

PUBLIC

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1 November 2007

**Further Information on UA 171/07 (MDE 13/081/2007, 4 July 2007) and follow-up (MDE 13/091/2007, 19 July 2007) - Fear of torture / possible prisoner of conscience New concern: medical concern**

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

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There are renewed concerns for the health of Iranian Kurdish journalist Mohammad Sadiq Kabudvand, chairperson of the Human Rights Organization of Kurdistan (HROK), who is being held without charge in Section 209 of Tehran's Evin Prison.

In recent days, Mohammad Sadiq Kabudvand, who suffers from high blood pressure, a skin and a kidney condition, has been told by prison guards that every time he wants to go to the toilet, he must write a letter to the intelligence officials running Section 209 of Evin Prison and seek formal permission to do so. His kidneys may be damaged if he is not permitted to use the toilet when he needs to. The authorities have imposed this restriction in order to put pressure on HROK staff members to present themselves for questioning at the office of the Ministry of Intelligence in Mahabad and Tehran, where they are expected to be arrested and the HROK effectively closed.

Mohammad Sadiq Kabudvand was arrested by plain clothed security officials on 1 July 2007. His arrest took place the same day the publication ban on his newspaper *Payam-e Mardom-e Kordestan* (Kurdistan People's Message) reportedly expired. He is facing a one-year prison sentence in connection with articles published in this newspaper, but his current detention does not appear to be connected with this. Mohammad Sadiq Kabudvand told his family on 17 July that he was being accused of "acting against national security", "propaganda against the system" and "cooperating with groups opposed to the system". He reportedly said that whenever he was interrogated he was blindfolded and bound hand and foot, and complained about the poor conditions he was held in.

Mohammad Sadiq Kabudvand's lawyer, Nobel laureate Shirin Ebadi, has not been allowed to meet with him, and he has had limited contact with his family. When his wife last saw him, on 28 October, he was brought into the room blindfolded. The blindfold was then removed.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Kurds, who are one of Iran's many ethnic groups, live mainly in the west and north-west of the country, 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 actions to the Islamic Republic of Iran, although more recently they have abandoned armed opposition 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. Iran has accused foreign governments of fomenting unrest among its ethnic minorities.

The HROK was founded by Mohammad Sadiq Kabudvand in April 2005 and currently has around 100 members. Despite a longstanding request for official recognition and registration as a non-governmental body, the authorities have never granted the HROK recognition. Board member Ajlal Qavami is in prison in Sanandaj in connection with another case relating to work as a journalist with *Payam-e Mardom-e Kordestan* and member of the editorial board of the bilingual weekly *Didgah* (Viewpoint), was arrested on or around 9 July after being summoned to the Revolutionary Court in Sanandaj. He had previously been sentenced to three years' imprisonment by Branch 1 of the Revolutionary Court in Sanandaj for organizing a demonstration in July 2005 in protest at the killing of a Kurd, Showan Qaderi, by the security forces. He had appealed

against this sentence but his appeal is reported to have been rejected, although neither Ajlal Qavami nor his lawyer was told this before he was arrested.

The objectives of the HROK include the protection of fundamental rights such as those set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international conventions; the teaching, dissemination and encouragement of respect towards human rights in Kurdistan; and the development of friendly relations between the peoples of Iran based on the principle of equality before law.

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

- urging the authorities to ensure that Mohammad Sadiq Kabudvand is seen by a qualified doctor and receives medical treatment urgently;
- reminding them that every prisoner has the right to adequate medical attention and that they are responsible for prisoners' wellbeing;
- calling for him to be allowed immediate and regular access to his family and his lawyer;
- asking for details of the reasons for Mohammad Sadiq Kabudvand's arrest and ongoing detention, including any charges and evidence against him and any trial which may be held;
- stating that Mohammad Sadiq Kabudvand should be released immediately unless he is to be charged with a recognisably criminal offence and brought promptly to a fair trial.

**APPEALS TO:**

Head of the Judiciary

His Excellency Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi  
Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Justice Building, Panzdah-Khordad Square,  
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Email:** [info@dadgostary-tehran.ir](mailto:info@dadgostary-tehran.ir) (In the subject line write: **FAO Ayatollah Shahroudi**)

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

**COPIES TO:**

President

His Excellency Mahmoud Ahmadinejad  
The Presidency, Palestine Avenue, Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Email:** [dr-ahmadinejad@president.ir](mailto:dr-ahmadinejad@president.ir), or via website: [www.president.ir/email](http://www.president.ir/email)

Speaker of Parliament

His Excellency Gholamali Haddad Adel  
Majles-e Shoura-ye Eslami  
Baharestan Square  
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Email:** [hadadadel@majlis.ir](mailto:hadadadel@majlis.ir)

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 13 December 2007.