

PUBLIC

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UA 235/04

Fear for safety/torture and ill-treatment

30 July 2004

IRAN

**Mostafa Piran (m) aged 47, retired teacher
His family**

Retired teacher Mostafa Piran was forcibly evicted from his government-owned apartment on 6 July, together with his family. He is now reportedly held in Evin Prison, in Tehran, where he has reportedly been ill-treated and possibly tortured. It appears that he has not been informed of any charges against him, nor allowed to see a lawyer.

Mostafa Piran is the father of prominent jailed student activist Peyman Piran: in Iran, it has long been common practice for the security forces to arbitrarily detain relatives of people in custody, especially in cases that have been widely reported in the country. Mostafa Piran had reportedly been trying to organise a teachers' strike to mark the fifth anniversary of the July 1999 student-led demonstrations, known as *18 Tir* after the Iranian date. The authorities' response to the anniversary included a ban on demonstrations or rallies and a wave of arrests of student and political activists.

He and his family lived in a rented apartment, owned by the Education Ministry. They were violently evicted by a large group of security forces agents, who reportedly beat Mostafa Piran severely in front of his family before they arrested him. They threw the family's belongings into the street, and reportedly confiscated them, and sealed the apartment. They also reportedly sealed off the streets surrounding the apartment building while they evicted the family.

Mostafa Piran was initially taken to an unofficial detention centre under the control of the Ministry of Intelligence, possibly called 530. It is believed he was later transferred to Evin prison. A family member who was permitted to visit him reported that he was badly bruised. He has allegedly been ill-treated during lengthy interrogation sessions. The rest of the Piran family, including two teenage girls, are now homeless and are having to stay with friends. The authorities have reportedly threatened to split them up, and force them to live in different parts of Iran.

Mostafa Piran's son Peyman is a member of the National Union of Iranian Students and Graduates (*Anjoman-e Daneshjuyan va Daneshmukhtegan*). He was jailed for 10 years in March this year on vague charges connected with his student activism. Shortly before they were evicted, the Piran family were reportedly "put under pressure" to publicly beg forgiveness for their son, and to urge him to publicly admit his "mistakes" and seek forgiveness. When they refused, they were threatened with eviction from their apartment and warned that dissidents had no right to stay in government housing.

Two days before his father was arrested, Peyman and 11 other political prisoners began a hunger strike which coincided with the *18 Tir* anniversary. They called for those who had authorised the 1999 attack on the students to be identified, and for the student demonstrators and all other political prisoners to be released unconditionally. Prison guards warned Peyman Piran that his family would "pay the price" for his actions. Once his family was evicted and his father arrested, Peyman Piran and his fellow hunger strikers also demanded that the family be allowed to return to their home.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The *18 Tir* demonstrations began on 8 July 1999, when a small number of students gathered in a peaceful demonstration outside their university to protest against the closure of the daily newspaper *Salam* ("Peace" or "Hello"). As their numbers grew, and the days passed, there were increasingly angry exchanges and

eventually clashes between the security forces and demonstrators. Hundreds of demonstrators were arbitrarily arrested, most of whom were held without charge or trial.

Amnesty International has documented many cases of relatives of imprisoned dissidents being arbitrarily detained. Akbar Mohammadi was detained during the *18 Tir* demonstrations and sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment, but it is believed that he may have been arrested at least partly because his brother, Manuchehr Mohammadi, detained at around the same time, is a leading member of the National Association of Students and Graduates. Two more members of the Mohammadi family, Simin and Mohammed, were briefly detained in July 2003, and it is believed that they are still to face charges. (See UA 181/03, MDE 13/015/2003, 20 June 2003, and follow-ups.)

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Mostafa Piran, who was reportedly beaten in front of his family on 6 July, and then arrested and allegedly ill-treated or tortured during interrogation;
- calling for him to be treated humanely, and not subjected to further torture or ill-treatment, in line with Article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Iran is a state party. It states that "No one shall be subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment."
- asking why Mostafa Piran has been detained and for the charges against him to be made public;
- calling for him to be given access to legal representation of his choice and to any medical treatment that he may require;
- expressing concern for the safety of his family, who were evicted from their government-owned apartment on 6 July, and are now homeless and for the authorities investigate alleged threats against his family and bring those responsible to justice.

APPEALS TO:

Leader of the Islamic Republic

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

Fax: + 98 21 649 5880 (please mark 'For the attention of the Office of His Excellency, Ayatollah al Udhma Khamenei, Qom)

Email: webmaster@wilayah.org (on the subject line write: For the attention of the Office of His Excellency, Ayatollah al Udhma Khamenei, Qom)

Head of the Judiciary

His Excellency Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi
Ministry of Justice
Park-e Shahr
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: irjpr@iranjudiciary.org (please ask for your message to be forwarded to HE Ayatollah Shahroudi)

COPIES TO:

Article 90 Commission

Chairperson, Article 90 Commission (Komisyon-e Asl-e Navad)
Majles-e Shura-ye Eslami, Imam Khomeini Avenue, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax + 98 21 646 1746 (can be difficult to reach, please be patient)

Email: mellat@majlis.ir

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 9 September 2004.