

PUBLIC

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UA 216/08 Arbitrary arrest/ Detention without charge

IRAN **Dr Arash Alaei (m), doctor**
Dr Kamiar Alaei (m), doctor, brother of Arash Alaei

Brothers Arash Alaei and Kamiar Alaei, both of whom are doctors specialising in the prevention and management of HIV and AIDS, were arrested in June. They are believed to be held without charge in Tehran's Evin Prison. *E'temad* newspaper in Iran has reported that the brothers are held on "suspicion of plotting to overthrow the government". Amnesty International fears their arrest may be politically motivated and based on the brothers' association with non governmental organizations based in the US.

Dr Arash Alaei was arrested by Iranian security forces on 22 June. The following morning, they escorted him to his mother's house in Tehran, where they found his brother, Dr Kamiar Alaei, and arrested him too. They also seized documents belonging to the brothers.

Arash and Kamiar Alaei are well known for their work on HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, especially for their work to prevent the spread of HIV among drug users. Both doctors have travelled abroad as a result of their work, and Dr Kamiar Alaei is a doctoral candidate at the State University of New York (SUNY) Albany School of Public Health. He holds a Masters degree in International Health from Harvard University and is due to resume his studies in Albany later in 2008. Earlier this year, the US-based non-governmental organization (NGO), the Asia Society, named him as a Fellow, "one of 23 new Fellows identified as being among the most promising trendsetters and emerging leaders in the Asia-Pacific region." Dr Arash Alaei is the former Director of the International Education and Research Cooperation of the Iranian National Research Institute of Tuberculosis and Lung Disease. Neither man is known to have been involved in political activities.

Iran's response to HIV/AIDS has been accorded international respect, particularly the preventative measures promoted by Drs Arash and Kamiar Alaei. According to the 2008 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic (published by UNAIDS on 29 July 2008 and available at <http://www.unaids.org/>) "the... support for needle exchange projects in countries such as the Islamic Republic of Iran ... serve as clear examples of courageous, visionary leadership in the response to HIV". However, the government of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, which took office in August 2005, has started to remove its support of such centres.

On 3 August, Tehran's deputy prosecutor Hassan Haddad was quoted as saying, "A case has been filed whose defendants are two brothers. They held conferences on such topics as AIDS, which drew the attention of domestic and foreign organisations and NGOs," and that "they would organise foreign trips for people and train them. They were aware of what they were doing, and their training was of the nature of a velvet revolution." However, Haddad did not confirm that Dr Arash Alaei and Dr Kamiar Alaei are currently in detention.

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

- seeking confirmation that Dr Arash Alaei and Dr Kamiar Alaei are currently held at Evin Prison, and asking for the reasons for their detention;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that they are not tortured or otherwise ill-treated;
- urging that they be released unless they are to be tried for a recognizably criminal offence in proceedings meeting fair trial standards;

- seeking assurances that Iran remains committed to effective treatment and prevention of HIV as promoted by Dr Arash Alaei and Dr Kamiar Alaei.

APPEALS TO:

President

His Excellency Mahmoud Ahmadinejad
The Presidency
Palestine Avenue, Azerbaijan Intersection
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: dr-ahmadinejad@president.ir

Salutation: **Your Excellency**

Minister of Intelligence

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

Salutation: **Your Excellency**

Head of the Judiciary

His Excellency 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 Jomhuri
Tehran 1316814737, Islamic Republic of Iran

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

Salutation: **Your Excellency**

COPIES TO:

Minister of Health and Medical Education

His Excellency Dr Kamran Baqeri Lankarani
Ministry of Health
Jomhuri-ye Eslami Avenue
Hafez Crossing
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: **+98 21 8836 4100 (unreliable; please try three times and if it fails please send email)**

Email: Lankarani@mohme.gov.ir / minister@mohme.gov.ir / pro@mohme.gov.ir

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 16 September 2008.