

PUBLIC

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30 April 2007

UA 101/07 Incommunicado detention/ fear of torture or ill-treatment

IRAN Hamid Sa'edi (m), 35, Kurdish teacher

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Hamid Sa'edi, a teacher, singer and poet from Iran's Kurdish minority, was reportedly arrested on 22 April by plain clothed officials of the Ministry of Intelligence, in the city of Sanandaj, in Kordestan province, northwestern Iran. He was reportedly summoned by officials to a court, possibly for questioning, where he was arrested. He is currently held incommunicado in a Ministry of Intelligence detention facility in Sanandaj. Amnesty International is concerned that he may be at risk of torture and ill-treatment.

The reasons for Hamid Sa'edi's arrest are not clear to Amnesty International. However, Hamid Sa'edi reportedly participated in a peaceful demonstration held by about 200 teachers in Sanandaj in mid-March, and in a strike by teachers on 17 and 18 March, both of which were calling for higher pay and better working conditions. It is feared that Hamid Sa'edi may have been detained in connection with these activities.

Hamid Sa'edi is the brother of Kurdish journalist and human rights defender Sa'id Sa'edi, who was detained for over two months in 2005 in connection with his alleged participation in demonstrations (see Amnesty International Appeal Case, AI Index MDE 13/080/2006, July 2006). Hamid Sa'edi was briefly detained in late 2005 or early 2006, following his brother's release. When Hamid Sa'edi was arrested, security forces personnel confiscated books and two computers from the home he shares with his parents. He was released on bail, on accusations of "acting against national security". To date, he has not been charged or tried in relation to these accusations.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Teachers across Iran have taken part in demonstrations during March and April demanding better pay and conditions. Members of Iran's National Union of Teachers have undertaken large, peaceful demonstrations in the cities of Tehran, Kermanshah and Hamedan, each of which resulted in scores of arrests. The reasons for these arrests are not clear. On 7 April, members of the National Union of Teachers in Hamedan met to debate issues of concern when security officials broke up the meeting, arresting the 30 participants and reportedly another 15 people at their homes. All are since believed to have been released. At least seven teachers are currently detained without charge or trial in Tehran, including Ali Akbar Baghani, the Head of the National Union of Teachers.

Another strike took place on 29 April, with unconfirmed reports of arrests of up to 45 teachers in Hamedan and the north-western city of Ardebil. Further strikes are planned for 2 May and 8 May.

Kurds are believed to make up between seven and 10 per cent of the population of Iran. They live mainly in the north-western provinces neighbouring Iraq and Turkey, where the main economic activity is farming. For many years, Kurdish organizations such as the Kurdistan People's Democratic Party (KDPI) and *Komala* engaged in armed resistance to the government, but more recently they have abandoned armed struggle for independence in favour of pursuing regional autonomy within a federal system of government, by peaceful means. The more recently formed PJAK, the Iranian wing of the PKK, is currently engaged in armed opposition to the Iranian authorities in border areas close to Iraq.

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

- calling on the authorities to release Hamid Sa'edi immediately, unless he is to be promptly charged with a recognizably criminal offence;
- asking for a detailed account of the reasons for his arrest, the specific charges brought against him and the details of any trial which may be held;
- stating that if Hamid Sa'edi was arrested solely in connection with the peaceful teachers' demonstrations and strikes, then he would be a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for the peaceful exercise of his internationally recognized right to freedom of expression or association, who should be released immediately and unconditionally;
- seeking assurances that he is not being tortured or ill-treated;
- calling for him to be given immediate access to lawyers, his family, and any medical treatment he may require.

**APPEALS TO:**

Leader of the Islamic Republic

His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei, The Office of the Supreme Leader  
Shoahada Street, Qom, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Email:** info@leader.ir

istiftaa@wilayah.org

**Fax:** +98 251 7774 2228 (mark FAO the Office of His Excellency Ayatollah al Udhma Khamenei)

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi

Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Justice Building, Panzdah-Khordad Square, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

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

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

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

Governor of Kurdistan

Esmail Najjar

**Email:** If sending emails in English, French or your own language, please use the feedback form on the English part of the website: <http://en.ostan-kd.ir/Default.aspx?TabID=59>

If sending emails in Persian and Kurdish, please send emails via the feedback form on the Persian part of the website: [http://www.ostan-kd.ir/Default.aspx?tabId=150&cv=4@0\\_1](http://www.ostan-kd.ir/Default.aspx?tabId=150&cv=4@0_1)

**Salutation:** Dear Governor

**COPIES TO:**

President

His Excellency Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

The Presidency, Palestine Avenue, Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Email:** dr-ahmadinejad@president.ir

via website: [www.president.ir/email](http://www.president.ir/email)

Speaker of Parliament

His Excellency Gholamali Haddad Adel

Majles-e Shoura-ye Eslami, Imam Khomeini Avenue, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Fax:** +98 21 6 646 1746

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 11 June 2007.