

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 13/007/2009

23 January 2009

**Further Information on UA 216/08 (MDE 13/108/2008, 6 August 2008) and follow-ups (MDE 13/181/2008, 23 December 2008 and MDE 13/003/2009, 15 January 2009) - Arbitrary arrest/Unfair trial/ Prisoners of conscience**

IRAN

**Dr Arash Alaei (m), doctor  
Dr Kamiar Alaei (m), doctor and brother of Arash Alaei**

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Doctors Arash and Kamiar Alaei learned on 19 January that they had been sentenced to six and three years' imprisonment respectively, for "cooperating with an enemy government", which carries a penalty of one to ten years' imprisonment under Article 508 of the Penal Code. Amnesty International considers them prisoners of conscience, as they appear to have been imprisoned solely in relation to their work with international and specifically US institutions in the field of HIV and AIDS prevention and treatment.

The two doctors were tried in a closed court session held on December 31 2008. The proceedings that did not meet international standards for fair trial, as they were not told of all the evidence against them, nor did they have the right to call or examine witnesses. They will serve their sentences in Tehran's Evin prison. The brothers' lawyer, Massoud Shafie, said he would appeal against the sentences and ask for their release as there is no evidence proving the accusations against them.

Arash and Kamiar Alaei are among four people named by the Iranian government as part of a network allegedly working in cooperation with the US authorities to topple the Iranian government by creating social upheaval. The identity of the other two people allegedly involved in the network is not known.

Arash and Kamiar Alaei are particularly known for their work to prevent the spread of HIV among drug users. Both doctors have travelled abroad for their work. Kamiar Alaei is a doctoral candidate at the State University of New York's Albany School of Public Health and holds a Masters degree in International Health from Harvard University. In 2008, the Asia Society, a US-based non-governmental organization, named him as a Fellow, "one of 23 new Fellows identified as being among the most promising trendsetters and emerging leaders in the Asia-Pacific region." Arash Alaei is the former Director of the International Education and Research Cooperation of the Iranian National Research Institute of Tuberculosis and Lung Disease. Neither is known to have been involved in political activities.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Iran's response to HIV and AIDS has been accorded international respect, particularly the preventative measures promoted by Arash and Kamiar Alaei. According to the *2008 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic* published by UNAIDS on 29 July 2008 "the... support for needle exchange projects in countries such as the Islamic Republic of Iran... serve as clear examples of courageous, visionary leadership in the response to HIV". However, the government of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, which took office in August 2005, has started to remove its support for such centres. More information is available at: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/news/iranian-aids-doctors-tried-closed-hearing-20090108>.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Persian, Arabic, English, or your own language:**

- calling for the immediate release of Arash and Kamiar Alaei, as their imprisonment appears to be politically motivated and related to their international contacts in the context of their work on HIV and AIDS prevention and treatment;
- expressing concern that Dr Arash Alaei and Dr Kamiar Alaei were tried on 31 December in proceedings that fell far short of international standards for fair trial, as the evidence against them was not fully disclosed to the two men and their defence, and they did not have the right to call and examine witnesses;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that Dr Arash Alaei and Dr Kamiar Alaei are not tortured or otherwise ill-treated;
- seeking assurances that Iran remains committed to effective treatment and prevention of HIV as promoted by Dr Arash Alaei and Dr Kamiar Alaei.

**APPEALS TO:**

President

His Excellency Mahmoud Ahmadinejad  
The Presidency  
Palestine Avenue, Azerbaijan Intersection  
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Email:** [dr-ahmadinejad@president.ir](mailto:dr-ahmadinejad@president.ir)

**Salutation:** **Your Excellency**

Minister of Intelligence

His Excellency Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejeie  
Ministry of Information  
Second Negarestan Street  
Pasdaran Avenue  
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Salutation:** **Your Excellency**

Head of the Judiciary

His Excellency Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi  
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:** [shahroudi@dadgostary-tehran.ir](mailto:shahroudi@dadgostary-tehran.ir) (In the subject line write: **FAO Ayatollah Shahroudi**)

**Salutation:** **Your Excellency**

**COPIES TO:**

Minister of Health and Medical Education

His Excellency Dr Kamran Baqeri Lankarani  
Ministry of Health  
Jomhuri-ye Eslami Avenue  
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**Fax:** **+98 21 8836 4100 (unreliable; please try three times and if it fails please send email)**

**Email:** [Lankarani@mohme.gov.ir](mailto:Lankarani@mohme.gov.ir) / [minister@mohme.gov.ir](mailto:minister@mohme.gov.ir) / [pro@mohme.gov.ir](mailto:pro@mohme.gov.ir)

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 6 March 2009.