

PUBLIC

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26 September 2003

UA 277/03 Fear for safety/ Torture and ill-treatment/ Incommunicado detention

IRAN Mehdi Said Asgari (m)]
Maziyar Aslani (m)] members of *Hezb-e Mellat-e Iran*, Iran Nation Party
Ali Khaleqi (m)]

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of the three men named above, who have reportedly been tortured while in incommunicado detention. The reason for their arrest is not known to Amnesty International, but may be connected with their membership of the banned opposition group, *Hezb-e Mellat-e Iran*, Iran Nation Party.

According to a report on the internet news service *Peyk-e Iran* on 18 September, Mehdi Said Asgari and Maziyar Aslani were arrested on 9 August from their homes in the capital Tehran, by members of the Revolutionary Guard. Ali Khaleqi was reportedly arrested by members of the Revolutionary Guard on a street in Tehran on 1 September.

Mehdi Said Asari and Maziyar Aslani are believed to be detained at Tehran's Evin prison, though this has not been confirmed. They have reportedly been denied access to their family and to legal representation. Ali Khaleqi's place of detention is not known. All three men have allegedly been tortured.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Hezb-e Mellat-e Iran, is a banned secular opposition party. It was formerly led by Dariush Foruhar, who was the Minister of Labour in the Provisional Government of 1979. Dariush Foruhar remained in Iran following the establishment of the Islamic Republic, often criticising the authorities, especially on human rights issues. In 1998 he and his wife, Parvaneh Eskandari (Foruhar), were assassinated at their home in Tehran, in killings that were believed to be politically motivated. Since their assassinations their house has become a place of remembrance and a focal point for *Hezb-e Mellat-e Iran* members. Throughout 2003, the house has been under surveillance, while many members and supporters of the party have been detained briefly. A leading member of the party was reportedly told by security officials around June 2003 that if members of the party continued their activities in opposing the authorities, they would be arrested.

Freedom of expression and association in Iran is curtailed by legal restrictions and by flaws in the administration of justice. Amnesty International has for many years documented a catalogue of arrests without charge, prolonged and often incommunicado detention, followed in many cases by unfair trial, and imprisonment for no reason other than the expression of conscientiously held beliefs.

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 Mehdi Said Asari, Maziyar Aslani and Ali Khaleqi, and calling for an investigation into the allegations of torture;
- urging the authorities to clarify the current whereabouts of the three men, and to guarantee that they are not being tortured or ill-treated in detention;
- urging the authorities to grant the men immediate access to their family, to legal representation of their choice, and to any medical treatment they may require, in accordance with Articles 32 and 35 of the Constitution of Iran and Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Iran is a state party.

- calling on the authorities to give details of the charges against the three men, noting that such charges should be in accordance with internationally recognised criminal offences;
- calling for their immediate and unconditional release if they are not to be charged with a recognisable criminal offence.

APPEALS TO:

Head of the Judiciary

His Excellency Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahrudi

Ministry of Justice, Park-e Shahr, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Telegram: Head of Judiciary, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: + 98 21 879 6671 (please keep trying; please mark "care of Director of International Affairs, Judiciary")

Salutation: Your Excellency

Leader of the Islamic Republic

His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed >Ali Khamenei,

The Presidency, Palestine Avenue,

Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Telegram: His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

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

Salutation: Your Excellency

President

His Excellency Hojjatoleslam val Moslemin Sayed Mohammad Khatami

The Presidency, Palestine Avenue

Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Telegram: His Excellency Hojjatoleslam val Moslemin Sayed Mohammad Khatami, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

E-mail: khatami@president.ir (please resend your message if it does not get through the first time)

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

Minister of Foreign Affairs,

His Excellency Kamal Kharrazi

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Abdolmajid Keshk-e Mesri Av

Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: + 98 21 390 1999 (please keep trying; please mark "care of Human Rights Department, Foreign Ministry)

Islamic Human Rights Commission

Mr Mohammad Hassan Zia'i-Far

Secretary, Islamic Human Rights Commission

PO Box 13165-137, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: + 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 7 November 2003.