

22 March

2007

UA 74/07 Fear for safety/torture and ill treatment/possible prisoner of conscience/medical concern

IRAN Nasser Kheyrollahi (m), aged 48

Nasser Kheyrollahi, who attempted to expose official corruption, has been charged with vaguely worded offences which could see him detained as a prisoner of conscience. He is now held in Reja-i Shahr prison in Karaj, near Tehran, together with prisoners convicted of violent offences, where he has reportedly been tortured and ill-treated repeatedly and has recently had several bones broken. He reportedly began a hunger strike on 17 January to draw attention to his situation.

A father of three, in March 2003 he had been forced to resign his post as a civil servant in the office of the mayor of Esfahan, a city in central Iran, after he attempted to expose the corruption he witnessed there. He was reportedly arrested by the Intelligence Services shortly afterwards, as he was boarding a subway train in Tehran, to face charges of "contacting foreign elements", "contacting Iranians abroad" and "endangering state security". He has reportedly been denied access to legal representation, and although he is known to have been brought before a court, no details of the proceedings are known.

He was reportedly first held in Evin Prison, where he spent six months in solitary confinement, and then moved to a prison in Esfahan, after which he was moved to Reja-i Shahr prison in Karaj, where he is now held with prisoners convicted of violent offences. His family was reportedly not told where he was until two months after he was arrested, when he was finally allowed to telephone them after he had staged a hunger strike. He has been allowed no visits from his family, though he is allowed a daily two-minute telephone call to them. On 15 March 2007, his wife reported that Nasser Kheyrollahi has had both his elbows, his collar bone and ribs broken.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The charge of "acting against national security" is not clearly defined in the Penal Code and can therefore be used to prevent human rights defenders and political activists from exercising their internationally recognized rights to freedom of expression and association. If convicted of this offence solely for an attempt to expose official corruption, Nasser Kheyrollahi would be prisoner of conscience, and Amnesty International would call for his immediate and unconditional release.

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

- asking to be told in detail why Nasser Kheyrollahi has been detained, including any charges and any trial which may be held;
- expressing concern that Nasser Kheyrollahi is reportedly held together with prisoners convicted of violent offences, and reminding the authorities that Principle 8 of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners states that "the different categories of prisoners shall be kept in separate institutions or parts of institutions taking account of ...the legal reason for their detention ...";
- expressing concern at reports that Nasser Kheyrollahi's elbows, collar bone and ribs have been broken, and calling on the authorities to investigate and bring those responsible to justice, and ensure that he is not further tortured or ill-treated;
- calling for him to be allowed immediate and regular access to his family, a lawyer of his own choosing and any medical treatment he may require;
- expressing concern that he is reported to be facing charges which are vaguely worded and which may infringe his internationally recognized right to freedom of expression and association, so that Amnesty International would consider him a prisoner of conscience if he were convicted.

APPEALS TO:

Leader of the Islamic Republic
Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei,
Leader of the Islamic Republic

The Office of the Supreme Leader, Shahid Keshvar Doost Street, Tehran. Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: +98 251 7774 2228 (mark "For the Office of His Excellency, Ayatollah Khamenei")

Email: via website, in English: <http://www.leader.ir/langs/EN/index.php?p=sendletter>

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Intelligence

Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejeie

Ministry of Intelligence, Second Negarestan Street, Pasdaran Avenue, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: iranprobe@iranprobe.com

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

President:

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

The Presidency, Palestine Avenue, Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: dr-ahmadinejad@president.ir

via website: www.president.ir/email

Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi

Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Justice Building, Panzdah-Khordad Square, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: +98 21 3390 4986 (please keep trying)

Email: info@dadgostary-tehran.ir (subject line: "For the attention of Ayatollah Shahroudi")

Speaker of Parliament

His Excellency Gholamali Haddad Adel

Majles-e Shoura-ye Eslami, Baharestan Square, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: +98 21 3355 6408

Email: hadadadel@majlis.ir

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 3 May 2007.
