

URGENT ACTION

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CANDIDATE THREATENED

Mehdi Karroubi, a 72-year-old male cleric who was a candidate in June's disputed presidential election in Iran, is facing criminal charges in relation to his reporting of allegations that detainees were tortured, including by rape, in the aftermath of the election.

Public protests over the election results were violently repressed by the security forces. Subsequently, Mehdi Karroubi co-founded a committee that gathered information and testimonies of protesters and others who reported being tortured or otherwise ill-treated by the security forces. Amnesty International has received reports consistent with a statement made by Mehdi Karroubi that both male and female detainees have been subjected to torture, including rape, by security officials.

A three-person judicial committee established by the Head of the Judiciary to investigate the allegations of abuse included former Minister of Intelligence Gholam-Hossein Mohseni-Ejeie, who was, in part, responsible for security during the demonstrations. On 12 September, he announced that the committee had concluded: "Not only is there no evidence indicating sexual abuse of individuals introduced by Mr Karroubi but also the claims are not documented and are far from the reality and... the documents that were presented are bogus and have been devised to negatively influence public opinion". The committee's statement also said a report had been sent to the Tehran Prosecutor's office, recommending that Mehdi Karroubi, and anyone else repeating the rape allegations, be prosecuted. On 13 October, Abbas Ja'fari-Dowlatabadi, the Tehran General and Revolutionary Prosecutor said that a case had been filed at Prosecution Office for the Special Court for the Clergy [which hears cases against clerics in Iran] concerning Mehdi Karroubi's claims. He also said that "a number of people have been summoned regarding this case". Although not yet specified, charges could include libel and "spreading lies".

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

- Calling on the Iranian authorities not to charge or prosecute Mehdi Karroubi solely for documenting and expressing concern over alleged human rights violations;
- Stating that if he were to be detained for such actions, Amnesty International would consider him to be a prisoner of conscience, held solely for the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression;
- Reminding the authorities that under international law they have an obligation to fully and independently investigate reports of human rights violations and offer an effective remedy to victims.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 26 NOVEMBER 2009 TO:

Leader of the Islamic Republic
Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei
The Office of the Supreme Leader
Islamic Republic Street – End of
Shahid Keshvar Doust Street, Tehran,
Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: info_leader@leader.ir
via website:
<http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/index.php?p=letter> (English)
<http://www.leader.ir/langs/fa/index.php?p=letter>
(Persian)
Salutation: Your Excellency

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/81/Default.aspx>
First starred box: your given name;
second starred box: your family name;
third: your email address
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Director, Human Rights Headquarters of Iran
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 (please keep trying)
Email: bia.judi@yahoo.com

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

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In the days following the 13 June announcement that incumbent president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad had won the presidential election, mass demonstrations were swiftly repressed with excessive force. Dozens of protestors were killed, and hundreds more injured. Some died later of their injuries. At least 4,000 people were detained across the country. Most have since been released, but several hundred are believed to remain detained, and arrests are continuing.

Mass trial sessions of over 100 people, which started on 1 August, have been grossly unfair. Detainees "confessed" to vaguely-worded charges, many of which do not amount to recognizably criminal offences. These "confessions", apparently obtained under duress, have been accepted by the court. Some of those on trial were filmed making similar "confessions", which were aired on TV before their trials took place. Defendants on trial could face the death penalty.

Iranian officials have confirmed that at least some of those detained after the post-election protests have been tortured or otherwise ill-treated, and that abuses took place in at least one detention centre, Kahrizak, a centre outside of Tehran, since closed on the order of Iran's Leader. Twelve police officials and a judge who had been involved in transferring detainees to Kahrizak are said to be facing trial for their role in the abuses. On 9 September, Farhad Tajari, a member of the Iranian parliament's Special Parliamentary Committee set up to review post-election arrests, told the *Fars News Agency* that a "court hearing for addressing law violations by suspects in the Kahrizak case will be held in the near future".

Mehdi Karroubi brought his concerns to the attention of a special parliamentary committee investigating the situation of detainees and has also spoken publicly about them. Initially, Farhad Tajari, a member of the Committee denied that rape had occurred, but on 26 August, another Committee's member told the website *Parleman News* on condition of anonymity, "It has definitely become evident to us that some of the post-election detainees have been raped with batons and bottles." The submission of the final report of the committee has been postponed on several occasions.

On 7 September, Iranian security officials closed the office of the committee co-founded by Mehdi Karroubi and another former presidential candidate, Mir Hossein Mousavi. Testimonies the committee had gathered on abuses of protesters and detainees in the course of the demonstrations following the 12 June 2009 presidential election, were confiscated. Amnesty International expressed concern that its confiscation would place those who had provided testimony at risk of reprisals by the security forces (see: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/iranian-rape-and-torture-victims-renewed-risk-20090910>).

The Special Court for the Clergy is not part of the Judiciary, and its head is appointed directly by the Supreme Leader. Only clerics appointed to the court may act as defence lawyers, and it can, in common with other courts in Iran, impose the death penalty for certain crimes.

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