprisonment. In September 2006 he was summoned to begin his prison sentence, but remained free pending an appeal against his conviction to the Supreme Court.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Kurds are one of Iran's many ethnic groups. They live mainly in the west and north-west of Iran, in the province of Kurdistan and neighbouring provinces bordering Kurdish areas of Turkey and Iraq. For many years, Kurdish organizations such as the Kurdistan People's Democratic Party (KDPI) and *Komala* carried out armed opposition to the Islamic Republic of Iran, although more recently they have abandoned armed struggle in favour of a federal solution. Iran continues to face armed opposition mainly from the Kurdistan Independent Life Party (PJAK), which reportedly began operations in 2004, and is affiliated to the Turkey-based Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). Iran has accused foreign governments of fomenting unrest among its ethnic minorities.

Violent unrest in the Kurdish areas of Iran broke out in July 2005 and continued for several weeks, after Iranian security forces shot dead a Kurdish opposition activist, Showan Qaderi, and reportedly dragged his body through the streets behind a jeep. Thousands of Kurds took to the streets to protest. Security forces reportedly used light and heavy weaponry in response to the demonstrations, which in at least some places included attacks by demonstrators on government buildings and offices. Up to 20 people were reportedly killed and hundreds more injured. The authorities acknowledged that five people were killed, and stated that their deaths were under investigation. At least 190 were arrested, according to official reports, although the true figure may well be higher.

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

- asking to be informed in detail about the reasons for Mohammad Sadiq Kabudvand's arrest, including any charges and evidence brought against him and of any trial which may be held;
- asking to be informed of his place of detention;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that he is not tortured or ill-treated;
- calling for him to be allowed immediate and regular access to his family, a lawyer of his own choosing, and to any medical treatment he may require;
- stating that if Mohammad Sadiq Kabudvand has been detained in connection with his peaceful activities on behalf of Iran's Kurdish community, or with his peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression or association, then he is a prisoner of conscience, who should be released immediately and unconditionally; otherwise he should be released unless he is to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence and brought to trial promptly and fairly.

APPEALS TO:

Leader of the Islamic Republic

His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei, The Office of the Supreme Leader
Shoahada Street, Qom, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: info@leader.ir

istiftaa@wilayah.org

Fax: +98 251 774 2228 (mark FAO Office of His Excellency Ayatollah al Udhma Khamenei)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Intelligence

Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejeie

Ministry of Intelligence, Second Negarestan Street, Pasdaran Avenue, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: iranprobe@iranprobe.com

Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary

His Excellency Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi

Ministry of Justice, Park-e Shahr, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

President

His Excellency Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

The Presidency, Palestine Avenue, Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: + 981 6 674 790 (Via Foreign Ministry. Mark "Please forward to H.E. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad")

Email: dr-ahmadinejad@president.ir, via website: www.president.ir/email

Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Parliamentary Article 90 Commission

Mohammad Reza Faker

Majles-e Shoura-ye Eslami

Baharestan Square, Tehran, Iran

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Kurdistan Human Rights Organization

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Tehran

Islamic Republic of Iran.

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and to diplomatic representatives of Iran accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 15 August 2007.