

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of Torture/Fear of Death Penalty

28 April 1994

IRAN

Ali Akbar Saidi-Sirjani

Amnesty International fears that Ali Akbar Saidi-Sirjani, a writer in his sixties, may be at risk of execution.

Ali Akbar Saidi-Sirjani was arrested on 14 March 1994, his current whereabouts are unknown and he is believed to be held in incommunicado detention. He was arrested ostensibly for the possession of drugs. However, according to recent reports in the Iranian press, a spokesperson for the Ministry of Intelligence and Security stated that Ali Akbar Saidi-Sirjani was arrested for, and has allegedly confessed to, using drugs, making alcoholic beverages, homosexual acts, links with espionage networks and receiving money from 'counter-revolutionary' circles based in the West. If he was convicted of the above charges, some of which carry the death penalty, he may be sentenced to death. There have also been reports of demonstrations outside government buildings calling for his execution.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Ali Akbar Saidi-Sirjani, a well-known poet, essayist and satirical writer, was arrested on 14 March while visiting a friend, and the authorities apparently raided his home the same day. He is said to have criticised the government openly, condemning censorship of dissenting voices in Iran. According to some reports, he was arrested after distributing bound photocopies of his books in response to an editorial in *Kayhan-e-Havaie*, a major Iranian daily newspaper, which accused him of having written against Islam in his books. Most of his writings are effectively banned in Iran as he has been unable to obtain a permit to have them bound and distributed.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams, telexes and airmail letters either in English or in your own language:

- requesting clarification of the reasons and legal basis for Ali Akbar Saidi-Sirjani's arrest and details of any legal proceedings being followed in his case;
- urging that he is humanely treated and given prompt access to lawyers of his own choosing, his family and to medical treatment if necessary;
- urging his immediate and unconditional release if he is being held solely for exercising his right to freedom of expression.

APPEALS TO:

1) His Excellency Hojjatoleslam
Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani
The Presidency
Palestine Avenue
Azerbaijan Intersection
Tehran
Islamic Republic of Iran

Telegrams: President Rafsanjani, Tehran, Iran

Telexes: 214231 MITI IR; 213113 PRIM IR
(marked for the attention of President Rafsanjani)
Salutation: Your Excellency

2) His Excellency Ayatollah
 Seyed Ali Khamanei
 The Presidency
 Palestine Avenue
 Azerbaijan Intersection
 Tehran
 Islamic Republic of Iran
Telexes: 214231 MITI IR; 213113 PRIM IR

3) His Excellency Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi
 Head of the Judiciary
 Ministry of Justice
 Park-e Shahr
 Tehran
 Islamic Republic of Iran
Telegrams: Justice Minister, Tehran, Iran
Telexes: 214231 MITI IR; 213113 PRIM IR
(marked for the attention of the Interior Minister)
Salutation: Your Excellency

4) His Excellency
 Mohammad Ali Besharati Jahromi
 Minister of Interior
 Ministry of Interior
 Dr Fatemi Avenue
 Tehran
 Islamic Republic of Iran
Telegrams: Interior Minister, Tehran, Iran
Telexes: 214231 MITI IR, 213113 PRIM IR
(marked for the attention of the Interior Minister)
Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

His Excellency
 Dr Ali Akbar Velayati
 Minister of Foreign Affairs
 Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 Sheikh Abdolmajid Keshk-e Mesri Avenue
 Tehran
 Islamic Republic of 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 9 June 1994.