

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 13/051/2005

09 September 2005

UA 233/05 Fear of torture and ill-treatment / Incommunicado detention

IRAN	Mohsen Bawi (m) aged 32]	
	Imad Bawi (m), law student]	
	Zamel Bawi (m)]	brothers
	Hani Bawi (m), student]	
	Moslem Bawi (m), student]	
	Hajj Salem Bawi (m), their father		
	Asad Bawi (m), their cousin		
	Mansour Tayouri (m)]	members of the extended Bawi family
	Hassan Boughedar (m)]	

The nine men named above, all members of Iran's Arab minority, are reportedly being held incommunicado at unknown locations. They are at risk of torture or ill-treatment. According to reports, all those named above may be facing charges of having contact with dissident organizations operating abroad.

The five Bawi brothers and their cousin Asad Bawi were reportedly arrested by security forces on 11 August. Their family are prominent figures in the city of Ahvaz, in Khuzestan province in eastern Iran. Mohsen Bawi, the eldest of the brothers, is an IT consultant. Imad Bawi is studying law at the Lebanese University of Beirut. He was visiting his family in Ahvaz during the summer holiday when the Iranian authorities banned him from returning to Lebanon. Amnesty International has no further information on the reasons for the ban. Zamel Bawi is a businessman who owns shops in Ahvaz. Hani Bawi is studying commerce and trade at the University of Ahvaz. Moslem Bawi is also a student. Their cousin, Asad Bawi, a businessman, is also their brother-in-law, and lives in the family home in Ahvaz.

Hajj Salem Bawi, a tribal leader and a businessman who runs a number of computer stores in Khuzestan province, may be accused of copying and distributing dissident material. According to reports, he was arrested by security forces after enquiring about where his sons and nephew are being detained. Amnesty International has no further information about the detention of Mansour Tayouri and Hassan Boughedar.

Tension has mounted among the Arab population since April, after it was alleged that the government planned to disperse the country's Arab population or to force them to relinquish their Arab identity. Scores of Iranian Arabs have been detained in recent months (See UA 91/05, MDE 13/014/2005, 18 April 2005 and UA 222/05, MDE 13/048/2005, 26 August 2005). The arrests of the nine men named above may be connected to four bomb blasts in Ahvaz, and two others in the capital, Tehran, which took place on 12 June. Up to ten people were killed and at least 90 others were injured in the explosions.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Arab community mainly lives in the Khuzestan region, which borders Iraq. It is strategically important because it is the site of much of Iran's oil reserves. The Arab population do not feel they have benefited as much from the oil revenue as the Persian population; historically they have been marginalised and discriminated against, for instance being denied the right to an education in their own language.

On 14 August, the Iranian government reportedly accused the United Kingdom and the United States of instigating the recent ethnic clashes involving the Arab and Kurdish minorities in the country. Furthermore, the Ministry of Intelligence has also reportedly announced that those responsible for the unrest and bombing in Khuzestan province in April and June have been identified and arrested.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Mohsen Bawi, Imad Bawi, Zamel Bawi, Hani Bawi, Moslem Bawi, Asad Bawi, Hajj Salem Bawi, Mansour Tayouri, Hassan Boughedar, who are reportedly held in incommunicado detention and are at risk of torture or ill-treatment;
- calling on the authorities to reveal where they are detained, and release them immediately, unless they are promptly charged with a recognizably criminal offence;
- calling for them to be given immediate access to lawyers, their family, interpreters and medical treatment if necessary;
- seeking assurances that they are not being tortured or ill-treated in detention;
- reminding the authorities that confessions extracted under duress are prohibited by Article 38 of the constitution of Iran, which says that "All forms of torture for the purpose of extracting confession or acquiring information are forbidden," and that Iran is a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), of which Article 7 states that "No one shall be subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment."

APPEALS TO: (Fax numbers and e-mail addresses for Iran are unreliable so please send letters if you cannot get through)

Leader of the Islamic Republic

His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei
The Presidency, Palestine Avenue, Azerbaijan Intersection
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: + 98 21 649 5880 (please mark 'For the attention of the Office of His Excellency, Ayatollah al Udhma Khamenei')

Email: info@wilayah.org

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: irjpr@iranjudiciary.org (mark 'Please forward to His Excellency Ayatollah Shahroudi')

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

Speaker of Parliament

Gholamali Haddad Adel
Majles-e Shoura-ye Eslami (Parliament)
Imam Khomeini Avenue, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: + 98 21 646 1746

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 21 October 2005.