

PUBLIC

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Further Information on UA 93/08 (MDE 13/053/2008, 10 April 2008) Arbitrary arrest/ Prisoner of conscience

IRAN

Khadijeh Moghaddam, (f), women's rights defender aged 56

Khadijeh Moghaddam was freed on 16 April. The condition of her release had originally been set as bail of one billion rials (approximately US\$112,000), but on 15 April this was changed to a third-party guarantee. She was released after the necessary court documents had been signed.

Initially held in the Eshrat Abad security police station for several hours, she was taken to court and charged with "spreading of propaganda against the state; disruption of public opinion; and actions against national security", following which she was transferred to the Vozara detention centre where she was held in solitary confinement for seven days. She was then transferred to Evin Prison where she spent one night before her release.

In an interview with the Campaign for Equality on 12 April, Khadijeh Moghaddam's husband, Dr. Khosrowshahi, said, "When I saw her yesterday, Khadijeh explained that she was interrogated in relation to the visits and gatherings in our home with members of the Mother's Committee of the Campaign and the Mothers for Peace, which she hosted. They asked her to name the persons who regularly visited with her in her home. My wife found this line of questioning to be unethical and as such did not provide a response. Additionally, it seems that they asked her why she had visited the family of Mr. Ossanlu [an imprisoned trade unionist leader – see UA 08/06 and follow-ups]. She responded by saying that Mr. Ossanlu's mother is a friend of hers, and that it is very natural for her to go their home on the occasion of the Iranian New Year. Additionally, she responded that she views defending civil society activists to be her duty." (see: <http://www.we-change.org/english/spip.php?article251>).

Khadijeh Moghaddam is an active member of the Campaign for Equality, which aims to collect one million signatures of Iranians for a petition demanding an end to legal discrimination against women in Iran and is a member of the Mother's Committee. She is also a member of the organization "Mothers for Peace", and has also been active on environmental issues for many years.

Other women's rights defenders in Iran continue to be harassed and to be convicted in connection with their peaceful activities. In recent weeks, four women – Marzieh Mortazi Langaroudi, Nasrin Afzali and Nahid Ja'fari received six-month prison sentences and 10 lashes all suspended for 2 years. This was in connection with their participation in a peaceful demonstration on 4 March 2007 outside the court where five other women were on trial for organizing another peaceful demonstration demanding an end to legal discrimination against women in June 2006. All were convicted of taking part in an illegal gathering and colluding with the intent to disrupt national security. Another woman, student Zeynab Peyghambarzadeh, received a two year suspended prison sentence in connection with the same event. Their treatment appears to show the arbitrary nature of Iranian justice, as at least 12 other women present at the March 2007 demonstration have been acquitted of any offence.

No further action is required at present. Many thanks to all those who sent appeals.