

PUBLIC

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EXTRA 74/98

Fear of Imminent Execution / Death Penalty  
Legal concern

9 October 1998

IRAN

Sirus Dhabihhi-Muqaddam, member of the Baha'i religious minority  
Hedayatollah Kashifi-Najafabadi, member of the Baha'i religious minority  
Ruhollah Rawhani, member of the Baha'i religious minority (executed)

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Sirus Dhabihhi-Muqaddam and Hedayatollah Kashifi-Najafabadi, both currently imprisoned in Mashhad, may face imminent execution after their death sentences were recently confirmed by a retrial.

The Supreme Judicial Court in Tehran reportedly ordered a retrial after finding that the two accused had not had access to defence counsel during their initial trial. Legal concerns have arisen from the retrial, however, since neither man was allowed a lawyer of his choice and was instead defended by court-appointed counsel.

Sirus Dhabihhi-Muqaddam and Hedayatollah Kashifi-Najafabadi were arrested in Mashhad in October 1997, on charges of being involved in the conversion of a Muslim woman to the Baha'i faith. The woman herself stated that her parents were Baha'i, and that she had been raised as member of the Baha'i religion.

Ruhollah Rawhani, who was arrested in connection with the case and tried together with Sirus Dhabihhi-Muqaddam and Hedayatollah Kashifi-Najafabadi at the first trial, was executed on 21 July 1998.

Amnesty International regards Sirus Dhabihhi-Muqaddam and Hedayatollah Kashifi-Najafabadi as prisoners of conscience, and believes the real reason for their arrests is their active involvement in the Baha'i community in Mashhad.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The Baha'i faith is not recognised by the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran and as such many face systematic harassment and persecution. Over 200 Baha'is have been executed since the Islamic Revolution in 1979, most of them during the 1980s.

#### **RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express/airmail letters in English or your own language:**

- urging the Iranian authorities to repeal the death sentences against Sirus Dhabihhi-Muqaddam and Hedayatollah Kashifi-Najafabadi;
- appealing to the Iranian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Sirus Dhabihhi-Muqaddam and Hedayatollah Kashifi-Najafabadi if they are being held solely for the peaceful expression of their religious beliefs;
- reminding the government of Iran of its commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular Article 18: "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance".

#### **APPEALS TO:**

Leader of the Islamic Republic  
His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei  
The Presidency, Palestine Avenue  
Azerbaijan Intersection  
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Telegrams:** Ayatollah Khamenei, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Faxes:** + 98 21 650203 (via Interior Ministry, ask for fax to be forwarded)

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

President

His Excellency Hojjatoleslam val Moslemin Sayed Mohammad Khatami  
The Presidency, Palestine Avenue  
Azerbaijan Intersection  
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Telegrams: President Khatami, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran**  
**Faxes: + 98 21 674790 (via Foreign Affairs, ask for fax to be forwarded)**

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

Head of Judiciary

His Excellency Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi  
Ministry of Justice  
Park-e Shahr  
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Telegrams: Head of the Judiciary, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran**

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

**COPIES TO:**

Minister of Foreign Affairs  
His Excellency Kamal Kharrazi  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Abdolmajid Keshk-e Mesri Avenue  
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Faxes: + 98 21 674790**

Mr Mohammad Hassan Zia'i-Far  
Secretary, Islamic Human Rights Commission  
PO Box 13165-137  
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Faxes: + 98 21 204 0541**

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 6 November 1998.

***"Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance."***

Article 18, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

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