

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 13/05/94

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Date: 27 May 1994

MEDICAL CONCERN

**Houshang Amjadi Bigvand
IRAN**

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for Houshang Amjadi Bigvand, a 54 year old prisoner who is reported to suffer from a chronic bleeding gastric ulcer which has now progressed to the point where surgery is required. He was recently released for a period of 25 days' home leave on medical grounds, but was returned to prison before surgery had been performed. Houshang Bigvand was arrested in 1988 and reportedly sentenced to death in 1990, charged with "spying for the USA". His death sentence is reported to have been commuted to ten years' imprisonment in 1991.

Background

Houshang Bigvand was arrested in September 1988 together with his cousin Jamshid Amiri Bigvand. Houshang Bigvand spent over a year in incommunicado detention, reportedly spending much of that time in solitary confinement, sometimes under torture. His family was not informed of his whereabouts for some months, but in mid-1989 learned that he was being held in Evin Prison in Tehran.

In March 1990 a secret trial took place before an Islamic Revolutionary Court in Evin Prison following which the family was informed that Houshang Bigvand was to be executed. Proceedings before these revolutionary courts are extremely summary, falling far short of international standards for a fair trial. The presumption of guilt is so great that the trial may consist only of the charge being read out and the sentence being passed. The accused have no right to be defended by a lawyer nor any right to call witnesses in their defence and there is no right to appeal against verdict or sentence. Prisoners are routinely held in indefinite incommunicado pre-trial detention in order to force them to confess to offences. These confessions may then form the basis of their convictions and it is believed that this occurred in Houshang Bigvand's case.

Houshang Bigvand is reported to have suffered from a gastric ulcer for several years. His condition has progressively worsened and he has experienced several episodes of bleeding. It would appear that he has not been receiving proper medical care while in prison, nor has any dietary provision been made. He is said to experience extreme pain, to have lost 30 kg in weight and to be in a very depressed state of mind.

In March 1994 Houshang Bigvand was allowed 25 days home leave in order to seek medical attention and, following X-rays and endoscopy, was told that surgical management was now necessary; it is believed that a partial gastrectomy was recommended. However, it is

reported that he was refused an extension to his leave and was returned to Evin prison without surgery being undertaken.

Amnesty International is seriously concerned that Houshang Bigvand has not received the treatment he requires and that he is now at risk of a perforated ulcer. It is appealing to the Iranian authorities to make arrangements for him to undergo surgery as a matter of urgency and to take all possible measures to ensure he receives sympathetic medical care in surroundings best conducive to management of his condition.

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To: Medical professionals
From: Medical Office / Research Department - Middle East
Date: 27 May 1994

MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION

**Houshang Amjadi Bigvand
IRAN**

Keywords

Theme: ill-health/medical care

Summary

Houshang Amjadi Bigvand is a prisoner in his mid-fifties who suffers from a chronic bleeding gastric ulcer which is reported to have progressed to the stage where gastric surgery is indicated. In March this year he was given 25 days home leave in order to seek medical attention, but was recalled to prison before surgery was undertaken. There is now very real concern for his life if surgery and proper medical care cannot be arranged. Please see the details attached.

Recommended Actions

Letters are requested from medical professionals to the addresses below:

- expressing your concern for Houshang Amjadi Bigvand who is reported to suffer from a chronic gastric ulcer which is now said to require surgical intervention
- noting that he was accorded a 25-day period of home leave in March 1994 in order to seek medical attention and that it was at this time that he was told he would require surgery
- expressing concern that he is reported to have been returned to prison before surgery was performed, noting that medication has failed to control his ulcer and that, unless surgery is promptly undertaken, he now risks a perforated ulcer which will put his life at risk
- urging that surgery is undertaken without further delay and that all possible measures are taken to ensure he receives specialist medical care in surroundings best conducive to management of his condition.
- seeking further information about his trial procedures, the precise nature of the charges on which he was convicted and the length of his current sentence

Addresses

His Excellency
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Ministry of Interior
Dr Fatemi Avenue
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Mr Ali Reza Marandi
Minister of Health and Medical Education
Ministry of Health
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Mr Sa'id Raja'i Khorasani
Head of Islamic Consultative Assembly's Human Rights Committee
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Director
Evin Prison
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COPIES OF APPEALS TO:

His Excellency
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Minister of Foreign Affairs
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