

13 August 2008

Further Information on UA 212/08 (MDE 13/104/2008, 31 July 2008) Arbitrary arrests/fear of torture and ill treatment/prisoners of conscience

IRAN	Mehdi Khoda'i (m)] students at Azad University, Shahr-e Rey
	Salman Sima (m)]
	Farzad Hassanzadeh (m)] students at Mashad University
	Mohamad Zerati (m)]
	Bahareh Hedayat (f)] students at Tehran University
	Mohammad Hashemi (m)]
	Majid Asadi (m)] student at 'Allameh University, Tehran
	Arash Rayji (m)] students at Zanjan University
	Hassan Joneydi (m)]
	Payam Shakiba (m)]
	Only known as 'Anbaraki'] students at Bushehr University
	Only known as 'Khoeyni']

According to the Iran-based Advar News website, on 9 August, after respectively 37 and 34 days of detention, Mehdi Khoda'i and Salman Sima were released. They have not, as yet, been charged. Salman Sima was detained at Evin prison, in Tehran and was released on bail said to exceed an amount equivalent to US\$ 60,000. It is not known whether Mehdi Khoda'i was required to post bail.

Mehdi Khoda'i, the former chair of the Islamic Association – a student union – at the Azad University in Shahr-e Rey, an area in south Tehran, and Salman Sima and the 10 other university students named above, were arrested at various locations across Iran in July. The arrests are connected with the eighth anniversary of student demonstrations that were held in Iran on 9 July 1999 and that were violently suppressed by the security forces. The other 10 students remain in detention and are facing various vaguely worded charges, such as "acting against national security", "propaganda against the regime", "propagating lies", "promoting anti-religious attitudes", and "disturbing public opinion". Amnesty International considers them to be prisoners of conscience, held on account of their conscientiously held beliefs, and is calling for them to be released immediately and unconditionally.

Mohamad Zera'ti and Farzad Hassanzadeh, who were both arrested on 3 or 4 July, have had their bail set at 30 million rial (3,150 USD). Their place of detention remains unknown.

Mohammad Hashemi and Bahareh Hedayat were arrested by the security forces at their homes on 13 July; they are accused of having links with "illegal and anti-revolutionary groups abroad". Both are members of the Office for Consolidating Unity, the central council of a pro-reform student group. They are being detained in Evin Prison in Tehran.

Payam Shakiba, Arash Rayji and Hassan Joneydi, students at Zanjan University, were arrested on 8 July; their place of detention remains unknown.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

On 8 July 1999, plainclothes police forces and paramilitary units calling themselves Ansar-e Hezbollah stormed a Tehran university dormitory at night in order to suppress student unrest that had lasted for five days. A number of students were injured, and at least one person, a visitor at the university, was killed. This fuelled

further protests and members of the general public joined the students' demonstrations, which the security forces suppressed by force.

Student groups have been at the forefront of demands for greater human rights in Iran. Since the election of President Ahmadinejad in 2005, there have been increasing restrictions on civil society. In April 2007, Minister of Intelligence Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejeie publicly accused student activists and campaigners for the rights of women, of being part of an "enemy conspiracy" – a claim they strongly deny.

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

- welcoming the release of Mehdi Khoda'i, apparently without bail
- noting the release of Salman Sima on bail, ,
- expressing concern about the arrest and continuing detention of the 10 students named above;
- calling for the unconditional release of the students who continue to be detained solely for the peaceful expression of their conscientiously held beliefs'
- calling on the authorities to ensure that they are protected against torture or other ill-treatment and are allowed immediate access to their family, legal representation and any medical attention that they may require.

APPEALS 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

Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi

Howzeh Riyasat-e Goveh Qazaiyeh / Office of the Head of the Judiciary

Pasteur St., Vali Asr Ave., south of Serah-e Jomhuri, Tehran 1316814737, Islamic Republic of Iran

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

Salutation: Your Excellency

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

Speaker of Parliament

His Excellency Ali Larijani

Majles-e Shoura-ye Eslami, Baharestan Square, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: +98 21 3355 6408 (works intermittently, please try three times before posting your appeal)

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 24 September 2008.