

PUBLIC

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UA 68/08

Fear of torture

IRAN

**Ebrahim Mehrnehad (m), aged 16**

**Fazlorahman Jahras (m), aged about 16**

**Abdollah Salarzahi, (m), leading member, Voice of Justice Young People's Society (VJYPS)**

**Asadollah Shahbaksh, (m) student, VJYPS member**

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According to local Baluchi sources, Ebrahim Mehrnehad, Fazlorahman Jahras, Abdollah Salarzahi and Asadollah Shahbaksh have been arrested, and their whereabouts are unknown. They are at grave risk of torture.

Ebrahim Mehrnehad is the younger brother of Baluchi journalist and civil society activist Ya'qoub Mehrnehad, who is the head of a legally-registered NGO, The Voice of Justice Young People's Society (VJYPS). VJYPS organises events such as concerts and educational courses for young Baluchi people, and raises funds to help the poor. Ebrahim Mehrnehad was said to have been arrested on 21 February while walking home from school. Fazlorahman Jahras, who was with him, was also reportedly arrested.

VJYPS member Asadollah Shahbaksh was reportedly arrested in late February, and VJYPS spokesperson and Central Council member Abdollah Salarzahi was reportedly arrested in early March.

Ya'qoub Mehrnehad has been sentenced to death after an unfair trial, for allegedly having "contacts with the Jondallah group", a Baluchi armed opposition group. See UA 38/08 (MDE 13/038/2008 and MDE 13/047/2008) for further details.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Baluchi armed group, the People's Resistance of Movement of Iran (PRMI), formerly known as *Jondallah* has carried out a number of attacks on Iranian officials and has sometimes taken hostages and killed them. It reportedly seeks to defend the rights of the Baluchi people, though government officials have claimed that it is involved in drug smuggling and terrorist activities and has ties to foreign governments.

Attacks by the PRMI have been followed by widespread arrests of members of the Baluchi minority, many of whom Baluchi sources claim are not connected to the attacks. In 2007, at least 312 people, and perhaps many more, were executed in Iran. There was a marked rise in the number of Baluchis executed.

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

- asking why Ebrahim Mehrnehad and the three others (naming them) have been detained, where they are detained and under what law, and seeking assurances that they will not be tortured or ill-treated while in detention;
- urging the authorities to release all four if they have been detained solely for the peaceful exercise of their rights to freedom of expression and association;
- reminding the authorities that the use of confessions extracted under duress is prohibited by Article 38 of the Constitution of Iran;
- urging the authorities to ensure that all four have access to their families and a lawyer of their choice and to any medical treatment they may require.

**APPEALS TO:**

Minister of Intelligence

Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejeie

Ministry of Intelligence, Second Negarestan Street, Pasdaran Avenue, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

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 Jomhouri, Tehran 1316814737, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Email: info@dadgostary-tehran.ir (In the subject line write: FAO Ayatollah Shahroudi)**

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

Governor of Sistan - Baluchistan province

Mr Dahmarde, Governor

**Fax: +98 541 3231990**

**E-mail: info@sb-ostan.ir**

**Salutation: Dear Sir**

**COPIES TO:**

Leader of the Islamic Republic

His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei

The Office of the Supreme Leader, Islamic Republic Street - Shahid Keshvar Doust Street

Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Email: info@leader.ir**

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

Speaker of Parliament

His Excellency Gholamali Haddad Adel

Majles-e Shoura-ye Eslami, Baharestan Square, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Fax: +98 21 3355 6408**

**Email: hadadadel@majlis.ir (Ask for your message to be passed to the Article 90 Commission)**

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 22 April 2008.