

PUBLIC

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15 January 2009

**Further Information on UA 216/08 (MDE 13/108/2008, 6 August 2008) and follow-up (MDE 13/181/2008, 23 December 2008) - Arbitrary arrest/Unfair trial/Possible prisoner of conscience**

**IRAN Dr Arash Alaei (m), Doctor  
Dr Kamiar Alaei (m), Doctor, brother of Arash Alaei**

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Brothers Arash Alaei and Kamiar Alaei, doctors specializing in the prevention and management of HIV and AIDS, were tried on 31 December in proceedings that did not meet international standards for fair trial. The verdict has yet to be announced, but the Alaei brothers are among the four Iranian citizens mentioned by a spokesperson for the Iranian judiciary on 13 January for their involvement in an attempt to overthrow the government. There is no further information on the two others accused.

The brothers' one-day trial before Tehran's Revolutionary Court fell short of fair trial standards, with the prosecutor withholding some of the charges they faced. The prosecutor also submitted secret evidence the brothers' lawyer did not have the opportunity to examine or refute. The verdict of the trial is expected to be announced in the next few days. The two doctors are known to have been charged under article 508 of Iran's Islamic Penal Code with "cooperating" with an "enemy government," which carries a penalty of between one and 10 years' imprisonment. The other offences they were charged with are not known.

Amnesty international is concerned the charges against Arash and Kamiar Alaei, and the allegations of their involvement in a plot to overthrow the government, are based solely on vaguely-worded national security laws and relate to their internationally recognized work in the field of AIDS prevention and treatment with foreign institutions, and believes they may be prisoners of conscience.

Arash and Kamiar Alaei are known for their work on HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, especially for their work to prevent the spread of HIV among drug users. Both doctors have travelled abroad because of their work. Kamiar Alaei is a doctoral candidate at the State University of New York's Albany School of Public Health and holds a Masters degree in International Health from Harvard University. Earlier this year, the Asia Society, a US-based non-governmental organization, named him as a Fellow, "one of 23 new Fellows identified as being among the most promising trendsetters and emerging leaders in the Asia-Pacific region." Arash Alaei is the former Director of the International Education and Research Cooperation of the Iranian National Research Institute of Tuberculosis and Lung Disease. Neither is known to have been involved in political activities.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Iran's response to HIV/AIDS has been accorded international respect, particularly the preventative measures promoted by Arash and Kamiar Alaei. According to the *2008 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic* published by UNAIDS on 29 July 2008 "the... support for needle exchange projects in countries such as the Islamic Republic of Iran... serve as clear examples of courageous, visionary leadership in the response to HIV". However, the government of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, which took office in August 2005, has started to remove its support for such centres. More information is available at: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/news/iranian-aids-doctors-tried-closed-hearing-20090108>

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

- expressing concern that Dr Arash Alaei and Dr Kamiar Alaei were tried on 31 December in proceedings that fell far short of international fair trial standards, as the charges they faced were not fully disclosed to the two men and their defence, and they did not have the right to call and examine witnesses;
- urging that they be released unless they are tried for internationally recognizable criminal offences in proceedings that meet internationally recognised fair trial standards;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that Dr Arash Alaei and Dr Kamiar Alaei are not tortured or otherwise ill-treated;
- seeking assurances that Iran remains committed to effective treatment and prevention of HIV as promoted by Dr Arash Alaei and Dr Kamiar Alaei.

**APPEALS 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)

**Salutation:** **Your Excellency**

Minister of Intelligence

His Excellency Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejeie  
Ministry of Information  
Second Negarestan Street  
Pasdaran Avenue  
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Salutation:** **Your Excellency**

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 Jomhuri  
Tehran 1316814737, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Email:** [shahroudi@dadgostary-tehran.ir](mailto:shahroudi@dadgostary-tehran.ir) (In the subject line write: **FAO Ayatollah Shahroudi**)

**Salutation:** **Your Excellency**

**COPIES TO:**

Minister of Health and Medical Education

His Excellency Dr Kamran Baqeri Lankarani  
Ministry of Health  
Jomhuri-ye Eslami Avenue  
Hafez Crossing  
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Fax:** **+98 21 8836 4100 (unreliable; please try three times and if it fails please send email)**

**Email:** [Lankarani@mohme.gov.ir](mailto:Lankarani@mohme.gov.ir) / [minister@mohme.gov.ir](mailto:minister@mohme.gov.ir) / [pro@mohme.gov.ir](mailto:pro@mohme.gov.ir)

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 26 February 2009.