

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 13/004/2003

20 February 2003

Further Information on UA 334/02 (MDE 13/023/2002, 11 November 2002) Fear for safety/Fear of torture or ill-treatment

IRAN **Dr Hossein Ghaziyan (m), university lecturer and Director of the Ayandeh Research Group (polling institute)**
Behrouz Geranpayeh (m), journalist and Director of the National Institute for Research on Opinion Polls
Abbas Abdi (m), journalist
Mohsen Goudarzi (m), Director of the National Plan for assessing Iranians' Opinions and Values

Amnesty International has learned that Behrouz Geranpayeh was released from prison on bail on 15 January. According to his lawyer, he will remain free until the court issues its final ruling in his case. No further details have emerged regarding his health or his treatment in prison.

On 2 February Abbas Abdi and Dr Hossein Ghaziyan were sentenced to prison terms of eight and nine years respectively by Bench 1410 of the Tehran General Court. They were both charged in December 2002 with the "sale of information" to non-Iranian research organizations and "propaganda" against the state. According to their lawyers, both Abbas Abdi and Dr Hossein Ghaziyan intend to appeal against their sentences.

There have been no reports that either Abbas Abdi and Dr Hossein Ghaziyan have been tortured or ill-treated. However, Abbas Abdi was reportedly held in solitary confinement in Evin prison in Tehran until being transferred around 10 January to a cell which he shared with several other individuals. The UN Commission on Human Rights stated in April 1997 that "prolonged incommunicado detention may facilitate the perpetration of torture and can in itself constitute a form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment."

Amnesty International has no new information regarding Mohsen Goudarzi's condition or whereabouts, and remains concerned for his safety.

All four men were detained in connection with an opinion poll on US-Iranian relations carried out by the Ayandeh Research Group and published by the government-run news agency IRNA on 22 September, which showed that 74 percent of respondents favoured dialogue with the United States. The polling organization has since been closed down after an order by the judiciary.

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

- welcoming the release of Behrouz Geranpayeh;
- seeking assurances that Dr Hossein Ghaziyan and Abbas Abdi are not facing ill treatment or torture while in detention;
- seeking clarification of the status of Mohsen Goudarzi, and calling on the authorities to guarantee his safety if he is in detention;
- if Mohsen Goudarzi is in detention, urging the authorities to immediately and unconditionally release him unless he is to be charged with an internationally recognized criminal offence;
- reminding the authorities that Iran is a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which under Article 7 states: "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment".

APPEALS TO:Leader of the Islamic Republic

His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed >Ali Khamenei,
The Presidency, Palestine Avenue,
Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: webmaster@wilayah.org (on the subject line write: For the attention of the office of His Excellency, Ayatollah al Udhma Khamenei, Qom)

Salutation: Your Excellency

President

His Excellency Hojjatoleslam val Moslemin Sayed Mohammad Khatami
The Presidency, Palestine Avenue
Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

E-mail: khatami@president.ir (please resend your message if it does not get through the first time)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary

His Excellency Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahrudi
Ministry of Justice, Park-e Shahr, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Faxes: + 98 21 879 6671 (unreliable; please mark "care of Director of International Affairs, Judiciary")

Email: lrjpr@iranjudiciary.org (Public Relations Office of Judiciary; please mark for the attention of HE Ayatollah Shahroudi)

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:Minister of Foreign Affairs.

His Excellency Kamal Kharrazi
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Abdolmajid Keshk-e Mesri Av
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Faxes: + 98 21 390 1999 (unreliable; please mark "care of the Human Rights Department, Foreign Ministry)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Law Enforcement Forces (LEF, or the police)

If possible, please paste a copy of your appeal letter to the Islamic Republic of Iran Police Force, noting that it is a copy of an appeal, at:

<http://www.policeiri.org/fpage/contactus.html>

Salutation: Dear Sir

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Iran accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.