

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 13/11/99

UA 133/99

Legal Con

IRAN

Navid Balazadeh, 16
Nejat Beroukhim, 35
Farhad Seleh, 30
Shahrokh Paknahad, 29
Ramin Farzam, 35
Farzad Kashi, 30
Faramarz Kashi, 34 (brother of above)
Aasher Zadmehr (aka Shekasteh Band), 48
Nasser Yaghoub Levy Haim (Leveeim), 45
Javeed Beit Yaghoub, 40
Ramin Nemati, possibly 22
Danny Tefileen, possibly 28
Omid Tefileen, possibly 25 (brother of above)

Amnesty International is concerned that the 13 people named above may be at risk of unfair trial and could face the death penalty if convicted. News reports citing the Iranian authorities state that they have been accused of spying for Israel and the US, and are to be prosecuted in a Revolutionary Court on espionage charges. Espionage carries the death penalty in Iran. Lawyers and observers are excluded from trials at Revolutionary Courts, where trials often fall short of minimum international fair trial standards.

All 13, who lived in the Jewish communities in the cities of Shiraz and Isfahan, were arrested around 21 March 1999, and are detained in Shiraz. They are thought to include rabbis, religious teachers and community activists. Most have been denied family visits and legal representation, and no bail has been set. There has also been no official explanation of their initial arrest in March.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Iran's Jewish population of 20,000 to 30,000 is one of the largest in the Middle East. Certain religious minorities are officially recognised in Iran, including Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians.

Espionage is punishable by death in Iran. In 1997, two people were hanged after they were convicted on espionage charges.

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

- seeking urgent clarification of the charges brought against all 13 people;
- seeking assurances that all 13 will be allowed access to family and to independent legal representation of their choice;
- as all 13 have been held in pre-trial detention for approximately 70 days already, seeking assurances that trial proceedings will commence within a reasonable time.

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

Faxes: + 98 21 650 203 (via Interior Ministry, ask for fax to be forwarded)
Salutation: Your Excellency

President

His Excellency

Hojjatoleslam val Moslemin Sayed Mohammad Khatami

The Presidency, Palestine Avenue

Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, The Islamic Republic of Iran

Telegrams: President Khatami, Tehran, Iran

Faxes: + 98 21 674 790 (via Foreign Affairs, ask for fax to be forwarded)

Salutation: Your Excellency

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

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of the Interior

His Excellency Moussavi Lari

Ministry of the Interior

Dr Fatemi Avenue

Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Telegrams: Interior Minister, Tehran, Iran

Faxes: +98 21 899 547/650 203

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 21 674 790

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

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 20 July 1999.