

URGENT ACTION

TWO RELEASED, HUNDREDS STILL HELD IN IRAN

Reza al-Basha, a male Syrian student and journalist, was released in the Iranian capital, Tehran, on 10 January. **Women's rights defender Atieh Yousefi** was released on bail on 11 January. A female photographer, **Leily Afshar**, is among hundreds of others still detained incommunicado following mass arrests around the Shi'a Muslim holy day of Ashoura on 27 December. All those detained are at risk of torture or other ill-treatment.

Reza al-Basha, aged 27, was arrested while reporting on anti-government protests in Tehran on 27 December for the United Arab Emirates TV station Dubai TV. It is not known where he was held. He was released without charge. Women's rights defender **Atieh Yousefi**, detained in the northern city of Rasht since 28 December, was released on bail of 200 million rials (approx US\$20,000). There is no information about what charges she may be facing.

On and around Ashoura, there were anti-government protests across the country, which were violently repressed. At least seven people were killed in or near the demonstrations, apparently by security forces. **Leily Afshar**, a 29-year-old photographer, was also arrested in Tehran on 27 December. Hundreds of others remain detained. A list of 156 of those held has been published by human rights groups. On 1 January, the Deputy Head of the Judiciary said that those arrested will not be released on bail. However, on 12 January, a member of parliament said in an interview that 16 of 26 women arrested on Ashoura had been released.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Persian, Arabic, English, French or your own language:

- Welcoming the release of Reza al-Basha and Atieh Yousefi, and calling for anyone held solely for their peaceful participation in demonstrations on or following Ashoura to be released immediately and unconditionally;
- Urging the Iranian authorities to ensure that, while detained, Leily Afshar and all the others held are protected from torture or other ill-treatment, allowed access to their families, lawyers and any necessary medical treatment and are brought before a judge without delay so they may challenge the lawfulness of their detention;
- Expressing concern at the announcement by the Deputy Head of the Judiciary that those arrested will not be released on bail, which would appear to restrict the ability of judges to order the release pending trial of those who have been arbitrarily arrested.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 24 FEBRUARY 2010 TO:

Leader of the Islamic Republic

Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei
The Office of the Supreme Leader
Islamic Republic Street – End of
Shahid Keshvar Doust Street, Tehran,
Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: info_leader@leader.ir

via website:

[http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/index.php?](http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/index.php?p=letter)

[p=letter](http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/index.php?p=letter) (English)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Sadeq Larijani
Howzeh Riyasat-e Qoveh Qazaiyeh
(Office of the Head of the Judiciary)
Pasteur St., Vali Asr Ave., south of
Serah-e Jomhuri, Tehran,
1316814737

Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: Via website:

[http://www.dadiran.ir/tabid/75/Default.a](http://www.dadiran.ir/tabid/75/Default.aspx)

[spx](http://www.dadiran.ir/tabid/75/Default.aspx) **First starred box: your given name;**

second starred box: your family name;

third: your email address

Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Director, Human Rights Headquarters
of Iran

His Excellency Mohammad Javad
Larijani

Bureau of International Affairs, Office
of the Head of the Judiciary, Pasteur
St., Vali Asr Ave. south of Serah-e
Jomhuri, Tehran 1316814737,
Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: bia.judi@yahoo.com

**Fax: + 98 21 5 537 8827 (please keep
trying)**

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives of Iran accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 06/10 (MDE 13/004/2010). Further information:

www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/004/2010/en

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Ashoura, in the Islamic month of *Moharram*, is one of the holiest days for Shia Muslims, who traditionally take to the streets to commemorate the death of Imam Hossein, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad. The day also coincided with the seventh-day of mourning for Grand Ayatollah Montazeri, a senior dissident cleric who had died the week before. Mourners at his funeral had also been arrested (see UA: 347/09, MDE 13/132/2009).

Demonstrations in Iran in June and July against the disputed presidential election result of June 2009 were violently repressed, by police and the paramilitary Basij militia who used excessive force. Since then, demonstrations have continued to take place on days of national importance when public demonstrations are permitted, such as Qods Day (18 September), the anniversary of the seizure of the American Embassy (4 November), and National Student Day (7 December), when hundreds of protestors were arrested, although many were later released.

Many of those arrested during previous demonstrations were tortured or otherwise ill-treated. At least three died as a result of torture in the Kahrizak detention centre near Tehran. On 19 December 2009, a military court in Tehran announced that 12 people had been charged in connection with the abuses, three of whom had been charged with murder. .

The security forces' response to the demonstrations on or following Ashoura was the most violent since June and July. The opposition website *Jaras* estimates that at least 1,300 were arrested across Iran, including 600 in Esfahan, 200 in Najafabad and 500 acknowledged by the authorities to have been arrested in Tehran. Human rights groups say at least 300 detainees are still held in Evin Prison in Tehran and reports suggest others may be held in a re-opened detention facility under the control of the Revolutionary Guards in the Eshratyab complex in central Tehran. The Iranian authorities have made statements suggesting that protestors who "riot" or commit violent acts such as arson will be charged with *moharebeh* (enmity against God) which can carry the death penalty. On 5 January, five unnamed people were reported to have been charged with *moharebeh* in connection with the demonstration on Ashoura and may be tried imminently.

The authorities' have at various times acknowledged between eight and 15 deaths in the Ashoura demonstrations, although later revised the figure down to seven. They have denied that Sayed Ali Mousavi, nephew of opposition leader Mir Hossein Mousavi, was shot by security forces, saying that he was shot in the chest near his house by unknown assailants. Mohsen Makhmalbaf, a filmmaker close to Mir Hossein Mousavi said on 29 December that Sayed Ali Mousavi had received several death threats from unidentified security personnel in the week before his death and that he was shot in the chest by five men believed to be plainclothes security officers. At least two of the others killed were reportedly deliberately run over by vehicles said to belong to security forces, although again the authorities have denied responsibility.

Since the demonstrations, well over 180 journalists, human rights activists and members of political parties linked to Mir Hossein Mousavi and former President Khatami are reported by *Jaras* to have been arrested from their home or workplaces, among them Emadeddin Baghi, recipient of the 2009 Martin Ennals Award, a human rights prize. See UA: 05/10 Index: MDE 13/003/2010. Women's rights defenders Mansoureh Shojaei, who is a member of the One Million Signatures Campaign was also arrested from her home on 28 December and is held, apparently without charge, in Evin Prison. Ebrahim Yazdi, leader of the Iran Freedom Movement (IFM), a banned but tolerated political party, was arrested at home on 28 December. The IFM has since announced it is suspending the activities of two of its websites, under pressure from the Ministry of Intelligence.

Further information on UA: 06/10 Index: MDE 13.006/2010 Issue Date: 13 January 2010

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