

PUBLIC

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Further Information on UA 123/06 (MDE 13/048/2006, 5 May 2006) incommunicado detention/fear for safety/possible prisoner of conscience

IRAN Ramin Jahanbegloo (m), joint Iranian/Canadian national

Ramin Jahanbegloo was released on bail on 30 August 2006 after four months in detention in Section 209 of Evin Prison in Tehran, during which time he is believed not to have had access to a lawyer.

On the evening of his release he gave a long interview to the Iranian Students' News Agency (ISNA), the text of which can be read in Persian at <http://www.isna.ir/Main/NewsView.aspx?ID=News-780366>. He told ISNA that he had not been accused of espionage, but of acting against national security, and having contact with foreigners. When asked if he had finally accepted the charge that he had acted against national security, he replied, "I accepted the charge of acting against national security to the extent that I said that I had been in contact with the foreigners, and that I was part of that circle. To this extent, I accepted that I had acted against national security, but with the proviso that I did not know that what I was doing was acting against national security." He said that his case remained with the Prosecutor's Office for investigation, but did not know whether he would be formally charged or not. He said that he did not know the amount of bail that had been paid, but that the deeds of two houses had been used as guarantees.

Regarding his time in detention he said he had not been subjected to psychological or physical pressure, but he said, "The first month was very difficult for me, because I was not used to the place and I had no visitors either. During the following three months they put me in a solitary cell, which had television and newspapers and where I could meet with the members of my family and have telephone contact. I do not know whether those special facilities were only for me or not. However, I enjoyed conditions [privileges] that at least other prisoners who were in [such cells] did not have".

During the interview, Ramin Jahanbegloo talked about his academic work and his contact with foreign organizations and stated that he believed he had been trapped into carrying out political work for American organizations. He said, "I wrote a proposal for the Marshall Fund [which describes itself as "a non-partisan American public policy and grantmaking institution dedicated to promoting greater cooperation and understanding between the United States and Europe"]. In that project I made a comparative study between East European and Iranian intellectuals. I raised the issue of strengthening the civil society and the issue of toppling [the government]...I did not think at all that I was engaged in political work. I thought that I was engaged in intellectual work. The plan was an abstract plan. It was not a plan for a political group, but now I see that the outcome was different from what I had hoped. In other words, as a person who has a clear, non-political, social and intellectual background on the international stage, I see that my work has been misused for political purposes."

Amnesty International is concerned that Ramin Jahanbegloo appears to have been detained in connection with the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression and association, and that he may face the vaguely-worded and overly broad charge of "acting against national security". If he were to be convicted and imprisoned solely on the basis of such charges, Amnesty International would consider him to be a prisoner of conscience and would call for his immediate and unconditional release. Although Amnesty International notes Ramin Jahanbegloo's assertion that he was not subjected to psychological or physical pressure, the organization is concerned that he may have been compelled to testify against himself or to confess guilt during interrogations which did not respect the necessary human rights safeguards, such as the right to access to legal counsel.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Academic Ramin Jahanbegloo, who has joint Iranian and Canadian citizenship, was arrested in April 2006 at Tehran's Mehrabad Airport. He is the Head of the Department of Contemporary Studies at the privately-run Cultural Research Bureau in Tehran. He is the author of over 20 books in Persian, English and French on philosophy and current affairs in Iran, and is also a frequent contributor to international newspapers and journals in which he comments on Iranian affairs.

On 7 May, Minister of Intelligence Gholam Hussein Mohseni Ejeie stated that Ramin Jahanbegloo had been arrested for "having contact with foreigners". In a statement on 3 July carried by the ISNA, the Minister said, "Ramin Jahanbegloo was one of the people detained concurrent with US efforts to stage a velvet revolution in Iran ... The US was planning to launch a velvet revolution in Iran, and Jahanbegloo had a role in this respect."

On 15 July, a report in the Iranian newspaper *Resalat* suggested that Ramin Jahanbegloo had made a video-taped "confession" which had been shown in some Iranian "cultural circles". Iran has a history of airing video-taped "confessions" on national television. In previous cases, people who have made such "confessions" have later stated that such confessions were made after they had been tortured or ill-treated.

Iran is a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which includes the right not to be compelled to testify against oneself or to confess guilt (Article 14.3.g). Principle 21 of the UN Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment states that it should be prohibited to take undue advantage of the situation of a detainee for the purpose of compelling him to confess or incriminate himself.

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

- welcoming the release on bail of Ramin Jahanbegloo;
- seeking information concerning any charges and the nature of the evidence against him;
- asking to be informed of the date of any trial sessions which may take place;
- urging the authorities to drop any charges against him which relate solely to his peaceful exercise of his internationally recognized right to freedom of expression and association;
- stating that if Ramin Jahanbegloo were to be convicted and imprisoned solely on the basis of such charges, Amnesty International would consider him to be a prisoner of conscience, and would call for his immediate and unconditional release.

APPEALS TO:

Leader of the Islamic Republic

His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei, The Office of the Supreme Leader
Shoahada Street, Qom, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: info@leader.ir / istiftaa@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: Please send emails via the feedback form on the Persian site of the website:

<http://www.iranjudiciary.org/contactus-feedback-fa.html>

The text of the feedback form translates as:

1st line: name, 2nd line: email address, 3rd line: subject heading, then enter your email into text box.

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

President

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

Fax: Via Foreign Affairs Ministry: +98 21 6 674 790 and ask to be forwarded to H.E Ahmadinejad

Email: dr-ahmadinejad@president.ir OR via website: www.president.ir/email

Speaker of Parliament

His Excellency Gholamali Haddad Adel

Majles-e Shoura-ye Eslami, Imam Khomeini Avenue, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: hadadadel@majlis.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 24 November 2006.