

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 13/21/98

22 October 1998

Further information on UA 254/98 (MDE 13/14/98, 22 September 1998) and follow-ups (MDE 13/19/98, 21 October 1998 and MDE 13/20/98, 22 October 1998) - Fear of death penalty / Prisoners of conscience / Fear of Torture / Health concerns

IRAN Mashallah Shamsolva'ezin
 Hamid Reza Jalaipour
 Mohammad Javadi Hesar
 Ibrahim Nabavi

Journalists Mashallah Shamsolva'ezin, Mohammad Javadi Hesar and Ibrahim Nabavi have been released on bail. Reports indicate that their release occurred late on 21 October or 22 October 1998. Amnesty International had also just learned of the release of their colleague Hamid Reza Jalaipour on 13 October 1998.

The men, employees of the Iranian daily newspaper *Tous*, were arrested between 16 and 20 September after the paper printed an article which reportedly questioned the recent policies of the Iranian government in Afghanistan. This came amidst calls by some Iranian leaders for tighter controls over the press.

Tous was banned on 16 September on the same day its offices raided by members of the Revolutionary Guard. There were concerns that the men were at threat of being tried under charges, including subversion, that could result in the death penalty.

The journalists appeared to be detained solely for the peaceful expression of their views and, as such, Amnesty International considered them to be prisoners of conscience.

The organization welcomes the release of the journalists, but will continue to exert pressure on the Iranian authorities concerning the nature of any charges brought against them. Further information is also being sought concerning their well-being, after reports that Mashallah Shamsolva'ezin and Ibrahim Nabavi were in ill-health as a result of the harsh conditions of their detention.

The Urgent Action network will be kept informed as more information becomes available. No further action by the UA network is requested. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.