

URGENT ACTION

BROTHER OF PROMINENT FILMMAKER ARRESTED

Behrouz Ghobadi, brother of internationally acclaimed Iranian film maker, Bahman Ghobadi, was arrested on 4 November 2012 by men in plain clothes, believed to belong to the Ministry of Intelligence. He is reportedly being held in a Ministry of Intelligence detention centre, placing him at risk of torture or other ill-treatment.

Behrouz Ghobadi, father of a newborn baby boy and a member of the Kurdish minority in Iran, was arrested in the early hours of the morning of 4 November. He was in a taxi driving from Sanandaj, the capital of the north-western Kordestan province, to a Tehran airport. Plain-clothes men, who were reportedly following him, stopped his car and arrested him around 15 kilometres outside Sanandaj. Judicial officials claim that they had an arrest warrant but the reasons for his arrest do not appear to have been disclosed to his family or lawyer.

Behrouz Ghobadi is believed to be held in the Ministry of Intelligence detention centre in Sanandaj on suspicion of national security-related "offences", although the exact charges brought against him remain unclear. His family and lawyer have not been able to visit him, despite their repeated requests. According to his family, Behrouz Ghobadi is not affiliated with any political group. He manages a shop in the Kurdistan region of Iraq and has worked as the production manager for some of his brother's films. He has also directed a few short films himself.

Amnesty International is seriously concerned about Behrouz Ghobadi's health as he suffers from various chronic medical conditions, including asthma and a heart condition, both of which require medical care and medication.

Please write immediately in Persian, Arabic, English, or your own language:

- Calling on the Iranian authorities to ensure that Behrouz Ghobadi is protected from torture and other ill-treatment and is granted adequate medical treatment;
- Urging the authorities to allow Behrouz Ghobadi immediate and regular visits from his family and a lawyer of his own choosing;
- Stressing that if Behrouz Ghobadi has been arrested solely in connection with his or his brother's film-making activities, he is a prisoner of conscience and must be immediately and unconditionally released.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 8 DECEMBER 2012 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

Salutation: Your Excellency

Twitter: "#Iran leader @khamenei_ir"

Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani
[care of] Public relations Office
Number 4, 2 Azizi Street
Vali Asr Ave, above Pasteur Street
intersection
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: info@dadiran.ir (Subject line: FAO

Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani) or
info_leader@leader.ir

Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Secretary General, High Council for Human Rights

Mohammad Javad Larijani
High Council for Human Rights
[Care of] Office of the Head of the Judiciary,
Pasteur St., Vali Asr Ave. south of Serah-e
Jomhuri, Tehran 1316814737,

Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: info@humanrights-iran.ir
(subject line: FAO Mohammad Javad
Larijani)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In recent years workers in Iran's film industry have been facing growing repression. Several have been arrested, detained and imprisoned solely for their peaceful activities related to their work. Like some other film makers, Bahman Ghobadi, an internationally acclaimed Iranian film maker, has left the country as a result of the increasing repression. Amnesty International fears that Behrouz Ghobadi's arrest may be related to the film making activities of his brother, Bahman Ghobadi.

The Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, in his September 2012 report, expressed concerns about receiving accounts of independent journalists and employees of BBC Persian and Radio Farda whose family members have been subjected to arrest, detention, interrogation and intimidation by the security forces in attempts to place pressure on them to cease their reporting activities.

Iran's minority Kurdish population live mainly in the west and north-west of the country, in the province of Kordestan and neighbouring provinces bordering Kurdish areas of Turkey and Iraq. They experience discrimination in the enjoyment of their religious, economic and cultural rights. Parents are banned from registering their babies with certain Kurdish names, and religious minorities that are mainly or partially Kurdish are targeted by measures designed to stigmatize and isolate them. Kurds are also discriminated against in their access to employment, adequate housing and political rights, and so suffer entrenched poverty, which has further marginalized them.

Kurdish human rights defenders, community activists, and journalists often face arbitrary arrest and prosecution. Others - including some political activists - suffer torture, grossly unfair trials before Revolutionary Courts and, in some cases, the death penalty.

Iran is a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 27 of which states: "In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language."

In September 2010, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), in its concluding observations on Iran's 18th and 19th periodic reports, urged the Iranian authorities, among other things, to "take the necessary steps to achieve effective protection from discrimination against, inter alia, Arab, Azeri, Balochi and Kurdish communities and some communities of non-citizens... in various domains, in particular, employment, housing, health, education and freedom of expression and religion".

For more information on human rights violations against the Kurdish minority in Iran, see:

Iran: Human rights abuses against the Kurdish minority, at:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE13/088/2008/en/d140767b-5e45-11dd-a592-c739f9b70de8/mde130882008eng.pdf>

Names: Behrouz Ghobadi, Bahman Ghobadi
Gender m/f: m

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