

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 13/09/97

6 February 1997

Further information (3) on UA 269/96 (MDE 13/36/96, 20 November 1996) and follow-up (MDE 13/40/96, 23 December 1996; MDE 13/08/97, 31 January 1997) - Fear for safety / Possible Prisoner of conscience

**IRANFaraj Sarkouhi, editor
Isma'il Sarkhouhi, brother of Faraj
Parvin Ardalan, assistant to Faraj (f)**

According to media reports, the Iranian authorities have acknowledged that Faraj Sarkouhi and his brother Isma'il are currently detained in Iran. The two men had reportedly not been contactable since 27 January, and it was feared that they had been arrested. The authorities are reported as saying that the brothers were arrested with two smugglers while trying to leave south western Iran illegally. The time of their alleged arrest is unclear. The German Foreign Ministry is quoted as saying that the Iranian Foreign Minister had informed the German Embassy in Tehran on 3 February that the two brothers had been arrested on 2 February, but a report from the Iranian news agency IRNA on 4 February states that they were arrested late on 3 February in Chaqarak village near Bushehr, and are currently under interrogation. The authorities have not yet clarified the whereabouts of the two men between 27 January and 2 February.

Notwithstanding that illegal departure is a criminal offence in Iran, Amnesty International fears that the real reason for the arrest of Faraj and Isma'il Sarkouhi may be political. If so, and if they have not used or advocated violence as appears to be the case, the organization would consider them to be prisoners of conscience, and would call for their immediate and unconditional release.

No information has been received as to the whereabouts of Parvin Ardalan, who has reportedly not been seen since 24 January 1997. Amnesty International remains concerned about her fate and is continuing to seek urgent clarification of her situation.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express or airmail letters in English, French or in your own language:

- again seeking full details of the legal situation of Faraj Sarkouhi and his brother Isma'il, including any charges against them and any trial proceedings which may take place;
- again seeking urgent clarification of the current whereabouts and legal situation of Parvin Ardalan;
- calling for the immediate and unconditional release of all three if they are held as prisoners of conscience;
- urging that those held should be granted immediate and regular access to family members and doctors and lawyers of their choice;
- seeking assurances that those held are being humanely treated and are protected from torture, ill-treatment, enforced "disappearance" or extrajudicial execution.

APPEALS TO:

1) Leader of the Islamic Republic
His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei
The Presidency, Palestine Avenue
Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Telegrams: Ayatollah Khamenei, Tehran, Iran
Salutation: Your Excellency

2) President

His Excellency Hojjatoleslam
Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani
The Presidency, Palestine Avenue
Azerbaijan Intersection
Tehran, The Islamic Republic of Iran
Telegrams: President Rafsanjani, Tehran, Iran
Salutation: Your Excellency

3) Head of the Judiciary

His Excellency Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi
Ministry of Justice
Park-e Shahr, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Telegrams: Head of the Judiciary, Tehran, Iran
Fax: +98-21-6465242
Salutation: Your Excellency

4) Minister of Information

His Excellency Hojjatoleslam Ali Fallahian
Ministry of Information
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Telegrams: Information Minister, Tehran, Iran
Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

Minister of Foreign Affairs

His Excellency Dr Ali Akbar Velayati
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Abdolmajid Keshk-e Mesri Avenue
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
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Chairman of the Islamic Consultative Assembly's Human Rights Committee,
Imam Khomeini Avenue, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Mr Hussain Farahi, Secretary, Islamic Human Rights Committee,
PO Box 13165-137, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

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 20 March 1997.