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Further Information on 113/05 (MDE 13/021/2005, 6 May 2005) and follow-up (MDE 13/027/2005, 15 June 2005; MDE 13/033/2005, 12 July 2005; MDE 13/066/2005, 4 November 2005) - Fear for safety/ Medical concern/prisoner of conscience

IRAN Nasser Zarafshan (m), lawyer and human rights defender

Lawyer and human rights defender Nasser Zarafshan was released from Evin Prison on 15 March.

He had been sentenced to five years' imprisonment on 19 March 2002, after a secret trial before a military court. He was tried because of his role in representing the families of two political activists murdered in November 1998, during a series of killings which came to be known in Iran as the "serial murders". At least 18 people, including former senior Ministry of Intelligence officials, were tried in connection with the murders, in a case which attracted wide publicity and controversy within Iran.

Although Nasser Zarafshan was released after completing his sentence, he has said that he may still have to serve another 20 days in detention, relating to the extension of some of the medical leave he had eventually been granted.

While he was in custody, Nasser Zarafshan's health deteriorated and he was not immediately afforded adequate medical treatment. He suffers from a chronic kidney condition which required specialist treatment outside the prison.

Nasser Zarafshan is reportedly now in good health, and has expressed his gratitude to Amnesty International and all those who have campaigned for his release. He plans to renew his membership of the Bar Association in Tehran and to reopen his office.

Amnesty International believes that Nasser Zarafshan was a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for his legitimate activities as a lawyer and for the peaceful expression of his beliefs.

No further action is requested from the UA network. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.
