

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 13/042/2006

28 April 2006

UA 107/06 Fear of torture and ill-treatment/ Medical concern/ Possible prisoners of conscience

IRAN Ali Matouri-Zadeh (m), aged 30] husband and wife
 Fahima Ismail Badawi (f), aged 26]
 And their newborn daughter, aged one month

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of two members of Iran's Arab minority, Ali Matour-Zadeh and his wife, Fahima Ismail Badawi, who were reportedly arrested on 28 February 2006. Fahima Ismail Badawi was eight months pregnant and has since given birth to a daughter in prison.

Ali Matour-Zadeh, one of the founding members of Hizb al-Wifaq, an illegal political party in Iran, is being held incommunicado in an unknown place of detention where he is at risk of torture or ill-treatment. His wife, Fahima Ismail Badawi, and her mother were reportedly arrested at Fahima Ismail Badawi and Ali Matour-Zadeh's home a few hours later and taken to Sepidar prison, in Khuzestan province. Her mother was released a week later.

Fahima Ismail Badawi reportedly gave birth to her daughter, named Salma', in prison on 25 March after which she was taken briefly to hospital. Fahima Ismail Badawi is a school teacher in Ahvaz city, in Khuzestan province. She studied mathematics at Dezfoul University, north of Ahvaz, and has been politically active since then. According to reports, the Iranian authorities have set three conditions for her release: that the family pays a 3 billion Iranian riyals bail (equivalent to about US\$344,000); that she divorces her husband *in absentia* and that she allows the Iranian authorities to name her newborn baby for her, instead of using the Arabic name chosen for her by her parents.

Amnesty International believes that Fahima Ismail Badawi and her daughter may be prisoners of conscience held solely in order to force Ali Matour-Zadeh to cooperate with the Iranian authorities and provide information about wanted Arab activists during his continuing interrogation. All three should be released immediately and unconditionally or promptly charged with a recognizably criminal offence.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Much of Iran's Arab community lives in the province of Khuzestan which borders Iraq. It is strategically important because it is the site of much of Iran's oil reserves, but the Arab population does not feel it has benefited as much from the oil revenue as the Persian population. Historically, the Arab community has been marginalised and discriminated against. Tension has mounted among the Arab population since April 2005, after it was alleged that the government planned to disperse the country's Arab population or to force them to relinquish their Arab identity. Hundreds have been arrested and there have been reports of torture.

Following bomb explosions in Ahvaz City in June and October 2005, which killed at least 14 people, and explosions at oil installations in September and October, the cycle of violence has intensified, with hundreds of people reportedly arrested. Further bombings on 24 January 2006, in which at least six people were killed, were followed by further mass arrests. Two men, Mehdi Nawaseri and Ali Awdeh Afrawi, were executed in public on 2 March after they were convicted of involvement in the October bombings. Their executions followed unfair trials before a Revolutionary Court during which they are believed to have been denied access to lawyers, and their confessions, along with those of six other men, were broadcast on television.

Other women and children have also been detained in recent weeks apparently in an attempt to force their husbands/fathers to give themselves up to the authorities (Please see UA 65/06, AI Index: MDE 13/028/2006, 23 March 2006 and follow up AI Index: MDE 13/034/2006, 04 April 2006).

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Ali Matour-Zadeh, who is being held incommunicado, Fahima Ismail Badawi and their newborn daughter, who were all reportedly arrested on 28 February;
- calling on the authorities to release them immediately, unless they are to be promptly charged with a recognizably criminal offence;
- calling on them to ensure that they are given immediate access to lawyers, their family, interpreters and any medical treatment they may need;
- seeking assurances that they are not being tortured or ill-treated;
- expressing concern that Fahima Ismail Badawi and the newborn baby are very probably prisoners of conscience, held solely in order to force her husband to cooperate with the Iranian authorities;
- reminding the authorities that confessions extracted under duress 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, 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
Shoahada Street, Qom, Islamic Republic of Iran
**Fax: + 98 251 774 2228 (mark "FAO
the Office of His Excellency,
Ayatollah al Udhma Khamenei")**
**Email: info@leader.ir
istiftaa@wilayah.org**
Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary
His Excellency Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi
Shahrudi
Ministry of Justice, Park-e Shahr, Tehran, Islamic
Republic of Iran
**Email: irjpr@iranjudiciary.org
(mark "Please forward to His Excellency
Ayatollah Shahrudi")**

via the judiciary website:
www.iranjudiciary.org/feedback_en.html

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:
President
His Excellency Mahmoud Ahmadinejad
The Presidency, Palestine Avenue, Azerbaijan
Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Fax: + 98 21 6 649 5880
Email: dr-ahmadinejad@president.ir
via website: www.president.ir/email

Minister of the Interior
Hojjatolislam Mustafa Purmohammadi
Ministry of the Interior, Dr Fatemi Avenue, Tehran,
Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: ravabetomomi@moi.gov.ir

Speaker of Parliament
Gholamali Haddad Adel
Majles-e Shoura-ye Eslami (Parliament)
Imam Khomeini Avenue
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Fax: + 98 21 646 1746

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 8 June.