

UA 182/00

Fear of I.**IRANEzzatollah Sahabi, journalist [m], 70****Khalil Rostamkhani, translator [m], 47**

Ezzatollah Sahabi, managing editor of the journal *Iran-e Farda* (The Iran of Tomorrow), was arrested on 26 June 2000 after interrogation at Branch 3 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran. Ezzatollah Sahabi, a prisoner of conscience, could be held incommunicado, which may put him at risk of ill treatment. No charges have been made against him.

Ezzatollah Sahabi is detained in connection with his participation at a conference in Berlin, held in April, where political and social reform in Iran were debated. The journal *Iran-e Farda*, along with approximately 16 other journals was closed by the Iranian authorities following the conference, in April.

On 8 May, Khalil Rostamkhani was arrested because of translation services on behalf of participants of the conference. He was held for an unspecified time in incommunicado detention where he was at risk of ill treatment. He has since been allowed to see his mother and son in the Revolutionary Court, each time in the presence of the authorities. No charges have been made against him and he has been denied the right to legal representation. A warrant for the arrest of his wife, who is studying in Germany, has also been issued.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Iranian political groups in exile made strong protests about the Iranian authorities at Berlin conference. Members of the Iranian judiciary apparently consider attendance at the conference as "harmful to national security".

Many of those at the conference have since faced arbitrary detention and interrogation: Akbar Ganji was detained in April and remains in incommunicado detention (see EXTRA 43/00, MDE 13/07/00, 25 April). On 29 April, lawyer and human rights activist Mehrangiz Kar [f] and publisher Shahla Lahiji [f] were detained. Student representative, Ali Afshari, from the organization *Daftar-e Tahkim-e Vahdat* (Office for Strengthening Unity), was detained the following day (see UA 103/00). On 21 June, Mehrangiz Kar and Shahla Lahiji were released, followed by Ali Afshari on 25 June. Each spent a prolonged period incommunicado detention. Bail was in excess of \$US 60,000 for each person.

Three journalists, Hamid Reza Jalaipour, from *Asr-e Azadegan* (Era of the Free) and Alireza Alavitabar, editor of *Sobh-e Emrouz* (Morning of Today) were detained, interrogated and reportedly released the same day. Jamileh Kadivar, a member of the Iranian parliament, the *Majles*, and the writer Mahmud Dolatabadi have also been questioned by the Revolutionary Court but were not detained. Three others remain outside Iran, where they are wanted for questioning in connection with speeches made at the conference.

Ezzatollah Sahabi was fined and banned from journalism for one year in December 1998 after publishing "slanderous" material. He was detained in 1995.

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

- seeking guarantees that Ezzatollah Sahabi and Khalil Rostamkhani will be treated humanely in detention;
- urging that Ezzatollah Sahabi and Khalil Rostamkhani be released immediately and unconditionally, as they are prisoners of conscience;
- seeking urgent clarification of the charges they face;
- seeking assurances that they will be granted immediate access to legal representation of their choice and to their families;

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)President

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

Telegrams: President Khatami, Tehran, Iran

Salutation: Your Excellency

3)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

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 August 2000.