

**PUBLIC**

AI Index: MDE 13/23/00  
Distrib: PG/SC

To: Health professionals  
From: Medical office / Gulf team  
Date: 31 August 2000

**Further information on**  
***MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION***  
**Health concern Mahmudali Chehregani**  
**Iran**

(update on MDE 13/12/00)

**Key words** health concern / unfair trial / release prisoner of conscience

Amnesty International has received the good news that Dr Mahmudali Chehregani, Iran, was released on 27 July 2000. He was reportedly released early because of a general deterioration of his health. In May 2000 he was reported to be in a critical condition in Tabriz prison clinic and we issued a medical letter writing action on his behalf asking for his release.

Dr Mahmudali Chehregani has a PhD in linguistics and is a lecturer at the University of Tabriz. Dr Chehregani is a prominent member of the Azeri community in Iran. He has previously demanded recognition of the national rights of Azeris in Iran, as guaranteed under Article 15 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which permits the use of regional languages in the media and in schools when used in addition to Persian. Amnesty International believes that he was imprisoned to suppress the non-violent expression of his conscientiously held beliefs, and as such was a prisoner of conscience.

He was first arrested by agents of the Ministry of Intelligence in December 1999 and was sentenced to six months' imprisonment on 18 February 2000. He was also reportedly ordered to pay a fine of 20 million Toman (approximately US\$24,000) or face a further 10 years' imprisonment.

**Recommended actions**

Many thanks to all of you who sent appeals. No further action is required from the network on Dr Chehregani's behalf.