

29 June 2001

Further information on EXTRA 43/00 (MDE 13/07/00, 25 April 2000) and follow-ups (MDE 13/31/00, 10 November 2000; MDE 13/003/2001, 16 January 2001) - Torture/ill-treatment/prisoner of conscience

IRAN Akbar Ganji, 42, journalist

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According to Akbar Ganji's wife, Ma'soumeh Shafi'i, her husband has been transferred to the *Qarantina*, (the 'quarantine') in the basement of Evin Prison and has been in solitary confinement for 31 days. She also reported that all telephone contact has been prohibited since 22 September 2000. Akbar Ganji has also not been allowed to meet with his lawyer. Amnesty International believes that no independent investigation was made into allegations made by Akbar Ganji that he had been kicked and beaten by prison guards in January (see earlier further information MDE 13/003/2001, 16 January 2001) and Amnesty International continues to be concerned that he may be at risk of torture or ill treatment.

Akbar Ganji, who Amnesty International considers to be a prisoner of conscience, was detained 15 months ago, in April 2000, after attending a social and cultural conference entitled "Iran After the Elections", organized by the Heinrich Böll Institute in Berlin earlier that month. He was charged with "Taking part in an attempt against the country's internal security through participation in the formation of the Berlin Conference", "Propaganda against the Islamic system", "Propagating lies with the aim of disturbing the minds of the public", "Insulting religious sanctities" and "Insulting the departed Imam [Khomeini]".

On 15 May 2001, an appeal court reduced his 10-year prison sentence to six months and his sentence of five years in exile was overturned. Although he had served the entire sentence in connection his participation at the Berlin conference, the Tehran judiciary has challenged the appeal court decision to reduce the sentence and new charges were made against him in connection with newspaper articles he wrote prior to April 2000, for which the bail was posted at US\$75 000. It is not known when the case will be heard by the Supreme Court. His current detention appears arbitrary, in contravention of Article 33 of Iran's law regarding the procedure of Public and Revolutionary Courts, which states that detention orders can be challenged within 10 days and that "Under any circumstances, the position of the defendant shall be settled within one month."

On 21 May 2001 it was reported that Akbar Ganji had been taken to hospital for medical tests. It is widely believed that his condition is poor, but not serious.

**FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quicky as possible, in English or in your own language:**

- urging that Akbar Ganji be given immediate access to his lawyer and family and that he is not ill-treated while in detention;
- urging the authorities to drop all charges against Akbar Ganji and all other prisoners of conscience and to release them immediately and unconditionally;
- noting the appeal court's decision to reduce Akbar Ganji's sentence to six months, which he has already served, and noting his sentence of five years in exile has been overturned, but adding that as a prisoner of conscience, he should be released immediately;

- urging that all other charges against Akbar Ganji, related to newspaper articles he wrote in the past also be dropped, and that the bail payment of US\$75,000 be removed as a result.

**APPEALS TO:**

Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran

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

**Telegrams: Ayatollah Khamenei, Tehran, Iran**

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

Head of the Judiciary

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

**Telegrams: Head of Judiciary, Tehran, Iran**

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

President

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

**Telegrams: President Khatami, Tehran, Iran**

**Faxes: + 98 21 649 5880**

**E-mails: khatami@president.ir**

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

**COPIES TO:**

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 (you may receive notification that the message was not delivered, however we know that some such messages are getting through.)**

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**

**Telex: 21 42 32 ICAI IR**

**Faxes: + 98 21 646 1746 (Can be difficult to reach, please be patient)**

**Please forward your appeals, as an act of solidarity, to:**

Rajab'ali Mazrou'i, Director

The Association of Iranian Journalists

(Anjoman-e Senfi-ye Ruzname Negaran)

Keshavarz Bulvar, Kabkakan St., 7th Ave. No. 87

Tehran, Iran

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 10 August 2001.