PUBLIC AI Index: MDE 13/16/00

6 July 2000

Further information on UA 103/00 (MDE 13/20/00, 3 July 2000) - Prisoners of Conscience

IRAN Mehrangiz Kar (f), lawyer

Shahla Lahiji (f), publisher

Ali Afshari (m), student representative

All three former prisoners of conscience named above have been released on bail. No date has been set for their trial, and it is not known what charges they face.

Mehrangiz Kar and Shahla Lahiji were released on 21 June, each on bail of some US\$60,000. Ali Afshari was reportedly released four days later, on bail of some US\$62,000.

All three had been imprisoned by Branch 3 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran in late April. They were accused of "acting against national security", apparently for speaking at an academic and cultural conference in Berlin, where Iranian exile groups staged protests both against the participants and against the political situation in Iran.

Mehrangiz Kar and Shahla Lahiji, both prominent supporters of women's and other human rights, were held incommunicado for some time. Their families were eventually allowed to meet them at Branch 3 of the Revolutionary Court.

The women's lawyer has reportedly resigned. Shirin Ebadi (f), a human rights defender and author, was quoted in a newspaper interview on 5 June as saying that she was not allowed to be with the women when they were questioned, and was not allowed to meet with them afterwards. She said that the Lawyers' Association (Kanun-e Vokala) had ignored her request to take this up with Branch 3 of the Revolutionary Court; she was thus unable to carry out her work, and resigned. The judicial authorities have apparently denied her claims, and she was herself arrested on another matter on 27 June.

## FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express/airmail letters in English, French or your own language:

- asking to be told what specific charges the three face, and when they are to go on trial;
- urging the authorities to allow them unrestricted access to lawyers of their choice;
- urging that their lawyers be allowed enough time and access to the documents they need to prepare a defence;
- noting that Amnesty International considers all three to have been prisoners of conscience, detained for non-violent expression of their conscientiously held beliefs.

## APPEALS TO:

1) 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

## 2) 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

Salutation: Your Excellency

3) Head of Judiciary

His Excellency Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi-Shahrudi Ministry of Justice, Park-e Shahr,

Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Telegrams: Head of the Judiciary, Tehran, Iran

Salutation: Your Excellency

## COPIES TO:

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

Mr Mohammad Hassan Zia'i-Far Secretary, Islamic Human Rights Commission PO Box 13165-137, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Faxes: + 98 21 204 0541

and 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 16 August 2000.

N.B.:- Paragraph 5 reads: [Shirin Ebadi, lawyer representing Mehrangiz Kar and Shahla Lahiji] said that the Lawyers' Association (Kanun-e Vokala) had ignored her request to take this up with Branch 3 of the Revolutionary Court; she was thus unable to carry out her work, and resigned.

In fact the Lawyers' Association reportedly **did** write to the judiciary on her behalf, and it was the judiciary that ignored the Association, not the Association that ignored Shirin Ebadi.