

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 13/032/2005

04 July 2005

Further Information on UA 109/05 (MDE 13/020/2005, 6 May 2005) Arbitrary arrest/Fear of torture and ill-treatment

IRAN **Yousuf Azizi Bani Toruf (m), writer and journalist**

Writer and journalist Yousuf Azizi Bani Toruf was reportedly released on 28 June, on payment of bail of US\$25,000. It is not known whether he will face trial, as no charges have yet been brought against him.

Yousuf Azizi Bani Toruf had been arrested on 25 April, after he returned from a press conference where he had condemned the security forces' violent suppression of anti-government demonstrations in the province of Khuzestan. According to recent reports, his health deteriorated while he was in custody, possibly because he was ill-treated during interrogation.

Yousuf Azizi Bani Toruf is a member of the Writers' Association (*Kanoun-e Nevisandigan*). He has written books in both Persian and Arabic and had articles published in the Iranian press. For 12 years he worked as a journalist for the Iranian daily newspaper *Hamshahri*.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The demonstrations in Khuzestan, which began on 15 April in the city of Ahvaz, were sparked by reports of a letter, allegedly written in 1999 by an adviser in the office of President Khatami, setting out plans for the reduction of the Arab population of the province of Khuzestan: these include resettling Arabs in other regions of Iran, resettling non-Arabs in the province, and replacing Arabic place names with Persian ones. Government sources, including the letter's supposed author, have strongly denied that it is genuine. The security forces appear to have used excessive force in stopping the demonstration. The government has reportedly begun a limited enquiry into the unrest, as has the parliament, but these do not appear to be sufficiently wide-ranging or impartial.

No further action is requested from the Urgent Action network. We will be monitoring the case and taking further campaigning action as necessary. Many thanks to all those who sent appeals.