

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 13/010/2001

21 March 2001

Further information on UA 236/00 (MDE 13/22/00, 9 August 2000) and follow-ups (MDE 13/29/00, 17 October 2000; MDE 13/009/2001, 12 March 2001) Prisoners of Conscience/Medical Concern and new concern: fear of ill-treatment/incommunicado detention

IRAN Hojjatoleslam Hasan Yousefi Eshkevari, researcher and journalist, aged 50
 Ahmad Zeidabadi, journalist
 Massoud Behnoud, journalist, aged 55

20-30 supporters of the Iran Freedom Movement (*Nehzat-e Azadi-ye Iran*)

Ahmad Zeidabadi and 10 of those arrested with him on 11 March were reportedly released on 12 and 13 March. Twelve are still in custody, and their families have been denied access to them. The judge handling the case reportedly told the wife of Dr Habibollah Peyman, one of those still in detention, "you do not need to know where he is."

Among those still in custody is 65-year-old Dr Reza Reiss-Toosi (spelling corrected), who reportedly suffers from arthritis and a slipped disc. His family fear that "He may not be able to tolerate physical pressures that could be brought on prisoners kept in solitary confinement in unspecified prisons said to be run by the Revolutionary Guards without supervision by relevant authorities."

The families of the 12 still in custody reportedly met with the judge in charge of the case on 15 March. He apparently refused to say where they were held, or when they could be released on bail.

Hojjatoleslam Hasan Yousefi Eshkevari and his family and lawyer have reportedly still not been told what sentence was passed on him at his trial in November 2000. He is believed to be held in Evin prison. There is still no news of the outcome of an appeal hearing that was reportedly scheduled for 26 November 2000.

On 13 March, over 150 members of the Iranian parliament reportedly issued an open letter expressing regret and concern over the arrests.

People arrested during the continuing clampdown on freedom of expression are increasingly detained incommunicado: journalists Hoda Saber and Alireza Alijani, arrested in mid-February, have reportedly not been allowed to see their families or lawyers. On 18 March, the judiciary reportedly confirmed that the publications *Douwran-e Emrouz* (The Era of Today), *Peyam-e Emrouz* (Today's Message), *Jame'h Madani* (Civil Society) and *Mobin* (The Evident) had been closed after complaints. Their editors and directors will be held personally responsible for the articles that led to the closures. Many journalists from newspapers that have now been closed are now prisoners of conscience.

The following are reportedly among those who were released: Fatemeh Govaraee (f), Dr Nezamoddin Ghahari, Mohammad Mohammadi (Gorgani), Bahman Rezakhani, Naser Hashemi and Bahman Teyrani.

There is no further news of Massoud Behnoud.

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

- asking the authorities to tell the families of those arrested on 11 March where they are held, and expressing particular concern for Dr Reza Reiss-Toosi, who is 65 years old and in poor health;
- asking the authorities to guarantee that Hasan Yousefi Eshkevari, Ahmad Zeidabadi and those detained on 11 March will be treated humanely in prison;
- asking what internationally-recognised criminal offences they are alleged to have committed;
- urging the authorities to release Hojjatoleslam Hasan Yousefi Eshkevari and Massoud Behnoud immediately and unconditionally, as Amnesty International considers them to be prisoners of conscience;
- In appeals to the Head of the Judiciary: urging him to ensure that the Special Court for the Clergy (SCC) reviews Hasan Yousefi Eshkevari's case, and asking for guarantees that he will not be flogged or sentenced to death, in violation of international law prohibiting torture and cruel or degrading treatment;
- asking to be told the outcome of Hasan Yousefi Eshkevari's appeal hearing on 26 November 2000.

APPEALS TO:

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

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

Head of the Judiciary

His Excellency Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahrudi
Ministry of Justice
Park-e Shahr
Tehran

Islamic Republic of Iran

Telegrams: Head of Judiciary, Tehran, Iran

Faxes: + 98 21 879 6671 (number may be unreliable; please mark "care of Director of International Affairs, Judiciary")

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

Faxes: + 98 21 390 1999 (number may be unreliable; please mark "care of the Human Rights Department, Foreign Ministry)

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

E-mail: ihrc@Majlis.ir

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

Telegrams: Majles, Tehran or Telex: 21 42 32 ICAI IR

Faxes: + 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 30 April 2001.