

OCTOBER 1998 WORLDWIDE APPEALS

IRAN – PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE

TANZANIA – PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE / HEALTH CONCERNS

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA (KOSOVO) – “DISAPPEARANCE”

IRAN – PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE

Grand Ayatollah Hossein Ali Montazeri, 76, has been held under house arrest in Qom for several years because of his non-violent opposition to government policies. His detention began in March 1989, when he was replaced as the appointed successor to Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the then Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, because of his outspoken criticism of the government. Grand Ayatollah Montazeri had criticized the severe treatment of dissidents, including torture and incommunicado detention, and the mass executions of political prisoners. In November 1997, he was arrested and held incommunicado for almost two months, following a speech in which he criticized the assumption of supreme powers by Ayatollah Sayed ‘Ali Khamenei, Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Since his return to house arrest early this year, he has been placed under increased police surveillance and prevented from teaching at his religious school. Following protests calling for the lifting of all restrictions imposed on him, there were reports of widespread arrests of his supporters and relatives including his son-in-law, Hadi Hashemi, during May and June 1998.

+ Please write, urging that all restrictions imposed on Grand Ayatollah Montazeri be lifted immediately, and stating that the use of house arrest against individuals for the non-violent expression of their conscientiously held beliefs violates the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (to which Iran is a state party). Send letters to: His Excellency Hojjatoleslam val Moslemin Sayed Mohammad Khatami, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, The Presidency, Palestine Avenue, Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran.

TANZANIA – PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE / HEALTH CONCERNS

Eighteen members of the opposition Civic United Front (CUF) on the semi-autonomous island of Zanzibar have been imprisoned solely on account of their non-violent political activities. They are held on charges of treason and, if convicted, will face mandatory death sentences.

The 18 were arrested between November 1997 and May 1998. They include four members of the Zanzibar House of Representatives (parliament): Juma Duni Haji, a former Tanzania vice-presidential candidate; Hamad Masoud Hamad, director of the CUF human rights committee; Soud Yusuf Mgeni, former Deputy Chief Minister of Zanzibar; and Hamad Rashid Mohamed, former Tanzania Deputy Finance Minister.

They are held in harsh conditions, and are only allowed brief fortnightly visits from their families. AI has also been concerned about the deteriorating health and denial of adequate medical treatment for the 18 detainees. One of the two women detained, Zulekha Ahmed Mohamed, is ill with diabetes, hypertension and a suspected femoral hernia. She has been refused admission to hospital.

Since 1995, there have been frequent short-term arrests and cases of harassment of CUF members in Zanzibar, particularly on Pemba island. Many have been ill-treated or tortured, dismissed from government employment and prevented from voting in by-elections.

+ Please write, calling for the immediate and unconditional release of the above 18 members and supporters of the CUF, and urging that adequate medical treatment be provided to those that require it, pending their release. Send letters to: Dr Salmin Amour, President of Zanzibar, Office of the President, PO Box 776, Zanzibar, Tanzania; and to: His Excellency Benjamin Mkapa, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, Office of the President, PO Box 9120, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA (KOSOVO) – “DISAPPEARANCE”

Dr Hafir Shala, an ethnic Albanian who worked at a medical centre in Glogovac, was travelling with two companions on 10 April 1998 when they were all arrested by Serbian police and reportedly taken to the central police station in Priština.

“The three of us were taken to separate rooms on the third floor,” reported one of his companions. “I was interrogated for six hours and then told I could leave. When I was escorted out of the room and down the hall I heard horrible screaming. It was Dr Shala. I stopped. I asked the policeman what was happening to Dr Shala. He pushed me forward, saying ‘Go, go, go’”.

Dr Shala’s father went to the police headquarters the next day, but was reportedly turned away at the door and told that the doctor had never been in police custody. No one has seen or heard from Dr Shala since.

The conflict in Kosovo has taken place against a background of widespread human rights violations against the ethnic Albanian community by the ruling Serbian authorities. Of some 400 ethnic Albanians reported missing since the beginning of March, dozens were seen being detained by Serbian police.

+ Please write, urging the government to hold a public and impartial enquiry into the “disappearance” of Dr Hafir Shala and that of other ethnic Albanians who have been reported missing, to: Slobodan Milosevic, Predsednik SRJ, Bulevar Lenjina 211070 Beograd, Yugoslavia. (Faxes: 381 11 636 775/682 167). E-mail: slobodan.milosevic@gov.yu

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