

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 13/022/2006

28 February 2006

**Further Information on UA 34/06 (MDE 13/011/2006, 10 February 2006) - Possible incommunicado detention/fear of torture and ill-treatment/possible prisoners of conscience**

**IRAN**                      **Elham Afroutan (f), aged 21, journalist and member of the Writers' Association  
Up to six other journalists**

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Elham Afroutan is no longer held incommunicado, though she remains in custody and may face trial on charges that can carry the punishment of flogging, which Amnesty International considers to be cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment amounting to torture.

On around 10 February, reports began to circulate that Elham Afroutan had attempted suicide in prison, and was either in a coma or dead. On 17 February Amnesty International called on the Iranian authorities to reveal what had actually happened to her (See public statement *Iran: Concern for journalist Elham Afroutan*, MDE 13/015/2006). On 23 February the state news agency IRNA published an interview with her conducted the previous day. She denied that she had attempted suicide, and said that after she was arrested on 29 January, she had spent nine days in solitary confinement in a prison in Bandar Abbas, but was then moved to Evin Prison, in Tehran, where after a further 24 hours in solitary confinement she was moved to a communal cell in the women's section of the prison, where she remains. The interview can be seen, in English, at <http://www.irna.ir/en/news/view/line-17/0602232538102848.htm>.

Elham Afroutan was detained together with up to six other journalists after the weekly newspaper *Tammadon-e Hormozgan* published an article comparing the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran and the advent of Ayatollah Khomeini to AIDS, and said that President Ahmadinejad was the physical embodiment of the disease. In her interview with IRNA, Elham Afroutan said, "...we needed an article to fill a blank space in a page, I surfed the Internet and selected an article titled *Methods which the Public Should Know in the Fight against AIDS* written by a person named MF Sokhan, and I sent this to the layout section without carefully reading its contents." She stressed that she had not written the article and "there was neither any ill intention nor any pre-conceived plot behind the publication of the article" which she said was an "unintentional mistake".

In an interview with the Iranian Students' News Agency (ISNA) on 21 February, the Minister of Justice and Spokesman for the Judiciary, Jamal Karimi-Rad, said that at least two others had been detained in connection with the article. There is no further information about the others arrested with Elham Afroutan.

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

- welcoming the news that Elham Afroutan is no longer in solitary confinement;
- asking to be told the names of all others held in connection with the publication of the article in *Tammadon-e Hormozgan*;
- expressing concern that those detained in this case are prisoners of conscience, held solely for the peaceful exercise of their internationally recognized right to freedom of expression, and should therefore be released immediately and unconditionally;
- urging the authorities to grant them immediate and regular access to lawyers of their own choosing, their families and any medical treatment they may require;
- reminding the authorities that Iran is a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, of which Article 19 states that everyone has the right to freedom of expression.

**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

**Fax:** + 98 251 7 774 2228 (mark "FAO the Office of His Excellency, Ayatollah al Udhma Khamenei")

**Email:** [info@leader.ir](mailto:info@leader.ir) OR [istiftaa@wilayah.org](mailto:istiftaa@wilayah.org)

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary

His Excellency Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi  
Ministry of Justice, Park-e Shahr, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Email:** [irjpr@iranjudiciary.org](mailto:irjpr@iranjudiciary.org) (mark "Please forward to His Excellency Ayatollah Shahroudi")  
via the judiciary website: [www.iranjudiciary.org/feedback\\_en.html](http://www.iranjudiciary.org/feedback_en.html)

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance

His Excellency Mohammad-Hosseini Saffar-Harandi  
Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance,  
Public Relations Department, Central Building  
Kamal al-Molk Street, Baharestan Square, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

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

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

**COPIES TO:**President

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

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Minister of the Interior

Hojjatoleslam Mustafa Purmohammadi  
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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 April 2006.