

UA 69/02

Torture/I

**IRAN12 Kurdish minority rights activists, including 11 supporters of the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI) and one supporter of Komala, the Kurdistan section of the Communist Party of Iran (CPI)
5 Arab minority rights activists**

Seventeen Kurdish and Arab activists, imprisoned for opposing the Iranian government, have all been sentenced to death and are reportedly at risk of imminent execution. One former Kurdish activist and refugee, who was forcibly returned from Turkey in 1998, and five members of Iran's Arab minority, have already been hanged, and it is feared that more executions may soon follow.

Five Arab men were hanged in Ahvaz, southwestern Iran, on 27 January. They had been sentenced to death for arms smuggling. According to the Ahwazian Arab People's Democratic and Popular Front, an organization based in Europe, another five Arab men have recently been condemned to death in Ahvaz, apparently for opposing the government's policy of land seizures in the region. They are named as Fadhil Muqaddam, Rahim Sawari, Amir Sa'idi, Hashem Bawi and 'Abbas Sherhani.

A former member of the illegal Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI), Karim Tuzhali, was executed on 24 January at Mahabad prison, in western Iran (see further information on EXTRA 97/98, MDE 13/0002/2002, 5 February 2002). He had reportedly been held for three years in Orumieh prison, in West Azerbaijan province, northwestern Iran, before he was executed. According to the KDPI, 10 other prisoners formerly associated with the party are now at risk.

Three of them - Muhammad Sharverani, Khaled Faraidouni and Nader Afani - are believed to be detained in Mahabad prison. All three have been sentenced to death, Muhammad Sharverani in 1998 and the others in 2000.

Three others are believed to be held in Orumieh. They are 27-year-old Hasan Mahmoudi, who was reportedly arrested in 1997 or 1998; 50-year-old Khaled Shoghi, who was reportedly forcibly returned from Turkey and arrested in 1997, and has reportedly been tortured; and Kheder Viesi, who was sentenced to death in 1998.

Saleh Goudarzi, who was sentenced to death in 1999, is reportedly detained in Sanandaj prison.

Jalil Zeva'i was 18 when he was arrested in 1993. He has been in prison ever since, and has reportedly been tortured. Rasul Abdollahpour was reportedly arrested in 1994, and Anvar Alizadeh in 1997.

Mohammad Esmailzadeh or Esmaili, aged 35, was reportedly arrested in 1996 or 1997. There is an unconfirmed report that he suffered a leg injury some time after he was imprisoned, which still causes him pain, and for which he has been denied any medical treatment.

Also at risk is Mohammad Mehdi Zaliye, aged 32, who is reportedly a supporter of the Kurdistan Province section of the Communist Party of Iran (CPI), known as *Komala*. He was reportedly arrested in 1992, and is alleged to be suffering from "neurological problems caused by brutal mental and physical torture".

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Kurds and Arabs are two of Iran's ethnic minority groups. The Arab population live mainly in southwestern Iran, and the Kurds in the province of Kurdistan and neighbouring provinces bordering Iraq and Turkey.

The KDPI seeks autonomy for Iranian Kurdistan and states that it "rejects all acts of terrorism and...planting bombs in public places."

The Ahwazian Arab People's Democratic and Popular Front wrote to Amnesty International in August 2001 stating that it is "committed to *non-violent* opposition" to government policies in the Ahvaz region.

Amnesty International recorded 139 executions in Iran in 2001, although the true figure may be much higher. The death penalty is the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment, a violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Iran is a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Article 6 of which states that "In countries which have not abolished the death penalty, sentence of death may be imposed only for the most serious crimes." Under Article 14 (5), those convicted have the right to appeal against death sentences.

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

- expressing grave concern that the death sentences against all the individuals named above may have been upheld;
- urging the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, to commute the death sentences passed on the men named above, in line with Article 4 of the ICCPR;
- asking to be told the details of their trial proceedings, including the specific charges against the men, and whether they have been allowed to appeal against their convictions and sentences, as guaranteed by Article 14 (5) of the ICCPR.

APPEALS TO:

Leader of the Islamic Republic

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

Telegrams: Ayatollah Khamenei, Tehran, Iran

Salutation: Your Excellency

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

President

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

Telegrams: President Khatami, Tehran, Iran

E-mail: khatami@president.ir

Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary

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

Telegrams: Head of Judiciary, Tehran, Iran

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

Telegrams: Foreign Affairs Minister, Tehran, Iran

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

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES 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 17 April 2002.