

PUBLIC

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Further Information on UA 163/06 (MDE 13/063/2006, 08 June 2006) Incommunicado detention/ Fear of torture/ Medical concern new concern: Prisoner of Conscience

IRAN

**Abbas Lisani (or Leysani), (m) aged 38, activist
His family**

Prisoner of conscience Abbas Lisani is detained in Ardebil Prison in the north-west of Iran. He has received a one-year prison sentence for "spreading anti-government propaganda", and faces other trials apparently related to his peaceful political and cultural activities on behalf of the Iranian Azerbaijani minority community. He is reportedly in poor health.

Abbas Lisani was arrested on 3 June 2006, shortly after participating in a demonstration in Ardebil on 27 May. He was held detained for about two days in a detention facility run by the Ministry of Intelligence in Ardebil, before being transferred to Ardebil prison. His family did not know his whereabouts until 7 June, when, in a phone call lasting only a couple of minutes, he told them that he was detained in solitary confinement in Ardebil prison, and was on hunger strike.

Abbas Lisani has had limited access to his family. He was permitted his first family visit on 29 June, some 26 days after his arrest. His lawyer has only been allowed to see him once, though he has made several other requests for visits which have been denied.

Abbas Lisani's hunger strike reportedly lasted for 58 days, for some of which he also refused liquids. Throughout his hunger strike, he was detained in solitary confinement. He finally ended his hunger strike on 30 July, after being granted his first family visit, during which he was reportedly very weak and could barely speak. By the end of his hunger strike he had lost about 30 kilograms in weight.

Amnesty International remains concerned for the safety of Abbas Lisani. He is currently detained in a prison cell with non-political prisoners, some of whom are drug addicts. In Iran, although many prisons have sections for political prisoners, at times political detainees are detained with criminal prisoners, which they believe is a means of increasing pressure on them. It is believed that Abbas Lisani has been harassed and threatened by his cell-mates. He is said to suffer from stomach and kidney problems, and pain in his ribs, which is allegedly the legacy of torture during previous periods of detention. It is not known whether he has access to adequate medical care.

Several cases have been brought against Abbas Lisani. These include charges related to attending a commemorative gathering for Constitution Day at the mausoleum of Baghir Khan in August 2005; attending the annual cultural gathering at Babek castle in 2005; and his participation in the widespread demonstrations that took place in north-western Iran in May 2006.

On 6 September 2006, the Revolutionary Court in Kaleybar sentenced Abbas Lisani to one year's imprisonment, for "spreading anti-government propaganda" according to Article 500 of the Penal Code. According to the court verdict, the basis for the charge includes his participation in the annual Babek Castle demonstration in 2005; encouraging others to participate in this gathering; reciting Azerbaijani poems and other material at the gathering; publishing and distributing a "Turkish-language" calendar; sending messages abroad via the internet; making calls to his supporters abroad; and intending to promote Azerbaijani Turkic nationalism and independence.

Amnesty International believes that the charge of “spreading anti-government propaganda”, of which Abbas Lisani has been convicted, does not constitute a recognizably criminal offence. Moreover, according to the court verdict, the basis for the charge appears to relate solely to his peaceful political and cultural activities on behalf of the Iranian Azerbaijani minority. As such, Amnesty International believes that Abbas Lisani is a prisoner of conscience, and calls for his immediate and unconditional release.

According to recent reports, Abbas Lisani will soon face a further trial before the Revolutionary Court in Tabriz on charges related to his participation in the Constitution Day commemoration in August 2005.

Members of Abbas Lisani’s family have also been subject to harassment. His wife has allegedly been threatened with arrest if she publicises her husband’s condition. The family’s butcher’s shop- their sole source of income- has been closed, and its licence to operate revoked.

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

- expressing concern that Abbas Lisani has been sentenced to one year imprisonment for ‘spreading anti-government propaganda’ in connection with his peaceful political and cultural activities on behalf of the Iranian Azerbaijani minority community, including his participation in the 2005 Babek Castle gathering;
- stating that, as such, Amnesty International believes that Abbas Lisani is a prisoner of conscience, and should be released immediately and unconditionally;
- calling on the authorities to grant Abbas Lisani immediate and unconditional access to his lawyer, and continued and regular access to his family, and access to any medical treatment that he requires;
- expressing concern about Abbas Lisani’s safety and calling on the Iranian authorities to offer him protection from prisoner-on-prisoner violence;
- expressing concern for the safety of Abbas Lisani’s family, who have reportedly been harassed and intimidated by the authorities, and calling for them to be given all necessary protection to ensure their safety

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

Fax: +98 251 774 2228 (mark “FAO the Office of His Excellency, Ayatollah al Udhma Khamenei”)

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 the text box)

Salutation: Your Excellency

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 31 October 2006.