

URGENT ACTION

IRAN TV “CONFESSIONS” BREACH SUSPECTS’ RIGHTS
Iranian businessman Mazyar Ebrahimi and 11 others have been held incommunicado since their arrest in June 2012. On 6 August the five women and seven men appeared on Iranian state television “confessing” to the killing of five Iranian nuclear scientists and academics since 2010. Amnesty International fears they could face the death penalty.

On 12 June **Mazyar Ebrahimi**, founder of a cinema and television production company in Iraqi Kurdistan, was arrested in Tehran by Ministry of Intelligence security forces for “reasons of national security”. His family have not been informed of his whereabouts since and their requests for contact have been refused. Mazyar Ebrahimi has not been allowed a lawyer of his choosing since his arrest because his case is still “under investigation”.

On 6 August, Iranian state television channel IRTV1 broadcast a 39-minute documentary called “Terror Club” showing the alleged “confessions” of Mazyar Ebrahimi and 11 other men and women also arrested in June 2012 for involvement in the killings of five Iranian nuclear scientists and academics since 2010. The group said they had received weeks of military and intelligence training in Israel before carrying out the assassinations in Iran. The documentary did not show any evidence to support these claims, nor did it state whether they have been tried. Another man who appeared in the documentary, **Majid Jamali Fashi**, was executed earlier on 15 May 2012. He had also appeared in an earlier broadcast in January 2011, aired before his trial in August 2011.

The use of televised “confessions” grievously undermines defendants’ right to a fair trial, in particular the presumption of innocence and the right not to be compelled to confess guilt and are particularly disturbing in cases like this one where defendants are accused of crimes which could lead to their being sentenced to death and executed. Those accused of crimes must be treated in accordance with international human rights law and must receive trials that comply with the most rigorous internationally recognized standards for fair trial, and without recourse to the death penalty.

Please write immediately in Persian, Arabic, English or your own language:

- Call on the Iranian authorities to ensure that Mazyar Ebrahimi and the other 11 detainees have immediate access to their families and lawyers of their choosing and are protected from torture or other ill-treatment;
- Call on them to ensure that all 12 suspects receive fair trials in accordance with international human rights law, without recourse to the death penalty, and reminding the authorities that televised “confessions” violate Articles 14 (2) and (3g) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to which Iran is a state party.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 22 OCTOBER 2012 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
 Twitter: @khamenei_ir
Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani
 [care of] Public Relations Office
 Number 4, 2 Azizi Street
 Vali Asr Ave, above Pasteur Street
 intersection
 Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Secretary General High Council for
 Human Rights
 Mohammed Javad Larijani
 c/o Office of the Head of the Judiciary
 Pasteur St, Vali Asr Ave
 South of Serah-e Jomhuri
 Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
 Email: info@humanrights-iran.ir
 (Subject line: FAO Mohammad Javad
 Larijani)

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
 INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Majid Jamali Fashi, was executed on 15 May 2012 following a “confession” made on an earlier broadcast on Iranian state television in January 2011. He was arrested in January 2010 and charged with assassinating Tehran University professor, Massoud Ali-Mohammadi, who had been killed by a bomb earlier that month.

The 11 other detainees who appear, in the documentary, to make “confessions” to the killings are: Behzad Abdoli; Firouz Yeganeh; Maryam Zargar; Ramtin Mahdavi Moshayi; Arash Kheyratgir; Maryam Izadi; Fouad Faramarzi; Nashmin Zareh; Mohsen Sedeghi-Azad; Ayoub Moslem; and Tara Bagheri. In August 2012, Iranian state television reported that 20 people have reportedly been arrested in connection with the killings but only 12 appeared to make “confessions” in the TV documentary.

Televised “confessions” have repeatedly been used by the authorities to incriminate individuals in custody. Many have later retracted these “confessions”, stating that they were coerced to make them, sometimes under torture or other ill-treatment.

Amnesty International is concerned that Mazyar Ebrahimi and the other 11 detainees have been held in incommunicado detention since June 2012, without access to their relatives or to lawyers. Incommunicado detention facilitates torture or other ill-treatment which may be used to coerce a detainee into making a “confession” which may subsequently be used as evidence in court. Prolonged incommunicado detention can itself amount to torture.

Access to a lawyer from the outset of detention is essential to ensuring a fair trial. International fair trial standards require that anyone accused of a serious crime has access to a lawyer not only during the trial itself, but also immediately on arrest and throughout all subsequent proceedings, in particular in cases of offences carrying the death penalty.

Amnesty International urges the Iranian authorities to end immediately their practice of broadcasting “confessions” and other incriminating testimonies obtained from individuals who may have yet to stand trial. Such practice constitutes a gross breach of detainees’ right to a fair trial and of Iran’s obligations under international human rights law. Article 14 (2) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Iran is a state party, states that “Everyone charged with a criminal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty according to the law”, while Article 14 (3g) states that everyone has the right “not to be compelled to testify against himself or to confess guilt”.

In Sakineh Mohammadi Ashtiani’s TV “confession” broadcast on 11 August 2010, she appeared to implicate herself in the murder of her husband. She is facing execution by stoning for “adultery while married”.

On December 13, 2011, two members of Iran’s Ahwazi Arab minority, Hashem Sha’bani Amouri and Hadi Rashidi, were featured in a programme aired by Iran’s state-controlled television station, Press TV, in which they appeared to “confess” to having carried out “terrorist activities”. Subsequently, on 7 July 2012, both men were sentenced by Branch 2 of the Ahvaz Revolutionary Court after conviction of charges including the vaguely-worded offences of “enmity against God and corruption on earth” (*moharebeh va ifsad fil-arz*), “gathering and colluding against state security” and “spreading propaganda against the system”.

Another Ahwazi Arab man, Taha Heidarian, was shown in the same programme making a “confession” in connection with the killing of a law enforcement official in April 2011 amidst widespread protests in Khuzestan. On or around 19 June 2012, he and three other Ahwazi Arab men were executed in Karoun Prison, according to activists close to the family, after apparently being convicted by a Revolutionary Court of “enmity against God and corruption on earth” in connection with the killing.

Name: Mazyar Ebrahimi, Majid Jamali Fashi

Gender m/f: Mazyar Ebrahimi (M); Majid Jamali Fashi (M); other detainees are male and female

UA: 258/12 Index: MDE 13/062/2012 Issue Date: 10 September 2012