

PUBLIC

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Fear of torture

IRAN

**Jamshid Arazpour (m), ethnic Turkmen from Gomesh Deppeh  
Haji Aman Khadivar (m), ethnic Turkmen from Chapaqli, Golestan  
200-300 others**

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The two men named above were detained in the first week of January, during or after unrest that followed the killing of a Turkmen fisherman by the security forces. They are believed to be held incommunicado in Bouyeh Prison by officials from Iran's Ministry of Intelligence in the city of Gorgan, the capital of the north-eastern province of Golestan. They are at risk of torture.

On 28 December, an 18-year-old Turkmen fisherman, Husamettin Khadivar, was killed by maritime security officers. He had been fishing without a license in the Caspian Sea off the city of Bandar-e Torkman. Three other fishermen taking part in the unauthorised fishing were arrested.

It is not known where Jamshid Arazpour was arrested. Haji Aman Khadivar, older brother of the dead man, was detained while taking part in mourning and commemorative events for his brother, outside the family home in Chapaqli. Both men, and others detained in the course of protests which followed Husamettin Khadivar's death, are said to have been tortured by three security officials while being transported in a minibus from Bandar-e Torkman to prison in Gorgan. Following the arrests, Bouyeh prison in Gorgan was said to have been so crowded that shackled detainees were forced to stand, possibly for hours, in freezing temperatures in the prison's courtyard, before they were put in cells.

An Iranian body, the Turkmen Human Rights Group is said to have taken up the arrested men's case with the authorities.

On 30 December people from Turkmen fishing villages including Chapaqli and Khoja Nafas went to the military base near Chapaqli to seek information and to protest at the killing. Some also tried to lodge complaints at the office of the security chief of Bandar-e Torkman, but were turned away. Protests followed which are said to have led to broken windows and cars set on fire near the offices of the district governor, the security forces and the maritime security office. The protests are said to have continued until around 6 January, when the authorities received reinforcements. Dozens of Turkmen protesters are said to have been injured, and 200-300 were arrested in villages in the region, including at least two from Gomesh Deppeh (Gomeshiyan in Persian), 20 from Chapaqli and 75 from Bandar-e Torkman. The detainees were reportedly not given any reason for their arrest, nor told what was going to happen to them. Their families have not been told where they are held, nor allowed to contact them.

Scores, if not hundreds, of Turkmen have reportedly been taken to Zahedan in Sistan-Baluchistan province, possibly to make it harder for families to find out what has happened to them. One report suggested that these people were arrested at night and taken, in whatever they were wearing, to a detention centre where they received clothing and, in many cases, were taken from the region.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The Turkmen of Iran number around 2.2 million (no more than 3% of the population), and speak a Turkic language. They are Sunni Muslim and live in the north-west of the country. They are allowed no education or social services in their mother tongue, though a small number of newspapers are allowed to publish in Turkmen. Turkmen cannot obtain senior positions in even local government, under discriminatory *gozinesh*, or selection policies.

According to Turkmen sources, at least two other fishermen have been killed in the past two years, in a region marked by poverty and up to 40% unemployment. Fishing has reportedly recently been transformed into a state enterprise, effectively banning individual fishermen from their traditional livelihood.

The parliamentary representative for Bandar-e Torkman, himself a Turkmen, has reportedly complained to parliament on three occasions about the killing of Husamettin Khadivar and the subsequent mass arrests of his constituents. In one of his statements he is reported to have said that, "One cannot tell poor villagers that they should continue to live in hunger."

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

- expressing concern at the reports of the incommunicado detention of up to 300 Turkmen, including Jamshid Arazpour and Haji Aman Khadivar following the killing of Husamettin Khadivar;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that none is tortured or ill-treated;
- calling on the authorities to allow all those detained to be granted immediate and regular access to their families and lawyer of their choice and to be granted any medical treatment they may require;
- reminding the authorities of their obligation under international human rights law to charge the detainees with recognisably criminal offences and to try them promptly and fairly, or else release them.

**APPEALS TO:**

Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi  
Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Justice Building, Panzdah-Khordad Square,  
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Email:** [info@dadgostary-tehran.ir](mailto:info@dadgostary-tehran.ir) (In the subject line write: **FAO Ayatollah Shahroudi**)

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

Minister of Intelligence

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

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

**COPIES TO:**

Leader of the Islamic Republic

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

**Email:** [info@leader.ir](mailto:info@leader.ir)

Governor of Golestan province

Governorate of Golestan (Ostandari-ye Ostan-e Golestan)  
Gorgan, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Email:** **via website:** <http://www.golestanstate.ir/layers.aspx?quiz=contact>

**Put your name in the top field and your message in the last field. Click the grey box beneath to send.**

**COPIES 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 2008.