

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 13/11/97

27 February 1997

Further information on UA 33/97 (MDE 13/07/97, 30 January 1997) - Prisoners of conscience / Death penalty

**IRANDhabihullah Mahrami
Musa Talibi**

According to media reports, Iran's Supreme Court has officially confirmed the death sentences against Dhabihullah Mahrami and Musa Talibi. Previous reports received by Amnesty International suggested that both had been convicted of apostasy. However, a report from the Iranian news agency IRNA on 23 February states that the Head of the Revolutionary Court said that both men have been convicted of espionage.

Amnesty International is not aware of any indication that charges of espionage had been brought previously, nor of any indication that the two men have been tried on fresh charges. Amnesty International still believes that both men are prisoners of conscience, held solely on account of their religious beliefs.

It is commonplace for the Iranian authorities to deny that the Baha'i community follows any recognised religion, and treats them with hostility and suspicion, often accusing them unfoundedly of espionage. In an interview last year with IRNA (reported by Reuters and Agence France Press on 14 May 1996), Ayatollah Yazdi, the Head of the Judiciary said that religious minorities in Iran enjoyed freedom of faith but that "the Baha'i sect is not a religion, but a web of espionage activities".

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

- urging the authorities to lift the death sentences against Dhabihullah Mahrami and Musa Talibi, and to release the two men immediately and unconditionally as prisoners of conscience;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that no one in the future is sentenced to a prison term or to the death penalty solely for the peaceful expression of his or her religious beliefs, including by reviewing relevant legislation.

APPEALS TO:

1) 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

2) His Excellency Hojjatoleslam
Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani
The Presidency, Palestine Avenue
Azerbaijan Intersection
Tehran, The Islamic Republic of Iran
Telegrams: President Rafsanjani, Tehran, Iran
Salutation: Your Excellency

3) Head of the Judiciary
His Excellency Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi

Ministry of Justice
Park-e Shahr, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Telegrams: Head of the Judiciary, Tehran, Iran
Fax: +98-21-6465242
Salutation: Your Excellency

4) Minister of the Interior
His Excellency Mohammad Ali Besharati Jahromi
Ministry of the Interior
Dr Fatemi Avenue
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Telegrams: Minister of the Interior, Tehran, Iran
Faxes: +98 21 655 426/899 547/650203
Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

Minister of Foreign Affairs
His Excellency Dr Ali Akbar Velayati
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Abdolmajid Keshk-e Mesri Avenue
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Fax: +98-21-674790

Chairman of the Islamic Consultative Assembly's Human Rights Committee
Imam Khomeini Avenue, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Mr Hussain Farahi, Secretary, Islamic Human Rights Committee,
PO Box 13165-137, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

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 8 April 1997.