

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 13/165/2008

11 November 2008

Further Information on UA 289/08 (MDE 13/155/2008, 21 October 2008) Arbitrary detention/Fear of torture or other ill-treatment

IRAN

Esha Momeni, 28 (f), student

Esha Momeni was released from Tehran's Evin Prison on 10 November. Her bail of 2000 million rials (approximately US\$ 200,000) was met by the deeds to her family's apartment. According to the website www.mardomak.org, her father said that she was expected to appear in court on 11 November to face charges of 'acting against state security' and 'propaganda against the system'. He also said that she is not permitted to leave Iran, but hoped that she would be able to return soon to Los Angeles.

Esha Momeni is reported to have lost about 7 kilograms in weight since her detention on 15 October, but otherwise is said to be in good health. She was arrested while driving in Tehran by security officials who escorted her to her home then searched it and confiscated her computer and video footage of interviews of Iranian women's rights activists. She was then taken to Evin Prison in Tehran. She was not granted access to her lawyer.

Esha Momeni is a graduate student at California State University, Northridge in the USA. She is a member of the Californian branch of the Campaign for Equality. At the time of her arrest, she was in Iran to visit her family and to conduct research for her Master's degree thesis on the Iranian women's movement. As part of her research she had been conducting video interviews with members of the Campaign for Equality in Tehran.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Campaign for Equality, launched in 2006, is an Iranian women's rights initiative composed of a network of women and men committed to ending discrimination against women in Iranian law. The Campaign gives volunteers basic legal training, and these volunteers travel around the country promoting the Campaign, talking with women in their homes, as well as in public places, informing them about their rights and the need for legal reform. The volunteers are also aiming at collecting one million signatures of Iranian nationals for a petition demanding an end to legal discrimination against women in Iran.

Dozens of activists and supporters have been arrested in connection with their activities for the Campaign for Equality, some while collecting signatures for the petition demanding an end to legal discrimination against women in Iran. As of October 2008, the Campaign's website had been blocked by the authorities at least 16 times (see: <http://www.change4equality.com>). Official permission to hold public meetings has frequently been denied, and Campaign activists usually hold their workshops in the homes of sympathizers, some of whom have then received threatening phone calls apparently from security officials or been summoned by them for interrogation. At least one such workshop was forcibly broken up by police, who arrested those present, beating some. Some members have been banned from travelling abroad.

Three women are currently detained in connection with their activities on behalf of the Campaign for Equality. For details of Ronak Safarzadeh and Hana Abdi (see UA 297/07, MDE 13/130/2007, 07 November 2007) and for Zeynab Beyezidi (see UA 207/08, MDE 13/107/2008, 01 August 2008).

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

- welcoming the release on bail of Esha Momeni;
- calling for any charges against her which relate solely to her peaceful activities in connection with the Campaign for Equality to be dropped, as she would be a prisoner of conscience if detained on such charges.

APPEALS TO:

Head of the Judiciary

His Excellency Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi
Howzeh Riyasat-e Qoveh Qazaiyeh / Office of the Head of the Judiciary
Pasteur St., Vali Asr Ave., south of Serah-e Jomhouri, Tehran 1316814737, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: info@dadgostary-tehran.ir (In the subject line write: **FAO Ayatollah Shahroudi**)

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

President

His Excellency Mahmoud Ahmadinejad
The Presidency
Palestine Avenue, Azerbaijan Intersection
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: + 98 21 6 649 5880

Email: via website: <http://www.president.ir/email/>

Director, Human Rights Headquarters of Iran

His Excellency Mohammad Javad Larijani
Howzeh Riyasat-e Qoveh Qazaiyeh (Office of the Head of the Judiciary)
Pasteur St, Vali Asr Ave., south of Serah-e Jomhouri, Tehran 1316814737, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: +98 21 3390 4986 (there are problems with this line, please try three times)

Email: int_aff@judiciary.ir (In the subject line: **FAO Mohammad Javad Larijani**)

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 December 2008.