

PUBLIC

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Possible Prisoner of Conscience/

Fear for

IRAN Tahmineh Reza'i Milani (f), aged 41

Tahmineh Milani, a prominent female film director, has been arrested by Tehran's Revolutionary Court, accused of "insulting Islamic values" in her latest film. Amnesty International considers her to be a prisoner of conscience, arrested for the non-violent exercise of her right to freedom of expression.

According to the state Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), Tehran's Revolutionary Court has accused Tahmineh Milani of "abusing the arts as a tool for actions which will suit the taste of counter-revolutionary and *mohareb* groups [those waging war against God]". Her new film, *The Hidden Half*, focuses on rebel activists during the political turmoil of the 1980s following the Iranian revolution.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Tahmineh Milani is an internationally-recognised director and has been involved in film-making since 1979. She has directed a number of films: the best-known, *Two Women*, has won international awards.

A struggle is taking place in Iran between reformist MPs and the judiciary. President Khatami's election in 1997 led to a relaxation of censorship, which enabled Iranian cinema to challenge religious and political mores. However, the judicial authorities have recently instigated a widespread clampdown on freedom of expression, arresting many journalists. Tahmineh Milani is the first film-maker arrested. The Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance is negotiating with the judiciary to attempt to secure her release.

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

- expressing concern for film maker Tahmineh Milani, who appears to have been arrested solely for the peaceful expression of her beliefs, and asking where she is detained;
- seeking assurances that she is being treated humanely and given prompt and regular access to her family, lawyers and any medical attention she may need;
- expressing concern that Tahmineh Milani appears to be a prisoner of conscience, who should be released immediately and unconditionally, and if this is not the case, asking why she was arrested, what charges she faces;
- reminding the judicial authorities of Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: "Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice."

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 Khomeini, Tehran, Iran

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, Iran

Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of Judiciary

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

Telegrams: Head of Judiciary, Tehran, 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

Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance

Ahmad Masjed-Jame'i

Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance

Baharestan Square

Kamal-ol-Molk Avenue

Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

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 12 October 2001.