

PUBLIC

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To: Health professionals
From: Medical office / Middle East Program
Date: 22 May 2000

**Further information on
*MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION***

Akbar Mohammadi, Iran
(Update AI Index MDE 13/05/00)

Key words death penalty / ill-health / torture / medical care / unfair trial

Summary

Akbar Mohammadi's death sentence was commuted on 30 April to 15 years' imprisonment by order of Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei, Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Amnesty International continues to urge the authorities that he be granted a re-trial conforming to international standards for fair trial and that an independent investigation into his alleged torture is carried out.

Background information

Akbar Mohammadi, a 29-year-old student, was sentenced to death in September 1999 after an unfair trial by Tehran's Revolutionary Court, in connection with peaceful student demonstrations in July 1999. The demonstrations were against new laws curbing press freedom and the closure of the daily newspaper *Salam*. Members of the vigilante student group *Ansar-e Hezbollah* who attacked the demonstrators were joined by members of the security forces, resulting in at least one death and serious injuries to scores of students.

Akbar Mohammadi had his sentence upheld by the Supreme Court, and was facing imminent execution. He had been tortured in detention by suspension by the arms and the whipping of the soles of his feet. He subsequently suffered from blood in his urine. He is believed to have undertaken a hunger strike along with other prisoners.

According to press reports, Akbar Mohammadi wrote a letter to judiciary chief Mahmud Hashemi-Shahrudi. In this letter which was published in some Iranian newspapers, he stated that he had been hit with an electric cable and "violently beaten". He was referred to hospital by the prison doctor, but was not taken to hospital.

Amnesty International has received reports that Akbar Mohammadi is suffering very poor health, though AI does not have full details of his current state of health. The organization is seeking details of his current situation and asking for reassurances that he will receive all necessary examinations, diagnosis and treatment.

Recommended actions

Appeals are requested from health professionals to the addresses below:

- introducing yourself as a concerned health professional and/or member of Amnesty International's health professional network;
- welcoming that the death sentence against Akbar Mohammadi has been commuted;
- expressing concern at the reported torture of Akbar Mohammadi, urging the authorities to launch an independent investigation into these allegations and to make the findings public;
- if he has been charged with a recognizably criminal offence, seeking information on the laws under which these charges were brought;
- urging the authorities that he be granted a re-trial conforming to international standards for fair trial;
- asking what examinations and diagnosis of Akbar Mohammadi's health have been made;
- seeking assurances that Akbar Mohammadi is given access to adequate medical care as provided for by international human rights standards such as the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners [Article 22].

If you receive no reply from the government or other recipients within two months of dispatch of your letter, please send a follow up letter seeking a response. Please check with the medical team if you are sending appeals after 21 July, and send copies of any replies you do receive to the International Secretariat (att: medical team).

ADDRESSES

Leader of the Islamic Republic

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

President

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

Head of Judiciary

His Excellency Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi-Shahrudi
Ministry of Justice, Park-e Shahr
Tehran
Islamic Republic of Iran
Telegrams: Head of the Judiciary, Tehran, Iran
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
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

Sa'id Neshat
c/o the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence
P.O. Box 16765-911
Tehran
Islamic Republic of Iran

and to representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran accredited to your country.