

URGENT ACTION

WOMEN'S RIGHTS ACTIVIST HELD IN IRAN

Women's rights activist Mahboubeh Karami has been detained in Evin prison in Iran's capital, Tehran, since 2 March. Amnesty International believes she is a prisoner of conscience, held because she campaigns for human rights. She is at risk of torture or other ill-treatment.

Mahboubeh Karami has been a member of the Campaign for Equality since its foundation in 2006. The Campaign aims to end discrimination against women in Iranian law.

Mahboubeh Karami's house in Tehran was raided by three security officials at 10pm on 2 March. Prior to her arrest, they searched the house and confiscated some of her personal belongings.

Mohsen Karami, her brother, told the Human Rights Activists News Agency, a website run by an independent Iranian human rights organization, that the warrant for her arrest listed charges of rioting and "participation in gatherings". He said that these charges were baseless, as "Mahboubeh has spent much of the last year caring for her ill father."

Mahboubeh Karami has been arrested four times before on similar charges. Each time, she was detained for several days before being released. She was later acquitted of all charges. See UA 86/09 and follow-up; and UA 169/08.

Her arrest is part of a wave of arrests of human rights defenders, journalists and political activists which have been carried out since the anniversary of the Iranian Revolution on 11 February 2010, and which have stepped up since the start of March 2010.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Persian, Arabic, English, French or your own language:

- Calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Mahboubeh Karami, who is held solely for her peaceful exercise of her right to freedom of expression and association in connection with her women's and other human rights activities;
- In the meantime, urging the Iranian authorities to protect her from torture or other ill-treatment and to grant her immediate and regular access to her family, her lawyers and to any adequate medical treatment;
- Reminding the Iranian authorities that freedom of expression and association are guaranteed under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to which Iran is a state party.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 23 APRIL 2010 TO:

Head of the Provincial Judiciary in Tehran
 Ali Reza Avaei
 Karimkhan Zand Avenue
 Sana'i Avenue, Corner of Alley 17, No. 152
 Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: avaei@Dadgostary-tehran.ir
Salutation: Dear Mr Avaei

Head of the Judiciary
 Ayatollah Sadeq Larijani
 Howzeh Riyasat-e Qoveh Qazaiyeh
 (Office of the Head of the Judiciary)
 Pasteur St., Vali Asr Ave., south of Serah-e Jomhuri, Tehran, 1316814737
 Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: Via website:
<http://www.dadiran.ir/tabid/75/Default.aspx?Fi>
 rst starred box: your given name; second starred box: your family name; third: your email address
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Secretary General, High Council for Human Rights
 Mohammad Javad Larijani
 Howzeh Riassat-e Ghoveh Ghazaiyeh
 Pasteur St, Vali Asr Ave., south of Serah-e Jomhuri
 Tehran 1316814737
 Islamic Republic of Iran
Fax: +98 21 3390 4986
Email: bia.judi@yahoo.com (In subject line: FAO Mohammad Javad Larijani)
Salutation: Dear Mr Larijani

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Campaign for Equality, also known as the One Million Signatures Campaign, is a grassroots women's rights initiative, aimed at ending discrimination against women in Iranian law. It was launched in August 2006 with the aim of collecting a million signatures of Iranians calling for the reform of legislation which discriminates against women. Over 50 members of the Campaign have been detained for their activities on behalf of the Campaign. For example, Alieh Eghdam-Doust is currently serving a three-year prison sentence for her peaceful participation in a 2006 demonstration demanding equal rights for women.

In August 2009, in the first of a series of mass "show trials" of people arrested following the disputed presidential election held in June, the women's rights movement was named by the prosecution as being part of an alleged "velvet revolution" aimed at overthrowing the government in Iran. Noushin Ahmadi Khorassani and Parvin Ardalan, both prominent members of the Campaign for Equality, as well as Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Shirin Ebadi, who has supported the Campaign since its foundation, were all mentioned as leaders of sections of the women's movement, although they were not on trial.

Another member of the Campaign for Equality, 24-year-old student Somayeh Rashidi was detained in Evin prison between 19 December 2009 and 25 February 2010 (see UA 30/10 and follow up).

In late October 2009, activists from the Campaign for Equality started receiving summons, and some were arrested (see UA 333/09). They have since been released. Others have been banned from travel abroad (see Amnesty International, *Iran: Renewed wave of intimidation and harassment of women's rights activists must end*, AI Index MDE 13/117/2009, 5 November 2009 (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/117/2009/en>).

Several activists from Iranian human rights organization, the Centre for Human Rights Reporters have been detained since late December. Three of them have told relatives they are facing pressure during interrogation to accept allegations against them on the basis of which they could be charged with *moharebeh* (being at enmity with God) and sentenced to death (see: UA 347/09 and follow-ups). The Committee for Human Rights Reporters has also been targeted: at least five of its members are currently detained (see UA 347/09 and follow ups)

Another Iranian NGO, Human Rights Activists in Iran, has reported that security forces had raided the house and workplace of at least 29 of its members between 2 and 3 March, leading to 15 arrests.

Amnesty International fears that such arrests and harassment of human rights activists mark a fresh crackdown on their peaceful activities.

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