

PUBLIC

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Fear for safety/Fear of torture or ill-treatment

26 June 2003

IRAN

Abdollah Momeni, (m), student
Mehdi Shirzad, (m), student
Said Noruzi Azghandi, (m), student
Khaled Bayazidi, (m), student
Hanif Nabavi, (m), student
and at least 55 other students from Tehran University

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of Abdollah Momeni, Mehdi Shirzad, Said Noruzi Azghandi, Khaled Bayazidi, Hanif Nabavi and at least 55 other students from Tehran University, who were arrested following demonstrations in the capital city. They are at risk of torture or ill-treatment and may be forced into making confessions under duress.

On 11 June, around 80 students living in student dormitories in the Amir Abad area of Tehran demonstrated against draft proposals to privatize universities in Iran. They were joined by local residents and the demonstration reportedly escalated and became increasingly politicized, with slogans being chanted against political leaders. Militant supporters of religious leaders opposed to social reform began to attack the demonstrators and police rapidly intervened to end the clashes. As the demonstrations grew over the following nights, Tehran's Special Forces (*Nirou-ye Vajeh*) were deployed to disperse demonstrators. There were reports, however, that the Special Forces permitted some militants to attack peaceful demonstrators and that in certain instances, excessive force may have been used to break up the demonstrations. Some demonstrators were reportedly attacked by unknown individuals on motorcycles wielding iron bars.

The demonstrations were part of countrywide unrest which began on 11 June and lasted for ten days. Hundreds of people have reportedly been arrested and according to a statement made by the head of the Tehran Justice Department Abbas Ali Alizadeh on 24 June "the judiciary is intent on dealing firmly with the main perpetrators".

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Persian, French, English or your own language:

- seeking urgent clarification of the whereabouts and legal status of Abdollah Momeni, Mehdi Shirzad, Said Noruzi Azghandi, Khaled Bayazidi, Hanif Nabavi and at least 55 other students arrested and assurances that those detained will be humanely treated;
- urging the authorities to guarantee the safety and security of all students on university campuses;
- urging the authorities to investigate instances where excessive force may have been used and to bring to justice all those found responsible;

APPEALS TO:

Leader of the Islamic Republic

His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed >Ali Khamenei,

The Presidency, Palestine Avenue,

Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Telegram: His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: webmaster@wilayah.org (on the subject line write: For the attention of the office of His Excellency, Ayatollah al Udhma Khamenei, Qom)

Salutation: Your Excellency

President

His Excellency Hojjatoleslam val Moslemin Sayed Mohammad Khatami

The Presidency, Palestine Avenue
Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Telegram: His Excellency **Hojjatoleslam val Moslemin Sayed Mohammad Khatami, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran**

E-mail: khatami@president.ir (please resend your message if it does not get through the first time)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary

His Excellency Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahrudi
Ministry of Justice, Park-e Shahr, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Telegram: **Head of the Judiciary, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran**

Fax: + 98 21 879 6671 (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

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

Salutation: Your Excellency

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 7 August 2003.