

# URGENT ACTION

## NEWSWEEK JOURNALIST RECEIVES DEATH THREATS

**Maziar Bahari, an Iranian-Canadian *Newsweek* journalist, has received threats from someone believed to be an Iranian official, who contacted a family member in Iran. Maziar Bahari was detained as a prisoner of conscience after the disputed presidential election in June 2009 but left the country after his release.**

On 17 April 2010, one of Maziar Bahari's relatives in Iran received a threatening phone call. The person on the line said "I'm calling from the court... Tell Maziar that he shouldn't think we don't have access to him because he is not in Iran... The situation is getting dangerous now. Anything can happen without advance notice." According to Maziar Bahari, he has been contacted previously by intermediaries who have warned him against speaking out, but this is the first time his relatives have been approached.

Maziar Bahari was arrested on 21 June 2009, shortly after the disputed presidential election in Iran. He was released on bail on 17 October 2009 after appearing in a mass "show trial" in August, and was allowed to return to the United Kingdom in time for the birth of his first child. He has lived abroad since his release and has spoken out against the ongoing human rights violations in Iran, and called for the release of prisoners, particularly journalists. In an article in *Newsweek* after his release, he said that he was warned not to speak of his detention.

Since his release on bail, Maziar Bahari has been summoned to court for a trial session on 2 May, in which he is facing 11 charges, including "insulting the Leader" because he did not refer to the Supreme Leader as "Ayatollah" in a private email, and "insulting the President" because someone tagged a photo of President Ahmadinejad that the authorities considered insulting on Maziar Bahari's Facebook page.

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

- Expressing concern that Maziar Bahari has received threats from individuals believed to be Iranian state officials or individuals acting on behalf of the Iranian authorities warning him that he might be harmed if he does not stop speaking out against human rights violations in Iran;
- Calling on the Iranian authorities to ensure Maziar Bahari's safety, by investigating the threats made against him and by bringing to justice anyone found to be responsible; any order to harm or kill him must be rescinded;
- Reminding them that the UN Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions require the guarantee of effective protection through judicial or other means "to individuals or groups who are in danger of extra-legal, arbitrary or summary executions, including those who receive death threats".

### PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 9 JUNE 2010 TO:

#### Leader of the Islamic Republic

Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei  
The Office of the Supreme Leader  
Islamic Republic Street – End of  
Shahid Keshvar Doust Street, Tehran,  
Islamic Republic of Iran

**Email:** [info\\_leader@leader.ir](mailto:info_leader@leader.ir)

**via website:**

[http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/index.php?](http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/index.php?p=letter)

[p=letter](http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/index.php?p=letter) (English)

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

#### His Excellency

Hojjatoleislam Heidar Moslehi  
Minister of Intelligence  
Ministry of Intelligence  
Second Negarestan Street  
Pasdaran Avenue  
Tehran

Islamic Republic of Iran

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

#### Secretary General, High Council for Human Rights

Mohammad Javad Larijani  
Howzeh Riassat-e Ghomeh 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](mailto:bia.judi@yahoo.com) (In subject  
line: **FAO Mohammad Javad Larijani**)

**And copies to:**

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.** Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the 3rd update of UA 171/09 MDE 13/062/2009. Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/062/2009/en>, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/092/2009/en>, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/115/2009/en>.

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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In an article in Newsweek after his release, Maziar Bajari said that he was warned not to speak about his detention by an interrogator who told him, "We can put people in a bag no matter where in the world they are...No one can escape from us." (For the full article see <http://www.newsweek.com/id/223862>).

Many Iranians outside the country have reported receiving threats by phone or in person. For example, Fakhteh Zamani, an activist for the rights of Iran's Azerbaijani minority who lives in Canada, has received death threats during phone calls from individuals who did not identify themselves. Demonstrators at a protest against violations in Iran held in 2009 in the UK outside Amnesty International's offices told Amnesty International that unknown persons whom they believed to be members of Iranian intelligence forces attended the protest and made threatening comments to some of them. Iranians who have fled Iran since the 2009 election and are seeking asylum have reported to Amnesty International that unknown persons whom they believe to be Iranian security officials have approached them and made comments in Persian such as "Don't think you're safe here."

The Iranian authorities also frequently harass the family members of individuals abroad who oppose the current government, or who publicly criticize human rights violations. For example, Noushin Ebadi, the sister of Nobel Peace prize Laureate Shirin Ebadi, was detained from 28 December for almost three weeks, apparently to put pressure on Shirin Ebadi, who is currently abroad, to cease speaking out about human rights violations in Iran. Shirin Ebadi has herself received many death threats in recent years and believes that slanderous articles in the press about her may be intended to pave the way for her assassination. In May 2009, Abdolzahra Vashahi, the father of Reza Vashahi, both members of Iran's Ahwazi Arab minority, was arrested and detained for several days. Abdolreza Vashahi had previously received threatening phone calls stating that if his son, who works with the Iranian Minorities Human Rights Organization in the UK, did not stop his human rights work, then he would be arrested. Family members of those who flee may also risk losing their homes if the deeds were posted as bail to obtain the release of their relatives.

In addition, in the past, opponents of the system have been subjected to extrajudicial execution both in Iran and abroad, apparently by Iranian officials, although these have reduced in number since what became known as the "serial murders" of writers and others in the 1990s were exposed in the late 1990s. For further information, see Iran: Victims of Human Rights Violations, November 1993, AI Index: MDE 13/10/93; Iran: Official secrecy hides continuing repression, May 1995 Index: MDE 13/02/95, Iran: "Mykonos" trial provides further evidence of Iranian policy of unlawful state killings, 10 APRIL 1997, Index: MDE 13/15/97 and Iran: alarming pattern of killings and "disappearances", 11 December 1998, Index MDE 13/025/1998.

The Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions (adopted by the UN Economic and Social Council on 24 May 1989 in resolution 1989/65 and endorsed by the UN General Assembly on 15 December 1989 in resolution 44/162) state in Articles 1 and 4:

1. Governments shall prohibit by law all extra-legal, arbitrary and summary executions and shall ensure that any such executions are recognized as offences under their criminal laws, and are punishable by appropriate penalties which take into account the seriousness of such offences. ...Such executions shall not be carried out under any circumstances ... this prohibition shall prevail over decrees issued by governmental authority.

4. Effective protection through judicial or other means shall be guaranteed to individuals or groups who are in danger of extra-legal, arbitrary or summary executions, including those who receive death threats.

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