

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 13/152/2008

20 October 2008

UA 286/08 Incommunicado detention/fear of torture or other ill-treatment

IRAN Jamila Nabgan (f), aged 43

Jamila Nabgan, a member of the Arab minority in Iran was arrested at her home on 19 October by officers from the Ministry of Intelligence. Her whereabouts are unknown and she is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

At 6am on 19 October 2008 plainclothes officers from the Ministry of Intelligence searched Jamila Nabgan's family home in the town of Shush, Khuzestan province, for about an hour and a half before arresting her. Her arrest seems linked to the help the Iranian authorities believe she gave to her sister-in-law, Ma'soumeh Ka'bi to flee Iran in May 2008. Ma'soumeh Ka'bi and her five children were forcibly returned to Iran from Syria on 27 September 2008 (See UA 279/08, MDE 13/147/2008, 10 October 2008).

Jamila Nabgan, wife of Ali Chaab and the mother of seven children, was previously arrested in May 2008 and held for two days at the Intelligence Ministry detention facility in Ahwaz and questioned about her sister-in-law's flight to Syria. She is also the sister of Habib Nabgan, a prominent member of the *Lejnat al-Wefaq* (Reconciliation Committee), a political party which promotes the rights of the Arab minority in Iran. Habib Nabgan was resettled as a refugee in Denmark two years ago.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Much of the Arab community in Iran lives in the province of Khuzestan, which borders Iraq. The Arab minority in Iran have complained of discrimination, including in access to resources, as well as forced evictions. There were mass demonstrations in April 2005, after it was alleged that the government planned to disperse the country's Arab population or to force them to relinquish their Arab identity. Following bomb explosions in Ahvaz City in June and October 2005, which killed at least 14 people and explosions at oil installations in September and October 2005, hundreds of people were arrested. Further bombings on 24 January 2006, in which at least six people were killed, were followed by further mass arrests. At least 17 men have now been executed as a result of their alleged involvement in the bombings. It is not clear if another man was executed or died in custody.

Article 15 of the Iranian Constitution states: "The official language and script of Iran... is Persian... However, the use of regional and tribal languages in the press and mass media, as well as for teaching of their literature in schools, is allowed in addition to Persian." *Lejnat Al-Wefaq* was established in 1999 to promote the rights of the Arab minority in Iran, including linguistic and cultural rights, but the party was declared illegal on 4 November 2006, and a statement from the Ahvaz Prosecutor's office said that "membership and connection with that party will be severely confronted."

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

- calling on the authorities to ensure that Jamila Nabgan is not subjected to torture and other ill-treatment, and to allow her immediate access to a lawyer of her own choosing, and any medical treatment she may require;
- asking why exactly she was arrested; what charges, if any, have been brought against her; and when any trial will begin;

- calling on the authorities to release her unless she is to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence and given a prompt and fair trial.

APPEALS TO:

Head of the Judiciary

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 Jomhouri, Tehran 1316814737, Islamic Republic of Iran

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

Salutation: **Your Excellency**

Minister of Intelligence

Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejeie

Ministry of Intelligence, Second Negarestan Street, Pasdaran Avenue, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Salutation: **Your Excellency**

COPIES TO:

Leader of the Islamic Republic

His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei

The Office of the Supreme Leader, Islamic Republic Street - Shahid Keshvar Doust Street

Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: info@leader.ir

Salutation: **Your Excellency**

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 1 December 2008.