

UA 266/95

Fear of torture / Legal concern

29 November 1995

IRAN Hojjatoleslam val muslimin Mohammad Taqi al-Dhakeri, aged 41
Hojjatoleslam val muslimin 'Abdolrahman al-Ha'eri, aged 32
Hojjatoleslam val muslimin Sayed 'Abdolrasul al-Musawi, aged 40
Hojjatoleslam Taleb al-Salehi, aged 24
Hojjatoleslam Mohammad Fazel Mohammad al-Saffar, aged 23
Hojjatoleslam Mohammad 'Ali Ma'ash, aged 24
Sighatoleslam Fu'ad Fujian, aged 30
Mohammad al-Ghaffari, aged 42
Hadi al-Akhound al-Dhakeri, aged 29
Iyad Fujian, aged 25
Hojjatoleslam val muslimin Sayed Morteza Shirazi, aged 29
and 7 others

The whereabouts of at least 18 followers of Grand Ayatollah Shirazi, a senior Iranian religious figure, who have been arrested in recent weeks, remain unknown. Amnesty International fears that they may be at risk of torture or ill-treatment in incommunicado detention, and is concerned that they may be held solely on account of their association with Grand Ayatollah Shirazi, and as such would be prisoners of conscience.

The first 10 men named above are all prominent religious figures or businessmen, who are known to be close to Grand Ayatollah Shirazi, who has opposed certain policies of the Iranian Government. They were all reportedly arrested without arrest warrants by members of the security forces on the night of 11 November 1995 from their homes in Qom and Tehran. Some of their relatives were also reportedly beaten during the arrests. The wife of Sheikh Muhammad al-Saffar reportedly had her hand broken, and the young son of Sheikh Muhammad Ali Ma'ash reportedly received an eye injury from a gun butt. Both were said to have received hospital treatment.

The following day, 12 November, security forces reportedly raided the Imam Hussein religious school in Qom, arresting approximately 120 students. Most were released several hours later, but seven remain detained, their whereabouts unknown.

On 21 November, Sayed Morteza Shirazi, the second son of Grand Ayatollah Shirazi, was arrested in Qom. His whereabouts are also unknown.

Note: *Hojjatoleslam val muslimin*, *Hojjatoleslam*, and *Sighatoleslam* are religious titles.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

There has been a pattern of arrest and detention of followers of Iranian religious figures opposed to government policies. During 1994, a number of followers of Grand Ayatollah Shirazi were arrested, including Sheikh Makki Akhound, who was allegedly severely beaten.

In addition at least nine followers of Grand Ayatollah Hussein Ali Montazeri were reportedly arrested in October 1994, after he had publicly criticised the authorities in an open letter. Five of his followers were also arrested in 1993.

In July and August 1995, Javad Rouhani, the son of Grand Ayatollah Sadeq Rouhani, and at least 25 of his supporters were arrested after Grand Ayatollah Rouhani had written a critical open letter to President Hashemi Rafsanjani which included a complaint that he had been held under house arrest for more than 10 years (see UA 221/95, MDE 13/15/95, 15 September 1995 and follow up, MDE 13/16/95, 28 September).

Torture and ill-treatment of detainees, particularly of people, either known, or believed, to be opposed to the government, remains widespread in Iran. Iran is a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

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

- asking for information about the current whereabouts of those named above and anyone else who may be detained because of their connection with Grand Ayatollah Shirazi;
- urging that their families be informed immediately and that they be granted access to lawyers and doctors of their choice and to a judicial review of their detention;
- seeking information about their legal status, and calling for their release if they are not to be charged with recognizably criminal offences;
- seeking assurances that the detainees are being treated humanely and protected from torture or ill-treatment.

APPEALS TO:

- 1) Leader of the Islamic Republic
His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamanei
The Presidency, Palestine Avenue
Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Telegrams: Ayatollah Khamanei, Tehran, Iran
Telexes: 214231 MITI IR ("for attention of Ayatollah Khamanei")
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
Telexes: 214231 MITI IR ("for attention of President Rafsanjani")
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: Justice Minister, Tehran, Iran
Telexes: 214231 MITI IR; 213113 PRIM IR ("for attention of Justice Minister")
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: Interior Minister, Tehran Iran

Telexes: 214231 MITI IR, 213113 PRIM IR ("for attention of Interior Minister")
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

Sa'id Raja'i Khorasani
Chairman of the Islamic Consultative Assembly's Human Rights Committee
Imam Khomeini Avenue, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Mr Hussain Farahi, Secretary, Islamic Human Rights Commission
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 10 January 1996.