

**PUBLIC**

**AI Index: MDE 13/076/2006**

**30 June 2006**

**Further Information on UA 115/06 (MDE 13/045/2006, 3 May 2006) Arbitrary arrest/ incommunicado detention/ fear of torture and ill-treatment/ possible prisoner of conscience**

**IRAN**

**Saleh Malla Abbasi (m), aged 53, agricultural engineer**

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Saleh Malla Abbasi was reportedly released on bail from Tabriz prison in northwestern Iran on 30 May 2006. It is not known if formal charges have been brought against him. During his six weeks in detention, he was not allowed to see a lawyer.

Saleh Malla Abbasi, an activist for the rights of the Azeri Turk minority community in Iran, was arrested on 17 April at his home in the town of Ahar in Azerbaijan province, northwestern Iran. Police from the Ministry of Intelligence reportedly entered the family house from the front and the back door simultaneously, and searched the house, confiscating the family's computer, satellite dish, and Turkish language books and CDs. The police also took their personal telephone and address book, and a Turkish calendar that was hanging on the wall. The police reportedly remarked that the calendar proved that the family are "pan-Turks". They searched through the family photograph albums, and took some of the photographs with them.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Iranian Azeri Turks, who are mainly Shi'a Muslims, are the largest minority in Iran, believed to constitute between 25-30 per cent of the population. They are located mainly in the north and north-west of Iran. As Shi'a, they are not subject to as much discrimination as minorities of other religions, and are well-integrated into the economy, but there is a growing demand for greater cultural and linguistic rights, including implementation of their constitutional right to education through the medium of Turkish. A small minority advocate secession of Iranian Azerbaijan from the Islamic Republic of Iran and union with the Republic of Azerbaijan. Those who seek to promote Azeri Turkish cultural identity are viewed with suspicion by the Iranian authorities, who often accuse them of vague charges such as "promoting pan-Turkism".

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

- welcoming the release on bail of Saleh Malla Abbasi;
- asking to be informed in details of any charges brought against him;
- urging the authorities to drop any charges brought against him if they are solely related to his peaceful activities for the rights of the Azeri Turk minority community;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that any judicial proceedings against him conform to international standards for fair trial;
- reminding the authorities that as a state party to the ICCPR they have undertaken to uphold Article 19 of the covenant which states that everyone has the right to freedom of expression.

**APPEALS TO:**

Minister of Intelligence

Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejeie

Ministry of Information

Second Negarestan Street

Pasdaran Avenue

Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Email:** [iranprobe@iranprobe.com](mailto:iranprobe@iranprobe.com)

**Salutation:** **Your Excellency**

Head of the Judiciary

His Excellency

Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi

Ministry of Justice, Park-e Shahr,

Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Email:** **via Judiciary website:** [www.iranjudiciary.org/feedback\\_en.html](http://www.iranjudiciary.org/feedback_en.html)

**Salutation:** **Your Excellency**

**COPIES TO:**

Supreme 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](mailto:info@leader.ir) or [istiftaa@wilayah.org](mailto:istiftaa@wilayah.org)

President

His Excellency Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

The Presidency, Palestine Avenue, Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Fax:** **Via foreign affairs: +98 21 6 674 790 and ask to be forwarded to H.E Ahmadinejad**

**Email:** [dr-ahmadinejad@president.ir](mailto:dr-ahmadinejad@president.ir)

**via website:** [www.president.ir/email](http://www.president.ir/email)

and 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 11 August 2006.