

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 13/016/2001

21 May 2001

Further information on UA 236/00 (MDE 13/22/00, 9 August 2000) and follow-ups (MDE 13/29/00, 17 October 2000, MDE 13/009/2001, 12 March 2001, MDE 13/010/2001, 21 March 2001) - Prisoners of Conscience/Medical concern/fear of ill-treatment/incommunicado detention

IRANHojjatoleslam Hasan Yousefi Eshkevari, aged 50

Massoud Behnoud, journalist, aged 55

Approx 10-20 supporters of the Iran Freedom and *Milli Mazhabi* (Religious Nationalist) Movements

New names: Dr Reza Reiss-Tousi, aged 65

Mohammad Bastehnegar

One of those arrested on 11 March, Mohammad Bastehnegar, has reportedly been charged with "acting against Islam", which is punishable by death. He has been held in solitary confinement, without access to a lawyer, since his arrest.

His wife was allowed to meet him on 13 May, and later reportedly wrote to parliamentarians that her husband had told her that his family would also be arrested, and that if he did not write a letter of repentance he would be killed. Such a letter would constitute a confession, which could be used to sentence him to a lengthy term of imprisonment. His wife later reportedly said that he spoke incoherently, and sounded as if he had been drugged.

Hojjatoleslam Hasan Yousefi Eshkevari was apparently sentenced to death in late 2000, but this sentence is believed to have been overturned. He remains imprisoned on charges of apostasy and "waging war against God". Amnesty International considers him a prisoner of conscience. His son stated in an interview on 17 May that his father had been transferred to a new, unknown place of detention approximately one month previously, and that he had not been able to locate him.

Dr Reza Reiss-Tousi's health is believed to have worsened considerably. A relative was reportedly able to meet him on 16 April, with court officials present, and said that Dr Reza Reiss-Tousi was so emaciated that at first he could not recognise him, and that he had "horrible marks and blood clots" on his legs. He remains in solitary confinement and has not been allowed access to his lawyer. No trial date has been set.

When they have been allowed to meet their relatives, the detainees are reportedly blindfolded and taken from their cells to a Revolutionary Court building. Their relatives are said to be deeply concerned at signs of apparent psychological torture.

The Iranian Islamic Human Rights Commission is reportedly unable to obtain information on these cases. The Commission's secretary, Mohammad Hassan Zia'i-Far, has reportedly told reporters, "The judiciary does not feel obliged to respond to our inquiries...Under these conditions, it is natural for the families of detainees to appeal to international rights organisations."

Massoud Behnoud remains free on bail pending the outcome of his appeal.

All those now detained are prisoners of conscience associated with the *Milli Mazhabi*, or Religious Nationalist movement, a broad and informal group of individuals advocating reform in Iran.

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

- urging the authorities to inform the families of those arrested on 11 March exactly where they are detained, and to grant them access to their families and lawyers;
- expressing particular concern for Dr Reza Reiss-Tousi, who is 65 years old and in worsening health;
- asking the authorities to guarantee that Hojjatoleslam Hasan Yousefi Eshkevari and all those detained since 11 March will be treated humanely in prison;
- asking what internationally-recognised criminal offences they are alleged to have committed or have been charged with;
- urging the authorities to release Hojjatoleslam Hasan Yousefi Eshkevari and all supporters of the *Milli Mazhabi* movement immediately and unconditionally, as they are prisoners of conscience;
- asking for details of Hasan Yousefi Eshkevari's appeal hearing, which reportedly resulted in his death sentence being overturned.

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

Salutation: Your Excellency

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

Head of the Judiciary

His Excellency Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi
Ministry of Justice
Park-e Shahr
Tehran

Islamic Republic of Iran

Telegrams: Head of Judiciary, Tehran, Iran

Faxes: + 98 21 879 6671 (number may be unreliable; please mark "care of Director of International Affairs, Judiciary")

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

Minister of Foreign Affairs,

His Excellency Kamal Kharrazi
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Abdolmajid Keshk-e Mesri Av
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Faxes: + 98 21 390 1999 (number may be unreliable; please mark "care of the Human Rights Department, Foreign Ministry")

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
E-mail: ihrc@Majlis.ir

Parliamentary Committee

Mohsen Mirdamadi Najafabadi
Article 90 Commission (Komisyon-e Asl-e Navad), Majles-e Shura-ye Eslami, Imam
Khomeini Avenue, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Telegrams: Majles, Tehran
Telex: 21 42 32 ICAI IR
Faxes: + 98 21 646 1746 (Can be difficult to reach, please be patient)

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 2 July 2001.