

**PUBLIC**

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conscience**

**Incommunicado detention/ Fear of torture or ill-treatment/ Possible prisoner of**

**IRAN**

**Sherko Jihani (m), journalist and human rights defender**

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Iranian Kurdish journalist and human rights defender, Sherko Jihani, was detained on 27 November 2006 in the town of Mahabad in Kurdistan province, northwestern Iran. He is held incommunicado at an undisclosed location where he is at risk of torture or ill-treatment. He may be detained on account of his peaceful activities on behalf of the rights of Iran's Kurdish minority, in which case Amnesty International would consider him a prisoner of conscience.

Sherko Jihani, the correspondent of the Turkish news agency Euphrat in Mahabad and a member of the Human Rights Organization of Kurdistan (HROK), was reportedly summoned to appear before Branch 2 of the Revolutionary Prosecutor's Office in Mahabad on 27 November and was immediately arrested and detained in Mahabad Central Prison. He was reportedly interrogated about forming an investigative committee to object to the kidnapping on 8 January 2006 of a woman human rights activist, Sarveh Komkar (Kamkar), and for giving interviews to foreign stations about the July 2005 killing by Iranian security forces of Kurdish activist, Showan (Shivan) Qaderi. His family was reportedly able to visit him on or around 4 December 2006. Sherko Jihani reportedly refused to pay a 50 million Rials bail (about US\$ 5,500) and began a hunger strike in protest at his detention on 30 November. On 4 December, he began refusing to speak.

On 6 December, Sherko Jihani was removed from Mahabad Prison and was taken to an unknown location, possibly Oromieh prison. His family has since been unable to visit him or to confirm his whereabouts.

Sherko Jihani has reportedly been arrested nine times since 1999 and is said to have been tortured while in detention.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The Kurds are one of Iran's many ethnic groups. They live mainly in the province of Kurdistan and neighbouring provinces bordering Kurdish areas of Turkey and Iraq.

Violent unrest in the Kurdish areas of Iran broke out in July 2005 and continued for several weeks after Iranian security forces shot dead a Kurdish opposition activist, Showan Qaderi, and reportedly dragged his body through the streets behind a Jeep. Thousands of Kurds took to the streets to protest. Security forces reportedly used light and heavy weaponry in response to the demonstrations, which in at least some places included attacks by demonstrators on government buildings and offices. Up to 20 people were reportedly killed and hundreds more injured. The authorities acknowledged that five people were killed, and stated that their deaths were under investigation. At least 190 people were arrested, according to official reports, although the true figure may well be higher.

Kurdish human rights defenders in Iran are at risk. Several human rights defenders and journalists involved in the July 2005 demonstrations have received death threats.

On 8 January 2006, Sarveh Komkar, also a member of HROK, was reportedly arrested by a special intelligence and security unit of the Revolutionary Guards before witnesses in the town of Mahabad, Kurdistan. She was released five hours later, having sustained injuries and bruises from a severe beating, after her family and the members of HROK complained to the authorities and pointed to a lack of evidence against her. Other members of the HROK are also in prison or facing prosecution, possibly in connection with their peaceful activities on behalf of the Kurdish minority in Iran.

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

- expressing concern that Sherko Jihani, a Kurdish human rights defender, is detained without access to his lawyer or family at an undisclosed location;
- calling on the authorities to disclose his place of detention and the reasons for his arrest, including any charges against him;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that he is not tortured and ill-treated, and to allow him immediate access to a lawyer of his own choosing, his family, and to any medical treatment he may require;
- expressing concern that Sherko Jihani may have been detained solely in connection with his peaceful activities on behalf of the rights of the Kurdish minority, in which case Amnesty International would consider him a prisoner of conscience;
- calling on the authorities to release him immediately and unconditionally unless he is to be promptly charged with a recognizably criminal offence and given a prompt and fair trial.

**APPEALS TO:**

**Leader of the Islamic Republic**

His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei, The Office of the Supreme Leader  
Shoahada Street, Qom, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Email:** [info@leader.ir](mailto:info@leader.ir) OR [istiftaa@wilayah.org](mailto:istiftaa@wilayah.org)

**Fax:** +98 251 774 2228 (mark "FAO the Office of His Excellency, Ayatollah al Udhma Khamenei")

**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](mailto:iranprobe@iranprobe.com)

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

**COPIES TO:**

**President**

His Excellency Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

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

**Email:** [dr-ahmadinejad@president.ir](mailto:dr-ahmadinejad@president.ir)

**via website:** [www.president.ir/email](http://www.president.ir/email)

add Speaker of Parliament

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 23 January 2007.