

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 13/028/2009
1 April 2009

Further Information on UA 60/09 (MDE 13/016/2009, 04 March 2009) Fear of torture and other ill-treatment

IRAN	Sanaz Allahyari (f) Nasim Roshana'i (f) Maryam Sheikh (f) Amir Hossein Mohammadi-Far (m) New name: Mohammad Pour Abdollah (m)	All students
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Sanaz Allahyari and Amir Hossein Mohammadi-Far were released on 19 March 2009. It is not known whether they have been released under any conditions. In a statement on its website, the Students for Freedom and Equality (*Daneshjouyan-e Azadi Khah va Beraber Talab*), a students' rights body, stated that they had been ill-treated during their 18 days of detention. The students' rights body reported that at the time of their release the students had signs of bruising and breathing difficulties possibly caused by beating they received while in detention.

Maryam Sheikh and Nasim Roshana'i remain in detention in Evin Prison where they continue to be at risk of torture or other ill-treatment.

The four students were arrested on 1 March, possibly in connection with a demonstration held on 23 February, at Amir Kabir University to protest against the government burying the remains of soldiers killed during the Iran-Iraq war between 1980 and 1988 on university campuses.

The details of the arrest of a fifth student, said to be linked to the Students for Freedom and Equality (*Daneshjouyan-e Azadi Khah va Beraber Talab*) student body, have emerged. Mohammad Pour Abdollah, a Tehran University student was detained at his house on 12 February 2009. Reports suggest that he was held for one month in solitary confinement at Evin Prison in Tehran and then transferred on 18 March 2009 to Qezel Hesar Prison in Karaj, west of Tehran. He was detained there in a section of the prison reserved to individuals convicted of serious crimes. He was reportedly later moved to the quarantined section of the prison for inmates with infectious diseases. On 21 March, Iran's Norouz, or New Year, his mother and father sat in front of the prison for several hours in the hope they would be granted permission to see their son.

In the presence of the prosecutor working on his case, Mohammad Pour Abdollah's parents were allowed to have a meeting with him during the last week of March. His parents have written an open letter to the Head of the Judiciary, calling for their son, to be released.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since December there have been waves of arbitrary arrests and harassment, particularly directed against members of Iran's religious and ethnic minorities, students, 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 presidential election in June 2009.

More than 70 students were arrested on 23 February during a peaceful demonstration held by students at Tehran's Amir Kabir University in protest at the government's burial on campus of soldiers' remains

The burial of the unknown soldiers on the university campus 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.

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

- calling on the authorities to ensure that Nasim Roshana'i, Maryam Sheikh and Mohammad Pour Abdollah are protected against torture or other ill-treatment and are allowed immediate access to their family, legal representation and any medical attention that they may require;
- seeking specific details of the reasons for their arrest and any charges they may be facing and urging that they be released immediately if they are not charged with a recognizably criminal offence and brought to trial promptly and fairly;
- noting that if any of the students are held solely on account of the peaceful expression of their views or the exercise of their right to freedom of assembly, then they are prisoners of conscience, and should be released immediately and unconditionally.

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

COPIES TO:

Head of Judiciary for Tehran province

Ali Reza Avaie

Tehran Judiciary

No. 152, corner of 17th Alley, before Shahid Motahhari Avenue

Sanaei Avenue, Karimkhan Zand Avenue

Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: avaei@dadgostary-tehran.ir, info@dadgostary-tehran.ir

Fax: +98 21 8832 6700 (unreliable, please try three times before trying an alternative method)

Salutation: Dear Sir

Director, Human Rights Headquarters of Iran

Mohammad Javad Larijani

Howzeh Riassat-e Ghoveh Ghazaiyeh (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 Javid 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 13 May.