

URGENT ACTION

IRANIAN PRISONER RETURNED TO CELL

Amnesty International has learned that student activist and prisoner of conscience Sayed Ziauddin (Zia) Nabavi has been returned to a prison cell in Karoun Prison, in Ahvaz, southwest Iran. He had been taken away on 24 February, apparently by Ministry of Intelligence officials, and his whereabouts had been unknown..

On 24 February, **Zia Nabavi** was taken without prior notice from Karoun Prison and apparently transferred to another detention facility in Ahvaz under the control of Iran's Ministry of Intelligence. According to the website Kalame, which is close to opposition leader Mir Hossein Mousavi who is currently under house arrest, he was under pressure to make a televised recording denying the existence of "starred" students, a process of warning students again taking part in political activities. Detention facilities such as the one he was taken to are not under the supervision of the Judiciary in Iran and individuals held in them are particularly vulnerable to torture and other ill-treatment, and it can be difficult for family members to discover information about their relatives' whereabouts. Such circumstances may amount to an enforced disappearance, which is forbidden under international law.

Amnesty International considers Zia Nabavi a prisoner of conscience, held solely for peacefully exercising his rights to freedom of expression and association in connection with his activities for the Council to Defend the Right to Education. This is a body set up in 2009 by students barred from further study because the authorities imposed "stars" on them for their political activities or on account of their being Baha'is. The organization is continuing to campaign for his immediate and unconditional release.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Persian, English, French or your own language:

- Expressing concern that the circumstances of Sayed Ziauddin (Zia) Nabavi's transfer from Karoun Prison to a Ministry of Intelligence detention facility may have amounted to an enforced disappearance, which is prohibited under international law;
- Seeking assurances that he will not face new charges in connection with his removal from Karoun Prison;
- Stressing that he is a prisoner of conscience held solely for his peaceful human rights activities, and should be immediately and unconditionally released, and urging the authorities accordingly to review his conviction as a matter of urgency with a view to overturning it.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 29 APRIL 2011 TO:

Leader of the Islamic Republic

Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei
The Office of the Supreme Leader
Islamic Republic Street – End of
Shahid Keshvar Doust Street, Tehran,
Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: info_leader@leader.ir
via website:
<http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/index.php?p=letter> (English)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani
[care of] Public relations Office
Number 4, 2 Azizi Street
Vali Asr Ave., above Pasteur Street
intersection
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: bia.judi@yahoo.com (In subject
line: FAO Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani)

Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Secretary General, High Council for
Human Rights
Mohammad Javad Larijani
High Council for Human Rights
[Care of] Office of the Head of the
Judiciary, Pasteur St., Vali Asr Ave.
south of Serah-e Jomhour, Tehran
1316814737, Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: info@humanrights-iran.ir (subject
line: FAO Mohammad Javad Larijani)

Salutation: Dear Sir

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Zia Nabavi was a student in chemical engineering at Nowshirvan University in Babol, northern Iran. He was banned from further study in 2007 after receiving three “stars”, a form of warning, for his political activities. He was arrested on 14 June 2009, shortly after attending a protest against the announcement that incumbent President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad had been re-elected in presidential elections held in Iran on 12 June 2009. The outcome was disputed.

Held since then, he was sentenced in January 2010 to 15 years’ imprisonment, reduced on appeal in May 2010, to 10 years’ imprisonment in internal exile.

He was initially charged with “gathering and colluding against national security”; one year for “propaganda against the system”; one year for “disturbing public order”; as well as ten years for “enmity against God” for his alleged links to and cooperation with the People’s Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI), a banned political group, to be served in internal exile in Izeh, Khuzestan province. He was also sentenced to 74 lashes for “creating unease in the public mind”.

On appeal, he was acquitted of the first two charges, but his ten-year sentence for “enmity against God” was upheld. In the Iranian Penal Code, one of the four possible punishments for a conviction of “enmity against God” is banishment, usually imprisonment in internal exile, usually served far from the family home, making it very difficult for family members to visit the person.

Initially held in Evin Prison, Tehran, Zia Navabi was transferred to Karoun Prison, in the city of Ahvaz, south-western Iran, in September 2010. It takes his family up to 48 hours travelling to reach the prison. He was reportedly beaten on arrival and has said that the prison conditions are very poor.

Zia Nabavi was previously arrested in 2007 while studying at Mazandaran University, in relation to his participation to a sit-in protest at the arrest of a student, and was later barred from resuming his studies.

Further Information of UA: 69/11 Index: MDE 13/031/2011 Issue Date: 16 March 2011

