

PUBLIC

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31 July 2008

UA	<u>Arbitrary arrests/Fear of Torture or ill-treatment/prisoners of conscience</u>	
IRAN	Mehdi Khoda'i (m)] students at Azad University, Shahre-Ray
	Salman Sima (m)]
	Farzad Hassanzadeh (m)] students at Mashad University
	Mohamad Zerati (m)]
	Bahareh Hedayat (f)] students at Tehran University
	Mohammad Hashemi (m)]
	Majid Asadi (m)] student at Alahmeh University, Tehran
	Arash Rayji (m)] students at Zanjan University
	Hassan Joneydi (m)]
	Payam Shakiba (m)]
	Only known as 'Anbaraki'] students at Bushehr University
	Only known as 'Khoeyni']

The 12 university students named above were arrested at various locations across Iran in July and remain in detention. They were arrested around the eighth anniversary of student demonstrations held in Iran on 9 July 1999 that were violently suppressed by the security forces. The 12 are facing various charges, such as "acting against national security", "propaganda against the regime", "propagating lies", "promoting anti-religious attitudes", and "disturbing public opinion". They are prisoners of conscience, held on account of their conscientiously held beliefs and should be released immediately and unconditionally.

Mohamad Zerati and Farzad Hassanzadeh, were both arrested on 3 or 4 July, have had their bail set at 30 million rial (Around \$3,230 USD). Their place of detention remains unknown.

Mohammad Hashemi and Bahareh Hedayat were arrested by the security forces at their homes on 13 July; they are accused of having links with "illegal and anti-revolutionary groups abroad". Both are members of the Office for Consolidating Unity, the central council of a pro-reform student group. They are being detained in Evin Prison in Tehran.

Payam Shakiba, Arash Rayji and Hassan Joneydi, students at Zanjan University, were arrested on 8 July; their place of detention remains unknown.

At least 12 other students who were arrested in July have now been released without charge.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

On 8 July 1999, plainclothes police forces and paramilitary units calling themselves Ansar-e Hezbollah stormed a Tehran university dormitory at night in order to suppress student unrest that had lasted for 5 days. A number of students were injured, and at least one person, a visitor at the university, was killed. This fuelled further protests and members of the general public joined the students' demonstrations, which the security forces suppressed by force.

Student groups have been at the forefront of demands for greater human rights in Iran. Since the election of President Ahmadinejad in 2005, there have been increasing restrictions on civil society. In April 2007, Minister of Intelligence Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejeie publicly accused student activists and campaigners for the rights of women, of being part of an "enemy conspiracy" – a claim they strongly deny.

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

- expressing concern about the arrest and continuing detention of the named students;
- urging the authorities to promptly charge the students with recognisably criminal offences or release them immediately and unconditionally;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that they are protected against torture or other ill-treatment and are allowed immediate access to their family, legal representation and any medical attention that they may require.

APPEALS 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

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 Jomhuri, Tehran 1316814737, Islamic Republic of Iran

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

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

President

His Excellency Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

The Presidency, Palestine Avenue, Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: dr-ahmadinejad@president.ir

via website: www.president.ir/email

Speaker of Parliament

His Excellency Ali Larijani

Majles-e Shoura-ye Eslami, Baharestan Square, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: +98 21 3355 6408

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 11 September 2008.