

**PUBLIC**

**AI Index: MDE 13/156/2008**

**21 October 2008**

**Further Information on UA 151/08 (MDE 13/076/2008, 30 May 2008) and follow-ups (MDE 13/079/2008, 11 June 2008; MDE 13/138/2008, 17 September 2008) - Prisoners of Conscience/ Death Penalty**

**IRAN Mahmoud Matin (m), aged 52, civil engineer  
Arash Basirat (m), aged 44**

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Mahmoud Matin and Arash Basirat have been acquitted of the charge of apostasy by Branch 5 of the Fars Criminal Court in Shiraz, south west Iran, on 25 Sep 2008. They have since been released.

The Court ruled that they were not presented with any reason and evidence to confirm the offence of apostasy was committed by Mahmoud Matin and Arash Basirat. Both had denied that they had converted to Christianity, and said that they remain Muslim and accordingly the court found no further evidence to the contrary.

Mahmoud Matin and Arash Basirat were arrested on 15 May 2008 by Ministry of Intelligence officials in Shiraz, southwest Iran, where they were having a meeting with 13 other people, who were also interrogated but released. They were held in a detention centre in Shiraz which is controlled by the Ministry of Intelligence. They were in solitary confinement for two months before being placed in a cell together around 15 July. Their lawyer was initially informed of their charge of apostasy in early August, which if they had been convicted could have carried the death sentence.

**Many thanks to all who sent appeals. No further action is required at present.**