

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 13/12/97

EXTRA 46/97

Fear of imminent execution

2 April 1997

IRAN Mohammad Assadi, lawyer, aged 68

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Amnesty International fears that Mohammad Assadi may be at risk of imminent execution. He was reportedly arrested in September 1993 and held in secret detention in a military prison for a year. In March 1997 it was reported that he had been sentenced to death and to confiscation of his property. He is said to be currently held in Evin Prison in Tehran.

The exact charges brought against Mohammad Assadi are unknown to Amnesty International, but they appear to be political. Reports suggest that the reason for his arrest may be related to his previous business partnership with Hedayatollah Zendehtdel who was executed at the end of 1996 on mainly political charges (see EXTRA 115/96, MDE 13/26/96, 25 July 1996, and follow-ups), or to his having defended an army officer accused of involvement in an attempted coup in 1980, whom he had met during an earlier detention. Other possible charges are reported to be an alleged trip to Israel before the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979, alleged membership of the Freemasons, and alleged purchases of American agricultural material before 1979.

Amnesty International is also concerned that Mohammad Assadi's trial may have been unfair. According to reports, his choice of lawyer was rejected by the court, which appointed another lawyer for him. He is said to have appealed against his conviction and sentence to the Supreme Court, and is now awaiting the result.

Mohammad Assadi has been arrested on five previous occasions since 1979.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

At least 110 people were executed in Iran during 1996, over twice as many as in 1995. The true figure may be much higher, as Amnesty International believes many executions are never publicly reported. Among those executed were political prisoners, sentenced after apparently unfair trials.

Amnesty International has serious concerns about the fairness of trials of political prisoners in Iran. The organization has repeatedly called on the Iranian Government to ensure that political prisoners in Iran are afforded a fair trial, as laid down in Article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Iran is a state party. In addition, the 1984 Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Safeguards guaranteeing the protection of the rights of those facing the death penalty make clear that the death penalty should only be implemented after trials which *at least* meet the standards of Article 14 of the ICCPR.

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

- expressing concern at the death sentence passed against Mohammad Assadi;
- calling for this to be commuted, should it be confirmed on appeal;
- calling for the commutation of all other pending death sentences in Iran;
- drawing attention to world trends to abolish or reduce the use of the death penalty, the desirability of which was reaffirmed in Resolution 32/61 of 8 December 1977 of the United Nations General Assembly;
- urging the Iranian authorities to ensure that all political prisoners in Iran are afforded a fair trial, safeguards which are all the more important

where the defendant may be facing execution, the most serious and irreversible of penalties.

**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**  
**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  
Iman 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 30 April 1997.