

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 13/017/2009

05 March 2009

UA 61/09

Fear of torture, ill-treatment

IRAN

**Abbas Hakimzadeh, (m) member of Central Council, Office for Strengthening Unity
Mehdi Mashayekhi (m), Amir Kabir University Islamic Students Association (ISA) member
Nariman Mostafavi (m), ISA member
Ahmad Qasaban (m), ISA member**

The four students named above were arrested on 24 February, following their alleged involvement in demonstrations at Tehran's Amir Kabir University. They are currently held incommunicado in Section 209 in Tehran's Evin Prison, a section of the prison under the supervision of Iran's Ministry of Intelligence. They are at risk of torture or other ill-treatment.

Abbas Hakimzadeh, Mehdi Mashayekhi, Nariman Mostafavi and Ahmad Qasaban were reportedly arrested at their homes on 24 February. Three of those arrested were members of the Islamic Students Association (ISA) of Amir Kabir University. Abbas Hakimzadeh is a member of the Office for the Consolidation of Unity.

More than 70 students were detained on 23 February during a peaceful demonstration held by students at Tehran's Amir Kabir University to protest against the government burying the remains of soldiers killed during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war on university campuses. Many of the students detained during the demonstration were reportedly ill-treated and others were taken to Police Station 107 at Palestine Square where there were also reports that students were ill-treated. Female students were said to have been insulted by police officers. Most of those arrested were released by the following morning.

The burial of unknown soldiers on university campuses has widely been seen as a move by the government to seek to control student groups opposed to its policies. Burial of soldiers, called martyrs on account of their sacrifice in fighting against Iraqi forces, appears to enable non-students to enter the campus without being required to show evidence that they are students, a normal requirement for access to university premises. Students groups fear that the presence of the graves would allow unrestricted access to the campuses by security forces, including the Basij (Mobilization) forces who are under the control of the Revolutionary Guards and would lead to further restrictions on debates and discussions relating to government policy.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since December there have been waves of arbitrary arrests and harassment of students, particularly directed against members of Iran's religious and ethnic minorities, trade unionists and women's rights activists. These measures may in part be intended to stifle debate and to silence critics of the authorities in advance of the forthcoming presidential election in June 2009.

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

- urging the authorities to ensure that all students held following demonstrations at Amir Kabir University on 23 February, be protected against torture or other ill-treatment and that they be allowed immediate access to their family, legal representation and any medical attention that they may require;
- seeking specific details of the reasons for the arrest of Abbas Hakimzadeh, Mehdi Mashayekhi, Nariman Mostafavi and Ahmad Qasaban; and any legal proceedings they might be facing;

- noting that if any of the students are held solely on account of the peaceful expression of their views or for exercising their right to freedom of assembly, then they are prisoners of conscience and should be released immediately without condition;

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: shahroudi@dadgostary-tehran.ir (In the subject line write: FAO Ayatollah Shahroudi)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Director, Human Rights Headquarters of Iran

Mohammad Javad Larijani

Howzeh Riyasat-e Qoveh Qazaiyeh / Office of the Head of the Judiciary

Pasteur St, Vali Asr Ave., south of Serah-e Jomhuri, Tehran 1316814737, Iran

Fax: +98 21 3390 4986 (please keep trying)

Email: info@dadgostary-tehran.ir (In the subject line write: FAO Javad Larijani)

Salutation: Dear Mr Larijani

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 16 April.