

URGENT ACTION

TWO IRANIAN FILMMAKERS DETAINED FOR MONTHS

Two Iranian filmmakers – Mohammad Ali Shirzadi and Ja'far Panahi – are detained without charge or trial in Evin Prison, Tehran after their arrest in January and March 2010 respectively. Amnesty International is calling for their immediate and unconditional release as they are held solely for the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression and are considered to be prisoners of conscience.

Mohammad Ali Shirzadi, aged 39, was arrested by five unidentified men on 4 January 2010 outside his home in Tehran. He was forced to re-enter his house which was then searched without a warrant and his computer, personal notebook and other items were confiscated. His family had no news about his whereabouts for 40 days, after which he telephoned them to say he was all right, but did not reveal his location. They later learned that he was being held in Evin Prison. He has so far been allowed two family visits, at which a security official was present, and he was unable to tell them the reasons for his arrest. However, his family believe his arrest may be linked to an interview he filmed around two years ago, between prominent human rights defender Emadeddin Baghi and Grand Ayatollah Montazeri. The film was shown after Grand Ayatollah Montazeri died in December 2009 and shortly afterwards, Emadeddin Baghi was arrested and has been in detention since (see UA: 05/10 Index: MDE 13/003/2010 and follow-up).

Award-winning filmmaker **Ja'far Panahi**, aged 49, was arrested on 1 March 2010 at his home in Tehran with several other people, including his wife and daughter. All have since been released except for Ja'far Panahi. His wife, Tahereh Saeedi, was allowed to meet him for the first time on 30 March. On 14 April 2010, the Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance said that Ja'far Panahi had been arrested because he was making an anti-government film about the disputed presidential election of 2009.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Persian, Arabic, English, French or your own language:

- Calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Mohammad Ali Shirzadi and Ja'far Panahi as they are held solely for the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression and are prisoners of conscience;
- Expressing concern that Mohammad Ali Shirzadi was held incommunicado for 40 days and urging that family members of all detainees are informed promptly of their relatives' whereabouts and allowed to visit them regularly;
- Reminding the Iranian authorities that freedom of expression is guaranteed under Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to which Iran is a state party and that the right to freedom of expression includes freedom to seek, receive and impart information, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 16 JUNE 2010 TO:

Leader of the Islamic Republic

Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei
The Office of the Supreme Leader
Islamic Republic Street – End of
Shahid Keshvar Doust Street, Tehran,
Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: info_leader@leader.ir

via website:

<http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/index.php?p=letter> (English)

Salutation: Your Excellence

Head of Tehran Judiciary

Mr Ali Reza Avaei
Karimkhan Zand Avenue
Sana'i Avenue, Corner of Alley 17, No
152

Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: avaei@Dadgostary-tehran.ir

Salutation: Dear Mr Avaei

And copies to: Secretary General, High Council for Human Rights

Mohammad Javad Larijani
Howzeh Riassat-e Ghoveh Ghazaiyeh
Pasteur St, Vali Asr Ave., south of
Serah-e Jomhuri
Tehran 1316814737

Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: +98 21 3390 4986

Email: bia.judi@yahoo.com (In subject
line: FAO Mohammad Javad Larijani

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



URGENT ACTION

TWO IRANIAN FILMMAKERS DETAINED FOR MONTHS

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Ja'far Panahi is a well-known film director who has made internationally-acclaimed films such as "the White Balloon" and "The Circle". He is also a peace activist who is a member of the National Peace Council in Iran, a group set up in July 2008 on the initiative of the Centre for Human Rights Defenders, an NGO established by Nobel Peace Laureate Shirin Ebadi and other prominent lawyers. The National Peace Council has 85 representatives from different social and, ethnic groups and professions. Its aims are "creating and strengthening the basis for peace; preventing a military attack; abolishing the imposed sanctions and preventing any additional sanctions; ending the situation of 'Neither war, Nor Peace'".

Ja'far Panahi was briefly arrested in July 2009 during a gathering at a cemetery in Tehran of people mourning the death of Neda Agha Soltan, a young woman apparently killed by a member of the Basij militia during a protest at the outcome of the 2009 presidential election. He was later released, but subsequently banned from travelling abroad, including to the 2009 Berlin Film Festival in which he was due to participate. He has been invited to participate on the jury of the Cannes Film Festival between 12 and 23 May 2010.

Mohammad Ali Shirzadi is a member of the now-banned Association in Defence of Prisoners' Rights, founded by Emadeddin Baghi.

UA: 107/10 Index: MDE 13/048/2010 Issue Date: 05 May 2010

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL

