

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: MDE 13/13/92

Distr: UA/SC

UA 188/92

Legal concern/Fear of Torture

5 June 1992

IRAN: Mass arrests in Mashhad

Amnesty International has received reports of mass arrests following riots and demonstrations in Mashhad on 30 May 1992. These were the latest in a series of protests apparently sparked off by municipal authorities' attempts to destroy illegally constructed buildings and forcibly evict their inhabitants, and discontent with the government's social and economic policies. It is not clear whether any of those arrested have been charged or tried, but reports indicate that some of them at least may be charged with political or other offences punishable by death.

On 1 June 1992 the Head of Judiciary, Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi, was quoted by Reuters as saying that: "... swift and decisive justice would be meted out to rioters ..." and that a number of experienced judges had been assigned special briefs to deal with the perpetrators of the Mashhad disturbances "with decisiveness and power". The Khorasan provincial governor, Ali Jannati, is reported to have said that the interrogation of more than 300 people detained indicated the involvement of "foreigners and agents of arrogance", while the daily newspaper Kayhan accused counter-revolutionaries of taking advantage of a municipality problem. Other reports said that officials described those arrested in the Mashhad riots as "insurgents" and "corrupt on earth" and that they would be tried by the Islamic Revolutionary Courts.

Amnesty International fears that they will not receive fair trials in accordance with internationally accepted standards for fair trial, that they are at risk of torture and ill-treatment, and that some may face the death penalty.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Mashhad riots and arrests are the latest in a series which began in Shiraz in mid-April 1992, and were reportedly followed by approximately 200 arrests after violent demonstrations in Arak at the end of May. Amnesty International is continuing to receive reports of arrests as well as unconfirmed reports of executions, and will be updating this action when more information becomes available.

Amnesty International's long standing concerns regarding trial procedures and torture in the Islamic Republic of Iran continue. The organization is particularly concerned about trials before Islamic Revolutionary Courts where trials fall far short of internationally recognized standards for fair trial, where trial hearings are usually held in camera, inside prisons; proceedings

are summary, hearings often lasting only for a few minutes, with defendants having no access to legal counsel and no right of appeal. No substantive steps have been taken to introduce safeguards for detainees and fears continue that those arrested are at risk of torture and ill-treatment.

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RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/airmail letters:

- urging that the names of all those arrested be made public and seeking urgent clarification of the precise charges brought against them, and their places of detention

- urging that those held for political reasons be given immediate and regular access to lawyers of their own choosing, their family members and medical doctors where necessary, and that their trial procedures will comply with internationally recognized standards for fair trial, as set down in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which Iran has ratified;

- seeking urgent assurances that all those who have been arrested are being humanely treated.

APPEALS TO

1) His Excellency Hojatoleslam
Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani
The Presidency
Palestine Avenue
Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran
Islamic Republic of Iran

Salutation: Your Excellency

Telegrams: President Rafsanjani, Tehran, Iran

Telexes: 214231 MITI IR; 213113 PRIM IR

(marked for the attention of President Rafsanjani)

2) His Excellency
Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi
Head of the Judiciary
Ministry of Justice
Park-e Shahr, Tehran
Islamic Republic of Iran

Salutation: Your Excellency

Telegrams: Justice Minister, Tehran, Iran

Telexes: 214231 MITI IR; 213113 PRIM IR

(marked for the attention of the Head of the Judiciary)

3) His Excellency
Hojatoleslam Abdollah Noori
Minister of Interior
Ministry of Interior
Dr Fatemi Avenue, Tehran
Islamic Republic of Iran

Salutation: Your Excellency

Telegrams: Interior Minister Noori, Tehran, Iran

Telexes: 214231 MITI IR; 213113 PRIM IR

(marked for the attention of the Interior Minister)

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

His Excellency
Dr Ali Akbar Velayati
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Sheikh Abdolmajid Keshk-e Mesri Avenue
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

and to diplomatic representatives of Iran in your country

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 17 July 1992.