

March 2007

**Further Information on UA 331/06 (MDE 13/135/2006, 12 December 2006) and follow-ups (MDE 13/137/2006, 14 December 2006; MDE 13/009/2007, 26 January 2007) – Incommunicado detention/ Fear of torture and ill-treatment/Possible prisoner of conscience/Unfair trial**

**IRAN Sherko Jihani (m), journalist and human rights defender**

Iranian Kurdish journalist and human rights defender Sherko Jihani was reportedly released from Mahabad Central Prison, in northwestern Iran, on 3 February on payment of bail. He is reportedly facing two trials, in Branch 1 of the General Court of Mahabad and Branch 2 of the Revolutionary Court of Mahabad, on charges of "disturbing public order" and "acting against state security" respectively.

Sherko Jihani, the correspondent of the Turkish news agency *Euphrat* in Mahabad and a member of the Human Rights Organization of Kurdistan (HROK), was detained on 27 November 2006. During interrogation, he was reportedly accused of involvement in organizing protests against the January 2006 kidnapping by a special intelligence and security unit of the revolutionary guards of a woman human rights activist, Sarveh Komkar (Kamkar), and for giving interviews to foreign journalists about the killing by Iranian security forces of a Kurdish activist, Showan (Shivan) Qaderi, in July 2005.

On 7 December Sherko Jihani had been moved from Mahabad to another detention centre. According to a 31 December report on the HROK website, Sherko Jihani had been moved back to Mahabad Central Prison. On 25 January, HROK reported that Sherko Jihani had appeared before Branch 1 of the General Court of Mahabad on 22 January, charged with "spreading lies". He appeared in a separate case on 24 January before Branch 2 of the Revolutionary Court of Mahabad charged with "propaganda against the system" and "acting against state security". Both trial sessions were said to have taken place behind closed doors, without any legal representation for Sherko Jihani.

Before he was transferred to Mahabad Central Prison, Sherko Jihani had been held incommunicado at an unknown location, believed to be a detention facility belonging to the Ministry of Intelligence. He is believed to have been severely beaten and otherwise tortured, and he is said to be in poor health. He may have been detained for his peaceful activities in defence of the rights of Iran's Kurdish minority, in which case Amnesty International would consider him a prisoner of conscience.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Violent unrest in the Kurdish areas of northwest Iran broke out in July 2005 and continued for several weeks after Iranian security forces shot dead a Kurdish opposition activist, Showan Qaderi, and reportedly dragged his body through the streets behind a Jeep. Thousands of Kurds took to the streets to protest. Security forces reportedly used light and heavy weaponry in response to the demonstrations, which in at least some places included attacks by demonstrators on government buildings and offices. Up to 20 people were reportedly killed and hundreds more injured. The authorities acknowledged that five people were killed, and stated that their deaths were under investigation. At least 190 people were arrested, according to official reports, although the true figure may well be higher.

Kurdish human rights defenders in Iran are at risk. Several human rights defenders and journalists involved in the July 2005 demonstrations have received death threats.

On 8 January 2006, HROK member Sarveh Komkar was reportedly seen being arrested by a special intelligence and security unit of the Revolutionary Guards in the town of Mahabad. She was released five hours later, after being severely beaten, after her family and HROK members complained to the authorities and pointed to a lack of evidence against her. Other HROK members have also been imprisoned or are facing prosecution, possibly in connection with their peaceful activities on behalf of Iran's Kurdish minority.

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

- welcoming the release on bail of Sherko Jihani;
- asking for details of any charges brought against him, of the evidence against him, and of any trial which may be held;
- calling for an investigation into the allegations that he was tortured, and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that any judicial proceedings against Sherko Jihani conform to international standards for fair trial;

- expressing concern that his trial proceedings on 22 and 24 January 2007 without the presence of a defence lawyer do not appear to have met international standards for fair trial;
- stating that if Sherko Jihani were to be imprisoned after conviction of charges solely related to his peaceful activities on behalf of the rights of the Kurdish minority, Amnesty International would consider him to be a prisoner of conscience, who should be released immediately and unconditionally.

**APPEALS TO:**

Leader of the Islamic Republic

His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei, The Office of the Supreme Leader  
Shoahada Street, Qom, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Email:** info@leader.ir OR [istiftaa@wilayah.org](mailto:istiftaa@wilayah.org)

**Fax:** +98 251 774 2228 (mark "FAO the Office of His Excellency, Ayatollah al Udhma Khamenei")

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

Minister of Intelligence

Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejeie

Ministry of Intelligence, Second Negarestan Street, Pasdaran Avenue, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Email:** [iranprobe@iranprobe.com](mailto:iranprobe@iranprobe.com)

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

**COPIES TO:**

President

His Excellency Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

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

**Email:** [dr-ahmadinejad@president.ir](mailto:dr-ahmadinejad@president.ir)

**via website:** [www.president.ir/email](http://www.president.ir/email)

Speaker of Parliament

His Excellency Gholamali Haddad Adel

Majles-e Shoura-ye Eslami, Imam Khomeini Avenue, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Fax:** + 98 21 6 646 1746

**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 4 May 2007.

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