



To: Health Professional Network
From: Health and Human Rights Team
Date: 1 August 2008

Health Professional Action
Dr Arash Alaei and Dr Kamiar Alaei
Iran

Two Iranian doctors, specialising in the prevention and management of HIV and AIDS, have been arrested and are believed to be held in Evin Prison in Tehran. The reason for their detention is not known.

Dr Arash Alaei, was arrested on 22 June, by Iranian security forces. The following morning, they took him to his home, where they arrested his brother Dr Kamiar Alaei and seized material and documents belonging to the brothers.

Arash and Kamiar Alaei are well known in Iran and abroad for their work in HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment including through harm prevention work with drug users. Both doctors have travelled internationally for professional reasons and Dr Kamiar Alaei is a doctoral candidate at the State University of New York (SUNY) Albany School of Public Health. He holds a Masters degree in International Health from Harvard University and is due to resume his studies in Albany later in 2008. Earlier this year, the Asia Society recognized him as a 2008 Asia Fellow, "one of 23 new fellows identified as being among the most promising trendsetters and emerging leaders in the Asia-Pacific region." Dr Arash Alaei is the former Director of the International Education and Research Cooperation of the Iranian National Research Institute of Tuberculosis and Lung Disease. Neither man is known to have been involved in political activities. Amnesty International is urging that both brothers should be released, unless they are to be charged with a recognizable offence and tried under conditions meeting the standards for a fair trial.

Iran's response to HIV/AIDS has been accorded international respect particularly with regard to the harm reduction measures promoted by Drs Arash and Kamiar Alaei. According to the 2008 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic (published by UNAIDS on 29 July 2008 and available at: <http://www.unaids.org/>) "the evidence informed support for needle exchange projects in countries such as the Islamic Republic of Iran ... serve as clear examples of courageous, visionary leadership in the response to HIV".

Iran's obligations to its citizens

Iran is a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which requires the government to protect all citizens from arbitrary arrest or detention and to guarantee prompt provision of reasons for an arrest

and any charges which will be brought, access to legal counsel, and the right to be brought before a judge to determine the legality of the detention.

Recommended action

Please write to the authorities below:

- explaining that you are a health professional concerned about human rights;
- expressing concern at the arrests of Drs Arash Alaei and Kamiar Alaei and the lack of immediate information about their location and reasons for their arrest;
- seeking confirmation that they are currently held at Evin Prison and asking for the reasons for their detention;
- urging that their security is guaranteed;
- urging that they be released unless they are to be tried for a recognisable offence under conditions meeting fair trial standards;
- seeking assurances that Iran remains committed to effective treatment and prevention of HIV as promoted by Drs Arash Alaei and Kamiar Alaei;
- asking to be kept informed of the situation of Drs Arash Alaei and Kamiar Alaei.

Addresses

President

His Excellency Mahmoud Ahmadinejad
The Presidency
Palestine Avenue, Azerbaijan Intersection
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: dr-ahmadinejad@president.ir
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Health and Medical Education

His Excellency Dr Kamran Baqeri Lankarani
Ministry of Health
Jomhuri-ye Eslami Avenue
Hafez Crossing
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Fax: +982 1 88364100
Email: Lankarani@mohme.gov.ir / minister@mohme.gov.ir / pro@mohme.gov.ir
Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary

His Excellency Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi
Howzeh Riyasat-e Goveh Qazaiyeh / Office of the Head of the Judiciary
Pasteur St., Vali Asr Ave., south of Serah-e Jomhuri
Tehran 1316814737, Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: info@dadgostary-tehran.ir (In the subject line write: FAO Ayatollah Shahroudi)
Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

Please send copies to diplomatic representatives of Iran accredited to your country.

If you receive no reply within six weeks of sending your letter, please send a follow-up letter seeking a response. Please send copies of any letters you receive to the International Secretariat, attention of Health and Human Rights Team, 1 Easton Street, London WC1X 0DW or e-mail: health@amnesty.org