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Iran: The Revolutionary Court must end arbitrary arrests

Amnesty International condemns the nationwide arbitrary arrests of 42 journalists, academics and political activists associated with the Iran Freedom Movement and supporters of the 'Religious Nationalist' (Milli Mazhabi) movement. The arrests were ordered by the Revolutionary Court on 7 April on grounds that they were "plotting to overthrow the state". Many of those arrested have been denied access to family and lawyers are believed to be held in a secret detention centre under the control of the Revolutionary Guard.

At least 10 other individuals associated with the same groups continue to be detained, some in incommunicado detention, following an earlier round up of 21 individuals on 11 March 2001 and ordered by the same court.

If, as seems likely, these individuals are being held solely for the expression of their conscientiously held beliefs, Amnesty International would consider them prisoners of conscience and call for their immediate and unconditional release.

Two of those arrested are 84 year old Ahmad Sadr Haj Seyed Javadi, a lawyer and former Minister of Justice in the 1979 transitional government of Mehdi Bazargan, and Taher Ahmadzadeh, former politician, aged 80.

"The recent mass arrests of those associated with the Iran Freedom Movement and supporters of the 'Religious Nationalist' (Milli Mazhabi) movement, is part of a pattern of arbitrary arrests that have resulted in

the prolonged incommunicado detention of prisoners of conscience. These arrests, apparently outside any legal framework and in violation of international legal norms, show a flagrant disregard for due process” Amnesty International said. “Freedom of expression and association in Iran remain under attack”, Amnesty International added.

Amnesty International is asking the authorities to provide urgent clarification regarding these arrests.

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