

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 13/005/2001

17 January 2001

Further information on UA 103/00 (MDE 13/20/00, 3 May 2000) and follow-ups (MDE 13/16/00, 6 July 2000; MDE 13/34/00, 18 December 2000) - Ill-treatment / prisoners of conscience / medical concern

IRAN Mehrangiz Kar (f), lawyer
Shahla Lahiji (f), publisher
Ali Afshari (m), student representative

On 13 January, the Tehran Revolutionary Court sentenced prisoners of conscience Mehrangiz Kar and Shahla Lahiji to four years' imprisonment, and Ali Afshari to five years' imprisonment. They reportedly have 20 days in which to appeal against their sentences.

All three were initially detained after attending a social and cultural conference in Berlin in April 2000, where Iranian exile groups staged protests both against the participants and the political situation in Iran. They had been released on bail pending their trial.

Mehrangiz Kar and Shahla Lahiji, two vocal women's and human rights supporters, reportedly told the Iranian press that they were convicted of acting against national security by participating in the Berlin Conference, and by disseminating propaganda against the Islamic Republic of Iran. Charges against Mehrangiz Kar for failing to comply with Islamic *hejab* (regulations regarding women's dress in public) have reportedly been forwarded to the Public Court, which will hear her case at a later date. Mehrangiz Kar was diagnosed with breast cancer in November 2000, but was denied permission to seek urgent medical treatment outside Iran (see follow-up of 18 December 2000).

Ali Afshari's lawyer reportedly told the Iranian press that he was sentenced to four years' imprisonment for acting against national security by participating in the Berlin Conference, six months for establishing a crisis centre in the student organization *Daftar-e Tahkim-e Vahdat* (Office for Strengthening Unity), and six months for disseminating propaganda against the Islamic Republic of Iran. He was reportedly acquitted of insulting the former Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini.

Ali Afshari's whereabouts have not been known since he was rearrested about 28 December 2000, this time in connection with different charges. He has been denied access to his family and lawyer, who have not received any information about his whereabouts or condition since he was detained.

BACKGROUND

Four other participants at the Berlin conference have also been sentenced to prison terms as follows: Saeed Sadr, 10 years; Khalil Rostamkhani, nine years; Ezzatollah Sahabi, four years (see UA 182/00 and follow-up); Akbar Ganji, 10 years in prison to be followed by five years in exile (see Extra 43/00 and follow-ups). Amnesty International considers all those detained solely for their attendance at the Berlin conference to be prisoners of conscience. A further six participants have reportedly been acquitted.

The Iranian deputy parliamentary speaker, Mohammad-Reza Khatami, brother of President Khatami, is reported to have stated in the Iranian press that the

sentences handed down to the participants of the Berlin conference were motivated by anti-reform political aims.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English or in your own language:

- urging that Mehrangiz Kar, Shahla Lahiji, Ali Afshari and all other prisoners of conscience be released immediately and unconditionally;
- seeking guarantees from the authorities that Mehrangiz Kar, Shahla Lahiji and others will be treated humanely whilst in detention and will be granted regular access to their families, lawyers and medical attention as necessary;
- urging the authorities to allow Mehrangiz Kar to seek medical treatment overseas as and when required;
- urging the authorities to clarify the whereabouts and condition of Ali Afshari, asking that he be granted immediate access to his family and lawyers;
- urging that the charges against all those convicted for their participation in the Berlin conference are reviewed and dropped upon appeal, since the existing charges do not appear to justify the convictions of the defendants.

APPEALS TO:

1)Leader of the Islamic Republic

His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei,
The Presidency, Palestine Avenue, Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran,
Islamic Republic of Iran

Telegrams: Ayatollah Khamenei, Tehran, Iran

Salutation: Your Excellency

2)President

His Excellency Hojjatoleslam val Moslemin Sayed Mohammad Khatami
The Presidency, Palestine Avenue Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran,
Islamic Republic of Iran

Telegrams: President Khatami, Tehran, Iran

Salutation: Your Excellency

3)Head of Judiciary

His Excellency Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi-Shahrudi
Ministry of Justice, Park-e Shahr, Tehran
Islamic Republic of Iran

Telegrams: Head of the Judiciary, Tehran, Iran

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

Minister of Foreign Affairs

His Excellency Kamal Kharrazi
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Abdolmajid Keshk-e Mesri Avenue
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Islamic Human Rights Commission

Mr Mohammad Hassan Zia'i-Far
Secretary, Islamic Human Rights Commission
PO Box 13165-137, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Faxes: + 98 21 204 0541

Parliamentary Committee

Mohsen Mirdamadi Najafabadi

Article 90 Commission (Komisyon-e Asl-e Navad), Majles-e Shura-ye Eslami, Imam Khomeini Avenue, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

☎ **Majles, Tehran or Telex: 21 42 32 ICAI IR**
☎ **+ 98 21 646 1746 (Can be difficult to reach, please be patient)**

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 28 February 2001.