

PUBLIC

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04 March 2009

UA 60/09	<u>Fear of torture and other ill-treatment</u>	
IRAN	Sanaz Allahyari (f) Nasim Roshana'i (f) Maryam Sheikh (f) Amir Hossein Mohammadi-Far (m)	All students

The four students named above, and possibly others, affiliated to the students' rights body, Students for Freedom and Equality (*Daneshjouyan-e Azadi Khah va Beraber Talab*), were arrested on 01 March and have reportedly been transferred to Evin prison. Amnesty International fears that they are at risk of torture or other ill-treatment while in detention.

They may have been detained in connection with a demonstration held on 23 February, at Amir Kabir University to protest against the government burying the remains of soldiers killed during the Iran-Iraq war between 1980 and 1988 on university campuses.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since December there have been waves of arbitrary arrests and harassment of students, particularly directed against members of Iran's religious and ethnic minorities, trade unionists and women's rights activists. These measures may in part be intended to stifle debate and to silence critics of the authorities in advance of the forthcoming presidential election in June 2009.

More than 70 students were detained on 23 February during a peaceful demonstration held by students at Tehran's Amir Kabir University in protest at the government's burial on campus of soldiers' remains

Many of the student temporarily detained during the demonstration were reportedly ill-treated. Others were taken to Police Station 107 at Palestine Square where there were also reports that students were ill-treated. Female students were said to have been insulted by police officers. Most of those arrested were released by the following morning although, more arrests of students were made in the days following the demonstration, including Abbas Hakimzadeh, Mehdi Mashayekhi, Nariman Mostafavi and Ahmad Qasaban, members of the Islamic Students Association (ISA) of Amir Kabir University.

The burial of the unknown soldiers on the university campus has widely been seen as a move by the government to seek to control student groups opposed to its policies. Burial of soldiers, called martyrs on account of their sacrifice in fighting against Iraqi forces, appears to enable non-students to enter the campus without being required to show evidence that they are students, a normal requirement for access to university premises. Students groups fear that the presence of the graves would allow unrestricted access to the campuses by security forces, including the Basij mobilization forces who are under the control of the Revolutionary Guards and would lead to further restrictions on debates and discussions relating to government policy.

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

- calling on the authorities to ensure that Sanaz Allahyari, Nasim Roshana'i, Maryam Sheikh and Amir Hossein Mohammadi-Far are protected against torture or other ill-treatment and are allowed immediate access to their family, legal representation and any medical attention that they may require;

- seeking specific details of the reasons for their arrest and any charges they may be facing;
- noting that if any of the students are held solely on account of the peaceful expression of their views or the exercise of their right to freedom of assembly, then they are prisoners of conscience, and should be released immediately and unconditionally;

APPEALS TO:

Head of the Judiciary

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 (In the subject line write: FAO Ayatollah Shahroudi)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of Judiciary for Tehran province

Ali Reza Avaie

Tehran Judiciary

No. 152, corner of 17th Alley, before Shahid Motahhari Avenue

Sanaei Avenue, Karimkhan Zand Avenue

Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: avaei@dadgostary-tehran.ir, info@dadgostary-tehran.ir

Fax: +98 21 8832 6700 (unreliable, please try three times before trying an alternative method)

Salutation: Dear Sir

Director, Human Rights Headquarters of Iran

Mohammad Javad Larijani

Howzeh Riassat-e Ghoveh Ghazaiyeh (Office of the Head of the Judiciary)

Pasteur St, Vali Asr Ave., south of Serah-e Jomhuri, Tehran 1316814737, Iran

Fax: +98 21 3390 4986 (please keep trying)

Email: info@dadgostary-tehran.ir (In the subject line write: FAO Javid Larijani)

Salutation: Dear Mr Larijani

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 15 April.