

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 13/037/2008

11 February 2008

UA 36/08 Arbitrary arrest/Torture or ill-treatment/Possible Prisoner of conscience

IRAN **Amin Ghaza'i (m) aged 29, writer and prominent leader of the group Students for Freedom and Equality (*Daneshjouyan-e Azadi Khah va Beraber Talab*)**

Amin Ghaza'i was arrested in Tehran on 14 January 2008. He is reported to be held without charge or trial in solitary confinement in Section 209 of Evin Prison, and to have been tortured. There is concern for his health as he reportedly suffers from a peptic ulcer, heart problems, and asthma.

Amnesty International is concerned that Amin Ghaza'i may be a prisoner of conscience held solely on account of the peaceful exercise of his rights to freedom of expression and association. He was detained along with 14 other students at a meeting, in what appears to be a worrying pattern of recent arrests. Between December 2007 and January 2008 alone, Amnesty International has recorded the names of more than 74 students who have been arrested. (See UA 331/07, MDE 13/147/2007, 13 December 2007 and follow-ups).

Amin Ghaza'i's home was searched on 15 January by the police who confiscated his computer and all of his papers. The students arrested with him have been allowed family visits. Amnesty International is not aware of any of them having been formally charged with any offence. On 30 January, Amin Ghaza'i was allowed a three minute telephone conversation with his family in the presence of guards, during which he reportedly appeared subdued. Amin Ghaza'i has not been allowed access to his family or a lawyer.

Amin Ghaza'i is the chief editor of the electronic journal *ArtCult* and has published many articles on the internet about gender identity. He has also written books on the subject and reportedly translated some banned books into Persian.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Student groups have been at the forefront of demands for greater human rights in Iran in recent years. Since the election of President Ahmadinejad in 2005, there have been increasing restrictions on civil society in Iran. In April 2007, Minister of Intelligence Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejeie publicly accused student activists and campaigners for the rights of women in Iran of being part of an "enemy conspiracy," though neither he nor other Iranian authorities have produced evidence to substantiate this charge, which such activists roundly repudiate.

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

- calling on the authorities to release Amin Ghaza'i immediately and unconditionally or else bring him to trial promptly and fairly on recognizably criminal charges;
- expressing concern at reports that Amin Ghaza'i has been tortured and seeking assurances that he will not be subjected to further torture or ill-treatment;
- calling for an immediate and impartial investigation into these accusations and for anyone found responsible for abuses to be brought to justice;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that Amin Ghaza'i has immediate and regular access to relatives, legal representation, and any medical attention he may require;
- reminding the authorities that confessions extracted under torture are prohibited by Article 38 of the constitution of Iran, which says that "All forms of torture for the purpose of extracting confession or acquiring information are forbidden," and that Iran is a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political

Rights (ICCPR), of which Article 7 states that "No one shall be subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment".

APPEALS TO:

Leader of the Islamic Republic

His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei

The Office of the Supreme Leader, Islamic Republic Street - Shahid Keshvar Doust Street
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: info@leader.ir

Salutation: **Your Excellency**

Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi

Howzeh Riyasat-e Qoveh Qazaiyeh / Office of the Head of the Judiciary

Pasteur St., Vali Asr Ave., south of Serah-e Jomhuri, Tehran 1316814737, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: info@dadgostary-tehran.ir (In the subject line write: **FAO Ayatollah Shahroudi**)

Salutation: **Your Excellency**

Minister of Intelligence

Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejeie

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

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

via website: www.president.ir/email/

Speaker of Parliament

His Excellency Gholamali Haddad Adel

Majles-e Shoura-ye Eslami, Baharestan Square, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: **+98 21 3355 6408**

Email: hadadadel@majlis.ir (Please ask that your message be brought to the attention of the Article 90 Commission)

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 24 March 2008.