

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 13/096/2006

18 August 2006

Further Information on UA 165/06 (MDE 13/065/2006, 09 June 2006) Fear for safety/ fear of torture and ill-treatment

IRAN **Abed Tavancheh (m), student and web logger**
Yashar Qajar (m), student

Student activist, Abed Tavancheh who was arrested during or following the May student demonstrations that took place in Tehran, was reportedly released on bail on 11 July. Fellow activist Yashar Qajar was released on bail the following day, 12 July. Bail for both men was set at 500 million Rials (about US\$57,000) and they are expected to face trial in the future. The exact nature of the charges is not yet known.

Both men had phoned their respective families on 5 June and said that they were held in Evin Prison. Prior to his phone call, Abed Tavancheh, a student at Amir Kabir Polytechnic University in Tehran, had reportedly not been in contact with his family and friends since 26 May and could not be reached on his mobile phone.

Yashar Qajar is the head of the Islamic Students' Association (ISA) at Amir Kabir University. He was reportedly arrested on 28 May by security forces whilst leaving the university. His arrest reportedly took place the day after the release of a letter written by the ISA addressed to the Office of the Supreme Leader's representative in Iran's universities. According to a report on the Rooz website, the letter stated: "The actions of the current cultural directors of the university have sparked angry reactions among students," and that "restricting the activities of the arts and cultural centres, the unfair distribution of opportunities, the implementation of unreasonable policies on campuses, and the increasing pressures on independent student publications" were among the students' grievances.

Two of Tehran's main universities were the scene of protest and clashes between students and police during the night on 23 May 2006. Students in a number of university campuses across Iran held protests rallies during the week of 21-28 May 2006 and on several occasions clashed with the police from which injuries (including of police) and arrests were reported.

A variety of issues prompted the protests. The protests at Tehran University were reportedly against the recent appointment of new university heads and the forced retirement of nine professors and in support of the students in Amir Kabir University who, in turn, were protesting against the intervention of members of the Basij volunteer force in the election for members of the Islamic Student Association which operates on campus. In the city of Zenjan, northwest of Tehran, the demonstrations were prompted by the publication of a cartoon in the daily state-owned newspaper *Iran* on 12 May which offended many in the Azeri Turkish community (who refer to themselves as Iranian Azerbaijanis). The newspaper was suspended on 23 May and the editor in chief and the cartoonist arrested.

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 Abed Tavancheh and Yashar Qajar and seeking information about the precise charges against them and any trial which may be held;
- urging the authorities to drop any charges brought against Abed Tavancheh and Yashar Qajar solely related to their peaceful exercise of their internationally recognized rights to freedom of expression and association, as if convicted and imprisoned on such charges, Amnesty International would consider them to be prisoners of conscience and would call for their immediate and unconditional release;

- 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:

Leader of the Islamic Republic

His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei,
The Office of the Supreme Leader
Shoahada Street, Qom, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: info@leader.ir / istiftaa@wilayah.org

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: Please send emails via the feedback form on the Persian site of the website:
<http://www.iranjudiciary.org/contactus-feedback-fa.html>

The text of the feedback form translates as:

1st line: name, 2nd line: email address, 3rd line: subject heading, then enter your email into text box.

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

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 OR via website: www.president.ir/email

Speaker of Parliament

His Excellency Gholamali Haddad Adel
Majles-e Shoura-ye Eslami,
Imam Khomeini Avenue, Tehran,
Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: + 98 21 6 646 1746

COPIES 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 29 September 2006.