

# URGENT ACTION

## IRANIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST RELEASED

**Mansoureh Behkish, an Iranian human rights activist, was released on bail on 9 July 2011. She is a member of the 'Mourning Mothers' group, which campaigns against human rights violations such as unlawful killings, arbitrary arrests, torture and enforced disappearances.**

**Mansoureh Behkish** was released on bail on 9 July. On 7 July, her husband and her mother were granted permission to visit her in Evin Prison, Tehran. The visit took place behind a glass screen (a "cabin"). Mansoureh Behkish was arrested in a street in Tehran on 12 June. She was held in Section 209 of Evin Prison, believed to be under the control of the Intelligence Ministry.

Mansoureh Behkish was twice arrested along with other members of the 'Mourning Mothers' group during the weekly meeting of the group in Laleh Park, Tehran. The first time was on 5 December 2009 and the second was on 9 January 2010 along with 32 women from the 'Mourning Mothers' group. On 17 March 2010, she was prevented from travelling to Italy to visit her children and her passport was confiscated. She remains banned from travelling abroad.

The 'Mourning Mothers' group mainly comprises women whose children have been killed, disappeared or detained in post-election violence in Iran since June 2009, but it quickly grew to include relatives of other victims of human rights violations and their supporters.

Iran has a history of large numbers of its citizens being killed or disappeared. From August 1988 until shortly before the tenth anniversary of the Islamic revolution in February 1989, the Iranian authorities carried out mass summary executions of political prisoners, known as the "prison massacre" – the largest numbers since those carried out in the first and second year after the Iranian revolution in 1979. In all between 4,500 and 5,000 prisoners are believed to have been killed, including women. Between 1981 and 1988 six members of Mansoureh Behkish's family have been killed or disappeared, including a sister, four brothers and a brother-in-law. Since then she has been an activist and has been detained several times during her work.

For the past few years, Mansoureh Behkish has participated in the commemoration of the victims of the 1988 mass executions, some of whom were buried in the Khavaran Cemetery in south Tehran. This event is held yearly by relatives of the dead on or about 29 August to mark the anniversary and demand justice for their loved ones. Hundreds of those summarily executed are buried in the cemetery, many of them in unmarked mass graves. Families of the victims have been under pressure from the Iranian authorities not to hold commemorations at the cemetery or in their homes. On 29 August 2008 Mansoureh Behkish was arrested and held in Evin Prison for three days and summoned several times that year.

**No further action is required. Many thanks to all those who sent appeals.**

This is the first update of UA 196/11. Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/063/2011/en>

Name: Mansoureh Behkish

Gender m/f: F

Further information on UA: 196/11 Index: MDE 13/067/2011 Issue Date: 12<sup>th</sup> July 2011

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