

12 March 2001

Further information on UA 236/00 (MDE 13/22/00, 9 August 2000) and follow-up (MDE 13/29/00, 17 October 2000) Prisoners of Conscience/Medical Concern and new concern: fear of ill-treatment/incommunicado detention

IRANHojjatoleslam Hasan Yousefi Eshkevari, researcher and journalist, aged 50

Ahmad Zeidabadi, journalist

Massoud Behnoud, journalist, aged 55

New names (see below): 20-30 supporters of the Iran Freedom Movement (*Nehzat-e Azadi-ye Iran*)

Journalist Ahmad Zeidabadi has reportedly been released but then rearrested, together with 20-30 supporters and members of the Iran Freedom Movement (*Nehzat-e Azadi-ye Iran*). All are feared to be held incommunicado. Their families applied to Branch 26 of the Revolutionary Court - delete if not essential for permission to see them, but were denied.

Ahmad Zeidabadi was reportedly released from Tehran's Evin prison on 28 February, reportedly on bail of 121 million Riyals (approximately US \$70,000), but rearrested on 11 March. He had been in Evin prison since August 2000, spending two months in solitary confinement in Section 240, after which he was transferred to the prison's "Qarantina" section, and later to the *Amuzeshgah*, or "Training Centre", in Section 3, and then to Section 5. He went on a 12-day hunger strike in protest at prison conditions. The "Qarantina" section usually holds drug smugglers and thieves.

The charges against him - insulting and defaming the authorities (*toheen va ahanet be masoul'an*), "spreading lies" (*nashr-e akazib*), "disturbing public opinion" (*tashvish-e azhan-e 'omumi*) and "attacking national security" (*bar ham zadan-e amniyat-e milli*) - were read in a preliminary hearing on 21 February, and he and his lawyer will soon present his defence.

Massoud Behnoud, who has an ulcer and a heart condition, was reportedly released on bail in December 2000, after some four months in custody. He is free on bail pending the outcome of his appeal. According to press reports of 28 February he has been sentenced to 19 months' imprisonment and a fine of 20 million Riyals (approx US \$11,500). He is reportedly charged with "spreading lies", insulting government officials, and public morality and alcohol-related charges.

Hojjatoleslam Hasan Yousefi Eshkevari is yet to be officially sentenced after he was reportedly convicted of "acting against national security", "defaming government officials in published articles" and "denial of the Islamic faith", both in a speech he gave at a conference in Berlin in April 2000, and in articles published in now-banned newspapers. According to press reports of November 2000 he was transferred to Evin prison as part of an initial ruling by the Special Court for the Clergy. An appeal hearing was reportedly scheduled for 26 November 2000, but there is no news on the outcome.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

An increasing number of people appear to be detained incommunicado: journalists Hoda Saber and Alireza Alijani, arrested about a month ago, have reportedly been denied access to family or legal representation.

Those arrested on 11 March reportedly: Mohammad Mohammadi (Gorgani); Ali Mohammadi (Gorgani); Nezamoddin Ghahari; Mohammad Mohamadi Ardehali; Alireza Radjaie; Massod Pedram; Naser Hashemi (Mohammad Ali Hashemi); Dr Reza Reissi-Toosi; Dr Hossein Rafiee; Dr Mohammad Maleki; Dr Habibollah Peyman; Marziyeh Mortazi Langaroudi[f] (his wife); Morteza Kazemiyan; Mohammad Basteh-Negar; Taghi Rahmani; Said Madani; Mahmood Emrani; Fatemeh Govaraee [f]; Bahman Rezakhani; Hamid Zeidabadi; and Mehdi Ghani.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English or your own language:

- asking what internationally recognised criminal offences Hojjatoleslam Hasan Yousefi Eshkevari, Ahmad Zeidabadi, Massoud Behnoud and those detained on 11 March are alleged to have committed;
- urging the authorities to release Hojjatoleslam Hasan Yousefi Eshkevari, Ahmad Zeidabadi and Massoud Behnoud immediately and unconditionally, as Amnesty International considers them to be prisoners of conscience;
- in appeals to the Head of the Judiciary: urging him to ensure that the Special Court for the Clergy (SCC) reviews Hasan Yousefi Eshkevari's case, and asking for guarantees that he will not be flogged or sentenced to death, in violation of international law prohibiting torture and cruel or degrading treatment;
- asking to be told the outcome of Hasan Yousefi Eshkevari's appeal hearing on 26 November 2000;
- asking the authorities to guarantee that Hasan Yousefi Eshkevari, Ahmad Zeidabadi and those detained on 11 March will be treated humanely in prison.

APPEALS TO:

Leader of the Islamic Republic

His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei,
The Presidency, Palestine Avenue,
Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Telegrams: Ayatollah Khamenei, Tehran, Iran

Salutation: Your Excellency

President

His Excellency Hojjatoleslam val Moslemin Sayed Mohammad Khatami
The Presidency, Palestine Avenue
Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Telegrams: President Khatami, Tehran, Iran

Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary

His Excellency Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahrudi
Ministry of Justice
Park-e Shahr
Tehran

Islamic Republic of Iran

Telegrams: Head of Judiciary, Tehran, Iran

Faxes: + 98 21 879 6671 (number may be unreliable; please mark "care of Director of International Affairs, Judiciary")

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

Minister of Foreign Affairs,

His Excellency Kamal Kharrazi
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Abdolmajid Keshk-e Mesri Avenue
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Faxes: + 98 21 390 1999 (number may be unreliable; please mark "care of the Human Rights Department, Foreign Ministry)

Mr Mohammad Hassan Zia'i-Far
Secretary, Islamic Human Rights Commission
PO Box 13165-137, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Faxes: + 98 21 204 0541
E-mail:ihrc@Majlis.ir

Parliamentary Committee
Mohsen Mirdamadi Najafabadi
Article 90 Commission (Komisyon-e Asl-e Navad), Majles-e Shura-ye Eslami, Imam Khomeini Avenue, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Telegrams: Majles, Tehran or Telex: 21 42 32 ICAI IR
Faxes: + 98 21 646 1746 (Can be difficult to reach, please be patient)

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 23 April 2001.