

05 April 2007

UA 82/07 **Torture and ill-treatment**

IRAN **Shahram Jazayeri- Arab (m), aged about 36, businessperson**

Businessperson Shahram Jazayeri-Arab, who had been serving a 27-year prison sentence, escaped on 20 February and fled to Oman. He was returned and handed over to the Iranian authorities on 18 March. He is now reportedly in solitary confinement at Evin Prison where he is reportedly being tortured and ill-treated.

Shahram Jazayeri-Arab reportedly escaped while being transferred to a Special Judicial Court for Economic Affairs, a court specializing in financial matters, in order to identify property he had allegedly misappropriated. Following his escape, the head of the Special Judicial Complex for Economic Affairs, two judges and the head of Evin Prison were reportedly dismissed. Later in February he was reportedly sentenced in absentia to a fine equivalent to about US\$62 million and 14 years in prison.

Shahram Jazayeri-Arab is reportedly being subjected to both psychological and physical torture in order to make him confess to bribery and corruption. He has reportedly been told that his parents, wife and children have been arrested and will be tortured to death unless he confesses. His interrogators reportedly told Shahram Jazayeri-Arab, "No one is supporting you, thief! We will torture you until you give us the confession we want, in front of a camera." He has reportedly been tied to a pillar with a bright light shining in his eyes; he has been put in a coffin-shaped box, set in a vertical position for several hours daily and has been flogged on the soles of his feet.

On 18 November 2002 Shahram Jazayeri-Arab was sentenced to 27 years' imprisonment and 50 lashes on charges of corruption and paying large bribes, some of them reportedly to senior politicians, in a bid to secure information and legislation favourable to his import-export business empire. Dozens of other people, including the sons of several prominent clerics, were also sentenced to prison terms, lashes and fines for their links with Shahram Jazayeri-Arab.

In 2004 Branch 26 of the Supreme Court reduced his 27-year prison term and referred the case to Tehran Public Court for further investigation. He was also allowed family visits, short periods of leave from prison and, reportedly, occasional use of a laptop computer and mobile phones.

After he was arrested in 2001 Shahram Jazayeri-Arab reportedly spent six months in solitary confinement in section 240 of Evin Prison. His cell was reportedly too small for him to lie down. He was reportedly subjected to torture and ill-treatment such as having his anus burned while sat on a chair with a hole under which a flame was lit; he was beaten on the soles of his feet several times then forced to run; he was also made to face mock executions and on one occasion he nearly suffocated during a mock hanging.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In July 2005 the authorities announced that a report prepared by the judiciary had produced detailed evidence of human rights violations, including torture and ill-treatment, of people held in prisons and detention centres. The report was said to have confirmed that measures had been taken to address the problems, but gave no details. Amnesty International has continued to receive new reports of torture and ill-treatment of detainees and is concerned that torture and other abuses remain routine in many Iranian prisons and detention centres.

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

- expressing concern at reports that Shahram Jazayeri-Arab has been tortured and ill-treated, and calling for a prompt and impartial investigation into these allegations, with its methods and findings made public;
- urging the authorities to ensure that he is protected from torture or other ill-treatment, and that he is permitted immediate and regular access to his family, to lawyers of his choice and any medical treatment he may require;
- reminding the authorities that Iran is a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, of which Article 7 says "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, Shahid Keshvar Doust St., Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: **+98 251 7774 2228 (mark "For the Office of His Excellency, Ayatollah Khamenei")**

Email: **via English-language website:**
<http://www.leader.ir/langs/EN/index.php?p=sendletter>

Salutation: **Your Excellency**

COPIES TO:

President:

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**

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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 17 May 2007.
