

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS ACQUITTED ON APPEAL

Iranian human rights defender Ali Bikas was released from Evin Prison on 29 June 2010 after being acquitted of all charges on appeal. He had previously been sentenced to seven years imprisonment and was a prisoner of conscience.

Ali Bikas, a member of the Student Committee for the Defence of Political Prisoners (SCDPP) and an activist for the rights of the Iranian Azerbaijani minority, was arrested in mid-June 2009 in the wake of the disputed presidential election. Ali Bikas appeared in a “show trial” session on 14 August 2009 in which he was accused of being a “field agent for a velvet coup”. He was sentenced to seven years and 74 lashes on 7 January 2010 after being convicted of “gathering and colluding to act against national security” and “causing unease in the public mind”. During his time in prison, Ali Bikas developed gum problems for which he did not receive adequate medical care.

Naseh Faridi, also a member of the SCDPP who was arrested on 15 June 2009, and appeared in the same “show trial” session as Ali Bikas. He was sentenced to six years in prison and 74 lashes in January 2010. He was released on bail on or around 1 September 2009 and remains free pending an appeal. He was accused at the “show trial” of passing information to the People’s Mojahedin Organization of Iran, a banned organization based in Iraq, on account of his activities in the SCDPP, including interviews with foreign media. If rearrested and imprisoned, Amnesty International would consider him to be a prisoner of conscience, held solely for the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression and association and would call for his immediate and unconditional release.

Shiva Nazar Ahari, a female journalist, blogger and human rights defender was released on bail from Evin Prison, Tehran, on 23 September 2009 after her arrest in June 2009, but was rearrested in December 2009. A prisoner of conscience, she remains detained awaiting trial (see UA 347/09), and updates and Iran: *Case sheet: Shiva Nazar Ahari*, (Index MDE 13/049/2010), 3 May 2010, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/049/2010/en>.

Protests in 2009 at the disputed outcome of the election were violently repressed, with scores killed. Thousands were arrested, many of whom were tortured or otherwise ill-treated, often to obtain forced “confessions”. Hundreds have been tried unfairly, including in mass “show trials”, many of whom are serving long-prison terms, often as prisoners of conscience. Some have been sentenced to death, and two executed.

For further information please see, *From Protest to Prison: Iran One Year after the Election*, (Index MDE 13/062/2010), June 2010, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/062/2010/en> and *Iran: Election Contested, Repression Compounded* (Index MDE 13/123/2009), December 2009, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/123/2009/en>.

No further action is requested from the UA network. Many thanks to all who sent appeals. Amnesty International is campaigning for the release of Shiva Nazar Ahari and will take further action if Naseh Faridi is imprisoned.

This is the second update of UA: 239/09 Further Information: www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/098/2009/en

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Further Information on UA: 239/09 Index: MDE 13/073/2010 Issue Date: 07 July 2010

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