

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 13/13/99

UA 141/99

Fear for

IRANHeshmatollah Tabarzadi, age 39, journalist
Hossein Kashani, journalist

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Heshmatollah Tabarzadi, editor-in-chief of the weekly newsletter *Hoveyat-e-Khish* (Our Identity), and Hossein Kashani, its director, who have been arrested after questioning about publishing information contrary to "public order and the public interest".

On 16 June 1999, Hossein Kashani was summoned to a tribunal at the office of the revolutionary prosecutor, in Evin prison, and arrested after questioning. Heshmatollah Tabarzadi was called to the same office for questioning the following day, and was also arrested. They have both been detained in Evin prison since then, and have not been granted access to family or legal representation. The precise charges brought against them are not clear and have not been officially announced.

Before Hossein Kashani was arrested the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance issued a statement saying that it intended to charge *Hoveyat-e-Khish* with publishing "deceitful and offensive" articles. Heshmatollah Tabarzadi gave a radio interview the day before his arrest, in which he reportedly criticised aspects of government policy. He also reportedly criticised President Khatami's position on the arrest of at least 13 people, thought to include Iranian Jews, rabbis and religious teachers, who have been charged with espionage and spying for the USA and Israel (see UA 133/99, MDE 13/11/99, 8 June 1999).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Hoveyat-e-Khish has only published three issues to date. Heshmatollah Tabarzadi was previously the editor of the student newsletter *Payam-e Daneshjou* (Students' Message), which was banned after complaints from a number of government officials. In 1998, shortly after he had reportedly criticised the Iranian leadership in *Payam-e Daneshjou*, he was attacked and beaten by a group of unknown men who raided the office of the Islamic Students' Association. He is now the president of the Association as well as the editor-in-chief of *Hoveyat-e-Khish*.

On 25 May 1999, shortly before he was scheduled to speak at a protest rally at Tehran University, student activist Manuchehr Mohammadi was attacked and driven off in a car by five unknown men. Gholamreza Mohajeri-Nezhad, another student leader, was also detained on 30 May. They were released at the beginning of June, but a number of people who attended the rally are said to be still in fear for their safety (see UA MDE 13/09/99, 26 May 1999 and UA MDE 13/12/99, 11 June 1999).

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

- seeking urgent clarification from the authorities of the exact charges which have been brought against Hossein Kashani and Heshmatollah Tabarzadi;
- seeking assurances that they will be allowed access to family and legal representation of their choice;
- urging the authorities to take concrete measures to guarantee the security of all other students activists and government critics believed to be at risk.

APPEALS TO:

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

President

His Excellency
Hojjatoleslam val Moslemin Sayed Mohammad Khatami
The Presidency, Palestine Avenue
Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, The Islamic Republic of Iran
Telegrams: President Khatami, Tehran, Iran
Salutation: Your Excellency

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
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of the Interior

His Excellency Moussavi Lari
Ministry of the Interior
Dr Fatemi Avenue
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Telegrams: Interior Minister, Tehran, Iran
Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

Minister of Foreign Affairs

His Excellency Kamal Kharrazi
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Sheikh Abdolmajid Keshk-e Mesri Avenue
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Mr Mohammad Hassan Zia'i-Far

Secretary, Islamic Human Rights Commission
PO Box 13165-137
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Faxes: + 98 21 204 0541

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 3 August 1999.