

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 13/167/2008

13 November 2008

Further Information on UA 74/08 (MDE 13/050/2008, 17 March 2008) Prisoner of conscience/ Torture

IRAN Abbas Lisani (or Leysani) (m), activist

Prisoner of conscience, Abbas Lisani, was released from Yazd Prison in central Iran, on 29 October 2008 after serving two consecutive sentences totalling 30 months' imprisonment.

A prominent activist for the rights of the Iranian Azerbaijani minority, Abbas Lisani was sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment and 50 lashes after he was convicted of taking part in a May 2006 demonstration by Iranian Azerbaijanis in his home town of Ardabil. The demonstration was staged to protest against a cartoon published in an Iranian newspaper which many Iranian Azerbaijanis found offensive. His sentence was confirmed on appeal in October 2006. The flogging sentence has not been yet carried out.

Abbas Lisani's second prison sentence of one year was passed in August 2006 and confirmed later on appeal, in connection with his participation in a peaceful cultural gathering at Babek Castle in 2003. In April 2008 he also received a fine of 50,000 Toman (about US \$50,125) by a court in Tabriz, north-western Iran, on charges of "disturbing public order" during another gathering in Tabriz in June 2005.

During his detention Abbas Lisani went on several hunger strikes including in protest against his transfer to Yazd Prison and his harsh treatment there. He was then deprived of temporary prison leave as permitted in Iranian law.

On 7 October 2008, Abbas Lisani was taken to the offices of the Intelligence Services in Yazd where he was subjected to 10 hours' interrogation during which he was questioned about his plans after his release. The interrogation took place in presence of members of the Security force from his north western hometown, Ardebil. A few days prior to his release, the General Prosecutor and the Intelligence Services of Ardebil threatened Abbas Lisani's family that he would be arrested again should he take part in any event or movement in an Azerbaijani city.

No further action is required from the UA network. Many thanks to all those who sent appeals.