

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 13/047/2006

05 May 2006

UA 120/06 Arbitrary arrest/ incommunicado detention/ torture and ill-treatment

IRAN Mostafa Evezpoor (m), aged 25, member of the Azeri Turk minority community

Mostafa Evezpoor is detained incommunicado, at an undisclosed location which is believed to be a detention facility run by the Ministry of Intelligence in Tabriz. It is feared that he is being tortured.

According to reports, Mostafa Evezpoor was arrested at his home in the city of Tabriz, East Azerbaijan province, on 6 April with his 16-year-old brother Morteza. Their younger 14-year-old brother, Mohammad Reza, had been arrested earlier that day by officials from the Ministry of Intelligence, while writing the following slogan on the wall: "I am a Turk and my language is Turkish". He was taken to a Ministry of Intelligence facility called *Bagh Shomal*, where he was allegedly severely beaten.

That night, at around midnight, around 15 officials from the Ministry of Intelligence came to the Evezpoor family home. They reportedly did not have an entry or an arrest warrant. Nonetheless, they searched the house, and confiscated some Azeri-Turkish language books, newsletters, posters, CDs, DVDs- reportedly of the three brothers at nationalist events with other Azeri Turk activists, and also some photos and a telephone book belonging to Mostafa. Mostafa and Morteza were then arrested.

Mohammad Reza and Morteza were detained for three days before being released. During this time, Mohammad Reza was allegedly tortured, including being suspended by his feet for 24 hours, and given no food or water, or allowed to use a toilet.

Mostafa Evezpoor remains in detention. His location has not been disclosed to his family, who have not had access to him. They managed to catch a brief glimpse of him on 9 April, three days after his arrest, when he was apparently brought before a court. It is believed that he is detained at a detention facility of the Ministry of Intelligence in Tabriz. He has had no access to a lawyer, and it is feared that he is being tortured in detention.

Amnesty International believes that Mostafa Evezpoor may be a prisoner of conscience, detained solely on account of his peaceful activism for the rights of the Azeri Turk minority in Iran. If this is the case, he should be immediately and unconditionally released. Otherwise, he should be promptly charged with a recognisably criminal offence and given a prompt and fair trial.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Iranian Azeri Turks, who are mainly Shi'a Muslims, are the largest minority in Iran, believed to constitute between 25-30 per cent of the population. They are located mainly in the north and north-west of Iran. As Shi'a, they are not subject to the same kinds of discrimination as minorities of other religions, and are well-integrated into the economy, but there is a growing demand for greater cultural and linguistic rights, including implementation of their constitutional right to education through the medium of Turkish. A small minority advocate secession of Iranian Azerbaijan from the Islamic Republic of Iran and union with the Republic of Azerbaijan. Those who seek to promote Azeri Turkish cultural identity are viewed with suspicion by the Iranian authorities, who often accuse them of vague charges such as "promoting pan-Turkism".

At the end of June 2005, scores of Iranian Azeri Turks participating in an annual cultural gathering at Babek Castle in Kalayber were arrested. At least 21 were later sentenced to prison terms of between three months and one year, some of which were suspended, reportedly after conviction of charges such as "spreading propaganda against the system" and "establishing organizations against the system". Some were also

banned from entering Kalayber for a period of 10 years. On 30 March 2006, Azeri activists Ebrahim Rashidi and Maharam Kamrani, who is the brother of lawyer and Human Rights Defender Saleh Kamrani, were arrested. They were released on bail on 18 April, and are due to be tried on the charge of "acting against national security". (See UA 86/06, MDE 13/043/2006, 2 May 2006 and follow up). Azeri activist Saleh Malla Abbasi is detained incommunicado at a detention facility run by the Ministry of Intelligence in Tabriz, following his arrest on 17 April 2006 (See UA 115/06, MDE 13/045/2006, 3 May 2006).

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Mostafa Evezpoor, who is being held in incommunicado detention, reportedly at detention facility run by the Ministry of Intelligence in city of Tabriz;
- calling for him to be given immediate access to a lawyer of his choice and his family;
- expressing concern that Mostafa Evezpoor's fourteen-year-old brother, who was arrested on the same day as his brother, was allegedly tortured in detention and seeking assurances that Mostafa Evezpoor is not being tortured or ill-treated in detention;
- reminding the authorities that Iran is a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which states that "No one shall be subjected to cruel, inhuman and or degrading treatment", and calling for an investigation into all allegations of torture, with those found responsible brought to justice in fair trials;
- expressing concern that Mostafa Evezpoor appears to have been detained solely in connection with his peaceful activities for the rights of the Azeri Turk minority community;
- calling on the authorities to release him immediately and unconditionally unless he is to be promptly charged with a recognizably criminal offence and given a prompt and fair trial.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of Intelligence

Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejeie
Ministry of Information
Second Negarestan Street
Pasdaran Avenue
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: iranprobe@iranprobe.com

Salutation: **Your Excellency**

Head of the Judiciary

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

Email: **via Judiciary website at Iranjudiciary.org/feedback_en.html**

Salutation: **Your Excellency**

COPIES TO:

Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic

His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei
The Office of the Supreme Leader
Shoahada Street, Qom, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: **info@leader.ir or istiftaa@wilayah.org**

and 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 16 June 2006.