

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 13/160/2008  
31 October 2008

Further Information on UA 286/08 (MDE 13/152/2008, 20 October 2008) Incommunicado detention/Fear of torture or ill-treatment

**IRAN** Jamila Nabgan (f), aged 43, member of Arab minority in Iran

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Jamila Nabgan, sister of a prominent member of an outlawed Arab political party, Habib Nabgan, was released on bail on 24 October, four days after she was arrested. She now has to report every morning to the Ministry of Intelligence detention facility in Ahvaz, Khuzestan province, where she is then detained from 8am until 10pm.

Jamila Nabgan was arrested at her family home in Shush, Khuzestan province, on 19 October by officers from the Ministry of Intelligence. The authorities believe she helped her sister-in-law, the wife of Habib Nabgan Ma'soumeh Ka'bi, to flee the country in May 2008. Ma'soumeh Ka'bi and her five children were forcibly returned to Iran from Syria on 27 September (See UA 279/08, MDE 13/147/2008, 10 October 2008). During her four-day detention the interrogating officers ensured that Jamila Nabgan and Ma'soumeh Ka'bi saw each other once, to pressure them both into confessing. Jamila Nabgan's husband, Ali Chaab, has gone into hiding: he was told that he might be arrested for the same reasons as his wife.

Jamila Nabgan had been arrested in May 2008 and questioned about her sister-in-law's flight to Syria, during her two days of detention at the Intelligence Ministry detention facility in Ahwaz. Her brother, Habib Nabgan, is a prominent member of the outlawed political party *Lejnat al-Wefaq* (Reconciliation Committee), which promotes the rights of the Arab minority in Iran. He was resettled as a refugee in Denmark in 2006.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Much of the Arab minority in Iran lives in the province of Khuzestan, which borders Iraq. The Arab minority in Iran have complained of discrimination, including restricted access to resources such as water, as well as forced evictions for government agricultural and other development plans. There were mass demonstrations in April 2005, sparked by rumours that the government planned to disperse the country's Arab population or to force them to relinquish their Arab identity. Following bomb explosions in Ahvaz City in June and October 2005, which killed at least 14 people, and explosions at oil installations in September and October 2005, hundreds of people were arrested. Further bombings on 24 January 2006, in which at least six people were killed, were followed by further mass arrests. At least 17 men have now been executed as a result of their alleged involvement in the bombings.

According to Article 15 of the Iranian Constitution, "The official language and script of Iran... is Persian... However, the use of regional and tribal languages in the press and mass media, as well as for teaching of their literature in schools, is allowed in addition to Persian." *Lejnat Al-Wefaq* was established in 1999 to promote the rights of the Arab minority in Iran, including linguistic and cultural rights, but the party was declared illegal on 4 November 2006, and a statement from the Ahvaz Prosecutor's office said that "membership and connection with that party will be severely confronted."

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

- calling on the authorities to end the daily detention of Jamila Nabgan;
- asking why exactly she is being detained in this way, what she has been charged with and when her trial will begin;
- calling on the authorities to release her unless she is to be charged with a recognizable criminal offence and given a prompt and fair trial.

**APPEALS TO:**

Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi

Howzeh Riyasat-e Qoveh 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 subject line write: **FAO Ayatollah Shahroudi**)

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

Minister of Intelligence

Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejeie

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

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

**COPIES TO:**

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

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 12 December 2008.