

PUBLIC

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UA 297/07 Prisoners of conscience/fear of torture or other ill-treatment

IRAN **Ronak Safarzadeh (f)**  
**Hana Abdi (f), aged 21, student**

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Women's rights activists Ronak Safarzadeh and Hana Abdi have been detained in the city of Sanandaj, in the north-western province of Kordestan, and are believed to be held in a Ministry of Intelligence detention facility. Neither is known to have been charged. They are at risk of torture or other ill-treatment. Amnesty International considers them prisoners of conscience, detained solely for the peaceful exercise of their rights to freedom of expression and association.

Both women are active members of the Campaign for Equality, which is seeking an end to legalised discrimination against women, and of the NGO Azar Mehr Women's Organization of Sanandaj, which is affiliated to the Campaign for Equality.

Ronak Safarzadeh had attended a meeting on the International Day of the Child in Sanandaj on 8 October, during which she had collected signatures in support of the Campaign for Equality. The following day, men understood to be agents of the Ministry of Intelligence reportedly came to her house at 8.20am, confiscated her computer, copies of the campaign's petition and a booklet it had produced, and detained her. After six days, her mother was permitted a brief telephone conversation with her.

In an interview with the Campaign for Equality (<http://www.we4change.info/english/spip.php?article152>), Ronak Safarzadeh's sister said, "On Thursday [25 October] court proceedings were held in the case of Ronak and the authorities informed us that during these court proceedings the arrest order of Ronak was renewed for the period of one month." She also said that family members had not been allowed to attend her court hearing and that they had been told that Ronak Safarzadeh is being held in the detention facility of the Sanandaj Office of the Ministry of Intelligence, although they were not sure whether this was true. According to the Campaign for Equality, Ronak Safarzadeh's mother was beaten by officials in the local office of the judiciary on 30 October when she went to try to find out about her daughter.

Hana Abdi is studying psychology at Payam-e Noor University in Bijar. She was arrested on 4 November by seven Ministry of Intelligence agents at her grandfather's home in Sanandaj. The agents then searched her father's home where they confiscated Hana Abdi's computer and pamphlets explaining the aims of the Campaign for Equality.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Campaign for Equality, launched in August 2006, aims to collect one million signatures from Iranians in support of an end to legalised discrimination against women. So far, 13 of its members have been arrested while collecting signatures, though this is not forbidden under Iranian law.

On 5 November, a 28 month jail sentence passed on Campaign for Equality activist Delaram Ali, 24, was upheld by an appeal court. She was reportedly one of around 70 people arrested in June 2006, following a peaceful demonstration against laws discriminating against women. Five other women activists who organised the protest were earlier this year given shorter jail terms of up to a year and suspended sentences of up to three years. She is expected to start serving the sentence immediately. In an interview, Nobel laureate and Iranian lawyer, Shirin Ebadi said: "Why should a woman who wants equal human rights be charged with acting against national security?"

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

- expressing concern that Ronak Safarzadeh and Hana Abdi have been detained for their peaceful activities in support of the Campaign for Equality, such as collecting signatures;
- urging the authorities to release them immediately and unconditionally, as they are prisoners of conscience, detained solely for exercising their right to freedom of expression and association;
- asking the authorities to ensure that, while they remain in custody, they are protected from torture and ill-treatment.

**APPEALS TO:**

Head of the Judiciary

His Excellency Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi  
Ministry of Justice, Panzdah Khordad (Ark) Square,  
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

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

**Fax: +98 21 3390 4986 (please keep trying, if the called is answered, say "fax please")**

Minister of Intelligence

Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejeie  
Ministry of Intelligence, Second Negarestan Street, Pasdaran Avenue, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

Leader of the Islamic Republic

His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei, The Office of the Supreme Leader  
Islamic Republic Street - Shahid Keshvar Doust Street  
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Email: info@leader.ir**

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

**COPIES TO:**

President

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

**Fax: +98 21 6 649 5880**

**Email: dr-ahmadinejad@president.ir**

**E-mail: via website: <http://www.president.ir/email/>**

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 18 December 2007.