

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST AT RISK OF FLOGGING

Saeed Ha'eri, a member of the Committee of Human Right Reporters (CHRR), which campaigns against human rights violations in Iran, is at risk of being flogged after being sentenced to 74 lashes. He and Shiva Nazar Ahari, another CHRR member have also been given prison terms.

On 18 September 2010, Branch 26 of the Revolutionary Court sentenced student activist **Saeed Ha'eri** and journalist and human rights defender **Shiva Nazar Ahari** to lashes and prison terms. They have the right to appeal.

Shiva Nazar Ahari's sentence of 74 lashes for "disturbing public order" was commuted to a fine of four million rials, (equivalent to approximately US\$400). She has also been sentenced to six years' imprisonment, consisting of three and a half years for "*moharebeh*" (enmity against God) to be served in internal exile at Izeh Prison, Khuzestan province almost 180 km from her family. It is unclear whether Izeh Prison even has facilities for women. She was also sentenced to two years for "gathering and colluding to commit a crime" and six months for "propaganda against the system." Her lawyer, Mohammad Sharif, says that he intends to lodge an appeal against her conviction and sentence.

Saeed Ha'eri was sentenced to two and a half years' imprisonment and 74 lashes for "disturbing public order" and "gathering and colluding with intent to harm state security". A third member of CHRR **Kouhyar Goudarzi**, remains in prison, serving a one year sentence.

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

- Urging the Iranian authorities to ensure that Saeed Ha'eri is not subjected to the cruel punishment of flogging;
- Calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Kouhyar Goudarzi, as he is a prisoner of conscience, held solely for the peaceful exercise of his rights to freedom of expression and association and meanwhile for him to have immediate and regular access to his family and lawyer;
- Calling on the Iranian authorities to review the cases against Shiva Nazar Ahari, Saeed Ha'eri, Kouhyar Goudarzi and any other member of the CHRR and ensure that they are not held for their peaceful human rights activities;
- Reminding the Iranian authorities that everybody has the right to promote, develop and protect human rights by lawful and peaceful means. This includes the rights to freedom of expression, association, and assembly which are protected under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Iran is a state party.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 3 NOVEMBER 2010 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)
Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Sadegh 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
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Director, Human Rights Headquarters of Iran
His Excellency Mohammad Javad Larijani
Bureau of International Affairs, Office of the Head of the Judiciary, Pasteur St., Vali Asr Ave. south of Serah-e Jomhuri, Tehran 1316814737, Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: bia.judi@yahoo.com
Fax: + 98 21 5 537 8827 (please keep trying)

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the seventh update of UA 347/09 (MDE 13/132/2009). Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/132/2009/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The CHRR was founded in 2006 and campaigns against a wide range of human rights violations, including abuses against women, children, prisoners, workers and others. Amnesty International believes that the sentences of Saeed Ha'eri, Shiva Nazar Ahari and Kouhyar Goudarzi are related to their peaceful work campaigning in support of human rights.

Shiva Nazar Ahari was arrested on 20 December 2009 along with, Kouhyar Goudarzi and Saeed Haeri, two male CHRR members. They were taken from a bus while on their way to the funeral of a senior cleric critical of the authorities, Grand Ayatollah Montazeri, which was to take place the following day. Other CHRR members were arrested later, though have all been released on bail. Some have since left the country.

Shiva Nazar Ahari was released on bail on 13 September 2010 and remains free pending her appeal. Saeed Ha'eri was released on bail in March 2010, and was summoned by telephone to appear before a court on 4 September 2010 on charges of "propaganda against the system" and "gathering and colluding with intent to harm state security. He also remains free, pending an appeal.

Kouhyar Goudarzi was sentenced on or around 2 June 2010 to one year's imprisonment for "spreading propaganda against the system by effective cooperation with the website of the CHRR, gathering and circulating news directed against the system and passing on this news to terrorist organisations based outside the country as well as giving interviews to foreign media and publishing articles on websites." He is held while awaiting the outcome of his appeal.

Judicial officials and pro-government news agencies have accused the CHRR and its members of contacting a banned group, the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI). For example, in January 2010, the Tehran Prosecutor, Abbas Ja'fari Dowlatabadi, told Shiva Nazar Ahari's family in a meeting: "Experts of the case have reported that the website for the Committee is linked to 'hypocrites' (the authorities' term for the PMOI), and any collaboration with the Committee is considered a crime." The CHRR and Shiva Nazar Ahari have strenuously denied these accusations. In a statement published on 29 January 2010, CHRR members stated that "the Ministry of Intelligence, despite full knowledge of the complete independence of CHRR from all political groups, whether domestic or foreign, is trying to falsely link the Committee to political organizations. The claims that the Committee is linked to Mujahedin Khalgh Organization (MKO) is considered nothing but an attempt by Intelligence experts to eliminate a reputable group that has been active in the field of human rights from its conception" (See: <http://chrr.biz/spip.php?article8188>).

In 1998 the UN adopted the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders which, although not legally binding, draws together provisions from other legally binding conventions and covenants most relevant to HRDs. The Declaration sets out the prime responsibility of states to take all necessary steps to ensure the protection of everyone who exercises their right to defend human rights. Amongst other things, the Declaration affirms the rights to defend human rights; to freedom of association; to document human rights abuses; to seek resources for human rights work; to criticize the functioning of government bodies and agencies and to access international protection bodies. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to which Iran is state party guarantees the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly.

Amnesty International is campaigning for the CHRR to be able to carry out its human rights work without fear of reprisals, for all charges faced by CHRR members pertaining to their human rights activities to be dropped. Those held solely for their peaceful human rights work should be released immediately and unconditionally.

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