

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 13/177/2008

15 December 2008

Further Information on UA 271/08 (MDE 13/142/2008, 23 September 2008) and follow-up (MDE 13/170/2008, 21 November 2008) - Fear for safety/fear of torture or other ill treatment/possible prisoners of conscience

IRAN	Maqsoud Ahdi (m)]	
	Mansour Aminian (m)]	
	Dariush Hatemi (m), aged 29]	
	Aydin Khaje'i (m), aged 23]	student activists for the cultural rights of Iranian Azerbaijanis
	Amir Mardani (m)]	
	Majid Makuyi (m)]	
	Sejjad Radmehr (m)]	
	Feraz Zahtab (m), aged 23]	

Student activist Dariush Hatemi was released in late November, on bail of 50 million rials (approximately US\$50,000). He and the other student activists named above are now all free on bail, awaiting trial on charges of "establishing and membership of illegal groups in order to disrupt national security" and "propaganda against the state". Their trial will begin on 17 January 2009 at the Revolutionary Court in Tabriz.

All but Dariush Hatemi had been released on bail on 28 October. Dariush Hatemi was not released at the time because he had been unable to raise the US\$50,000 bail.

According to the Vancouver-based Association for the Defence of Azerbaijani Political Prisoners (ADAPP), the police searched the students' houses after they had been detained, and confiscated their computers, CDs, documents and books. All the students were detained for three months in Tabriz prison, where they were regularly interrogated by Ministry of Intelligence officials. They were not allowed family visits, though some were occasionally allowed telephone calls.

None of the activists were allowed to choose their legal representation. According to ADAPP, their families have claimed that the students "were tortured during the detention in the Ministry of Intelligence in Tabriz and the authorities subjected them to 24-hour interrogations, sleeplessness, torture and abuses."

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Azerbaijani minority in Iran, who are mainly Shi'a Muslims, is recognized as the largest minority in Iran and is generally believed to make up 25-30 percent of the population. Members of the Azerbaijani minority live mainly in the north and north-west of the country. Although generally well-integrated into society, in recent years they have increasingly called for greater cultural and linguistic rights, such as the right to education in their own language, Azerbaijani Turkic, which they believe is provided for under the Constitution, and the right to celebrate Azerbaijani culture and history at cultural events.

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

- welcoming the release on bail of Dariush Hatemi;
- calling on the authorities to charge him and seven other student activists with an internationally recognizable criminal offence, and to promptly try them in proceedings meeting fair trial standards under

international law or, to drop the charges against them if they have been charged solely for their peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression and assembly.

APPEALS TO:

Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi
Howzeh Riyasat-e Qoveh Qazaiyeh / Office of the Head of the Judiciary
Pasteur St, Vali Asr Avenue, south of Serah-e Jomhuri
Tehran 1316814737, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: info@dadgostary-tehran.ir (In subject line write: **FAO Ayatollah Shahroudi**)

Salutation: Your Excellency

President

His Excellency Mahmoud Ahmadinejad
The Presidency
Palestine Avenue, Azerbaijan Intersection
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: + 98 21 6 649 5880

Email: via website: <http://www.president.ir/email/>

COPIES TO:

Director, Human Rights Headquarters of Iran

His Excellency Mohammad Javad Larijani
Howzeh Riyasat-e Qoveh Qazaiyeh (Office of the Head of the Judiciary)
Pasteur St, Vali Asr Avenue, south of Serah-e Jomhuri
Tehran 1316814737, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: +98 21 3390 4986 (please keep trying)

Email: int_aff@judiciary.ir (In the subject line: **FAO Mohammad Javad Larijani**)

Salutation: Your Excellency

and 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 26 January 2009.