

RUSSIAN FEDERATION/IRAN Karim Kabiri, age 29

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An Iranian asylum seeker was arrested at Moscow's international airport on 21 February. He now faces forcible deportation to Iran, where he risks being imprisoned and ill-treated.

Karim Kabiri, a 29-year-old affiliated to the Iranian Writers' Association in exile, fled from Iran about six weeks ago after having been arrested several times, reportedly in connection with his political activities and his part in antigovernment student protests. He was reportedly ill-treated and suffered a broken nose in prison.

According to his brother, Karim Kabiri initially fled to Cuba, where his application for political asylum was rejected. He then took a flight to Moscow, and tried to get off the plane when it landed in Ireland to apply for political asylum there. Apparently, he was not allowed to leave the transit zone and was put back on the plane. He was arrested on arrival in Moscow.

Karim Kabiri intended to apply for political asylum in the Russian Federation, but Amnesty International fears that he may have been denied the opportunity to do so. He should not be forcibly returned to Iran before his claim has been properly considered. To forcibly deport him would contravene the Russian Federation's obligations under international law, in particular the principle of *non-refoulement*, as laid out in Article 33 of the 1951 United Nations (UN) Convention on the Status of Refugees, to which the Russian Federation acceded in March 1993.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

It is frequently reported that asylum seekers arriving at Moscow's international airport, Sheremetyevo II, are forcibly returned to their countries of origin before their asylum claims have been considered.

Forcible return of asylum seekers is a clear violation of Article 3 of the UN Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment. It also violates the European Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. The Russian Federation has ratified both these conventions.

Article 63 of the Russian Constitution also provides the right of political asylum in the Russian Federation to avoid persecution at home.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in Russian, English or your own language:**

- urging the Russian authorities not to extradite Karim Kabiri to Iran, where he would be in danger of imprisonment and ill-treatment;
- reminding the Russian authorities that under Russian and international law, they are obliged not to forcibly return anyone without properly considering their applications for asylum;
- asking the Russian authorities to allow Karim Kabiri to apply for asylum.

**APPEALS TO:**

**Please note that it can be difficult to get through to Russian fax numbers, and that fax machines are often switched off outside office hours. Please be patient and keep trying.**

President of the Russian Federation

Vladimir Vladimirovich PUTIN

g. Moskva

Kreml

Prezidentu Rossiyskoy Federatsii

PUTINU V.V.

Russian Federation

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**Salutation: Dear President**

Minister of Internal Affairs

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**Salutation: Dear Minister**

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BLOKHINU A.V.

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**Salutation: Dear Mr Blokhin**

**COPIES TO:**

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Col.-Gen. Konstantin

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Direktoru TOTSKOMU K.

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and to diplomatic representatives of the Russian Federation accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 6 April 2001.