

URGENT ACTION

TWO MEN DUE TO BE RETURNED TO PRISON IN IRAN

Nine men arrested in Iran in connection with protests against the disputed results of the presidential elections in June 2009 have been released on bail. However, two are known to have been released only on a temporary basis and are due to be returned to prison imminently.

Behzad Nabavi, a former parliamentarian, was sentenced to six years' imprisonment on 25 November 2009 for "acting against national security" and "propaganda against the state". In February 2010, this was reduced on appeal to five years' imprisonment after he was acquitted of the charge of "propaganda against the system". On 16 March 2010, he was released for 20 days for medical treatment on bail equivalent to about US\$800,000. He was previously released for 10 days in November 2009, after he had been hospitalised the previous month. **Kian Tajbakhsh**, an academic who has dual Iranian-US nationality, was released on 13 March 2010 on bail equivalent to about US\$800,000. He was freed for 15 days, in order to celebrate the Iranian New Year. Kian Tajbakhsh was initially imprisoned for 15 years. His sentence was reduced to five years on appeal. The charges against him include "acting against national security" and "espionage and contacting foreigners in opposition to the system".

Those previously released on bail include seven men: **Hossein Rassam**, an Iranian employee of the British Embassy in Tehran, former Vice-President **Mohammad Ali Abtahi**, former Deputy Interior Minister **Mohammad Atrianfar**, former Deputy Foreign Minister **Mohsen Aminzadeh**, former government spokesperson **Abdollah Ramazanzadeh**, former member of parliament **Mohsen Mirdamadi** and **Maziar Bahari**, a Canadian-Iranian reporter for the magazine *Newsweek*, who was then allowed to leave Iran. Most have been sentenced to prison terms. Their appeals could be heard at any time, and if their appeals are rejected, they could be re-imprisoned immediately. Mohsen Mirdamadi is still facing trial on charges including "acting against state security" and "propaganda against the state". No date is known to have been set for his trial.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Persian, Arabic, English, French or your own language:

- Welcoming the release on bail of the nine men, but expressing concern that Kian Tajbakhsh and Behzad Nabavi are facing imminent return to prison;
- Calling on the Iranian authorities not to return them, or the six others currently freed on bail and still in Iran who are facing trial or who have received prison sentences in connection with protests against the June election result;
- Calling on the Iranian authorities to ensure that the eight men are freed unconditionally.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 13 MAY 2010 TO:

Head of the Provincial Judiciary in Tehran

Ali Reza Avaei
Karimkhan Zand Avenue
Sana'i Avenue, Corner of Alley 17,
No. 152
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: avaei@Dadgostary-tehran.ir
Salutation: Dear Mr Avaei

Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Sadeq Larijani
Office of the Head of the Judiciary
Pasteur St., Vali Asr Ave., south of
Serah-e Jomhuri, Tehran,
1316814737
Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: Via website:
<http://www.dadiran.ir/tabid/75/Default.aspx>
First starred box: your given name;
second starred box: your family
name; third: your email address
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Secretary General, High Council for
Human Rights
Mohammad Javad Larijani
Howzeh Riassat-e Ghoveh Ghazaiyeh
Pasteur St, Vali Asr Ave., south of
Serah-e Jomhuri
Tehran 1316814737
Islamic Republic of Iran
Fax: +98 21 3390 4986
Email: bia.judi@yahoo.com (In
subject line: FAO Mohammad Javad
Larijani)

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives of Iran accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 214/09 (MDE 13/083/2010). Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/083/2009/en

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Hossein Rassam was sentenced behind closed doors to four years in prison at the end of October 2009 on charges of "acting against state security" and has lodged an appeal. He had earlier been released on bail at the end of August 2009. On 21 November 2009, former Vice-President **Mohammad Ali Abtahi** was sentenced to six years' imprisonment for "acting against state security" and "propaganda activities against the system". **Mohammad Atrianfar** was sentenced to six years' imprisonment for what are believed to be similar charges. They were released soon afterwards on bail equivalent to US\$700,000 and US\$500,000 respectively pending their appeals against their convictions and sentences. **Mohsen Aminzadeh**, formerly Deputy Foreign Minister, was sentenced to six years' imprisonment on 7 February 2010. He was released on 10 February 2010 on a bail of about US\$700,000 pending his appeal. He was convicted of "acting against national security" and "propaganda against the system by granting interviews to foreign television stations". Another charge of "insulting the President" remains open against him. **Abdollah Ramazanzadeh**, formerly a government spokesperson, was sentenced to six years' imprisonment. He had been charged with "acting against national security", "propaganda against the system" and "possession of classified documents". He was freed on bail on 23 December 2009. **Mohsen Mirdamadi**, a former member of parliament, was released on 17 March 2010 after posting bail of about US\$450,000 whilst still awaiting a verdict on charges of "acting against national security" and "propaganda against the system." **Maziar Bahari** was released on 17 October 2009 on bail of about US\$300,000. He was allowed to leave Iran and arrived in the UK three days later, in time to be present at the birth of his first child.

Since the disputed presidential election in June 2009, over 5,000 people have been arrested, including over 1,000 during and following mass demonstrations on the religious festival of Ashoura on 27 December. Those detained include political figures and activists, students, human rights defenders and journalists. Since the beginning of March 2010, a widespread wave of arrests of human rights defenders has taken place.

Many of those arrested since June 2009 have been tried in grossly unfair trials, resulting in long prison term sentences and some sentences of flogging. At least 14 people are believed to have been sentenced to death, of whom two have been executed and three have had their sentences commuted to prison terms. Those known to be on death row include two people convicted of "*moharebeh*" (enmity against God) for alleged membership of the Anjoman-e Padashahi Iran, a group which advocates the restoration of a monarchy in Iran, and five unnamed individuals (two women and three men) said to have been tried and convicted in January 2010 of "*moharebeh*" for alleged membership of the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (a banned opposition group based abroad) and organizing the Ashoura demonstrations. A 20-year-old university student, Mohammad Amin Valian, has also been sentenced to death, although his appeal has not yet been heard. He was one of five people charged with "*moharebeh*" during the trial of 16 people in January and February 2010. Video footage of him throwing stones during the Ashoura demonstrations was shown in court and was used as evidence to convict him of "*moharebeh*". The International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran has also reported that 42-year-old Abdolreza Ghanbari is among those sentenced to death, although there has been no official confirmation of this.

The Iranian authorities are continuing to severely restrict freedom of expression in Iran, arresting journalists (of whom scores are believed to remain in detention), imposing restrictions on the use of the internet, including social networking sites, and shutting down newspapers. In addition, the Iranian authorities are continuing to deny permission for anti-government demonstrations to take place, and have taken brutal measures to suppress such demonstrations, thereby restricting freedom of assembly. The authorities have acknowledged over 40 deaths; opposition sources put the true figure much higher, at over 80.

In February 2010, Iran accepted several recommendations to guarantee freedom of expression and press activities made by other states in the framework of the Universal Periodic Review of its human rights record before the UN Human Rights Council (see para 90, recommendations 52-58 at http://www.upr-info.org/IMG/pdf/A_HRC_WG-6_7_L-11_Iran.pdf) but rejected other recommendations calling for an end to measures such as harassment and arbitrary arrest of writers, journalists and bloggers. It appears that, despite such public commitments, in practice, the Iranian authorities are continuing to disregard their human rights obligations relating to freedom of expression and assembly.

Further information on UA: 214/09 Index: MDE 13/036/2010 Issue Date: 01 April 2010

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