

**PUBLIC**

AI Index: MDE 13/12/00  
Distrib: PG/SC

To: Health professionals  
From: Medical office / Gulf team  
Date: 9 June 2000

***MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION***

Health concern Mahmudali Chehregani  
Iran

**Key words** health concern / unfair trial / prisoner of conscience

**Summary**

Prisoner of conscience Dr Mahmudali Chehregani is reported to be in a critical condition in Tabriz prison clinic. He has apparently been on hunger strike since 19 May 2000, in protest at receiving an unfair trial. Dr Mahmudali Chehregani is a diabetic with heart disease and prison doctors have reportedly recommended that he be released on medical grounds. Dr Mahmudali has a PhD in linguistics and is a lecturer at the University of Tabriz.

**Recommended actions**

Please write letters to the addresses below:

- demanding the immediate and unconditional release of Dr Mahmudali Chehregani as a prisoner of conscience;
- seeking assurances that he has been provided with all necessary medical treatment since he was arrested in February 2000;
- seeking details of the exact charges and trials proceedings against Dr Mahmudali Chehregani, and expressing concern that he was tried in a Revolutionary Court, whose procedures fell far short of international standards for fair trial;
- seeking confirmation of reports that supporters of Dr Mahmudali Chehregani were arrested at an April 2000 rally in Tabriz; if true, asking what charges were brought against them, and demanding their immediate release if they were arrested solely for their support of Dr Mahmudali Chehregani and have not been charged with a recognizably criminal offence.

If you receive no reply from the government or other recipients within two months of dispatch of your letter, please send a follow up letter seeking a response. Please check with the medical team if you are sending appeals after 1 August 2000, and send copies of any replies you do receive to the International Secretariat (att: medical team).

## **Addresses**

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 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**

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

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

and to diplomatic representatives of Iran accredited to your country.

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***MEDICAL CONCERN***

Mahmudali Chehregani  
Iran

Prisoner of conscience Dr Mahmudali Chehregani is reported to be in a critical condition in Tabriz prison clinic. He has apparently been on hunger strike since 19 May 2000, in protest at receiving an unfair trial. Dr Mahmudali Chehregani is a diabetic with heart disease and prison doctors have reportedly recommended that he be released on medical grounds. Dr Mahmudali has a PhD in linguistics and is a lecturer at the University of Tabriz.

**Background information**

Dr Mahmudali Chehregani is a prominent member of the Azeri community in Iran. He has previously demanded recognition of the national rights of Azeris in Iran, as guaranteed under Article 15 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which permits the use of regional languages in the media and in schools when used in addition to Persian. Amnesty International believes that he has been imprisoned to suppress the non-violent expression of his conscientiously held beliefs, and as such is a prisoner of conscience.

He was first arrested by agents of the Ministry of Intelligence in December 1999, effectively preventing him to register as a candidate for the Majles (Parliament) election within the specified time. He was tried by a Revolutionary Court on charges which included smuggling shampoo, and on 18 February sentenced to six months' imprisonment. He was also reportedly ordered to pay a fine of 20 million Toman (approximately US\$24,000) or face a further 10 years' imprisonment.

Amnesty International is concerned that his trial at the Revolutionary Court fell far short of international standards for fair trial. He was reportedly granted access to a lawyer only two hours before the trial started.

Dr Mahmudali Chehregani reportedly suffered a stroke in 1996, and is now said to be partially paralysed and to have lost the sight in his right eye. According to unconfirmed reports, in April 2000 Iranian security forces arrested scores of his supporters at a rally in his support in Tabriz.

Amnesty International issued an urgent action on his behalf on 24 May 2000 but has been unable to clarify the current situation. The organization remains deeply concerned at the serious risk to his health and is urgently renewing appeals that he be given immediate care and be released unconditionally and immediately.