UA 173/03   <u>**Prisoners of conscience /Incommunicado detention/ fear of torture or ill-treatment**</u>

IRAN   **Mohsen Sazegara (m), aged 48, journalist**
                 Vahid Sazegara (m), aged 22, his son, student

Journalist Mohsen Sazegara and his son Vahid Sazegara, a student, are being held incommunicado at an unknown location and may be at risk of torture or ill-treatment by security forces. Amnesty International believes them to be prisoners of conscience, arrested solely for the peaceful expression of their conscientiously held beliefs.

Mohsen and Vahid Sazegara were arrested at their home in the capital Tehran on 15 June. Following their arrest, their family home was searched and the sum of 700 US dollars was reportedly confiscated by the authorities.

Mohsen Sazegara has been an outspoken critic of the Iranian authorities for several years. In 2002 he launched a newspaper, *Golestan-e-Iran*, which was closed down after a few editions. In February 2003, Mohsen Sazegara was held for five days at Tehran's Evin prison after he had published an article called "First step, last talk" on his website *All Iran* in which he called for a "profound change of the constitution". On 7 June, Mohsen Sazegara was told by the authorities that he was no longer allowed to speak to Farsi-language media based abroad or to travel outside the country. The following day, when he attempted to fly from Tehran to London**,** his passport was confiscated at Tehran airport.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION
Amnesty International has for many years documented a catalogue of arbitrary arrests, prolonged and often incommunicado detention, followed in many cases by unfair trials. Vague laws relating to security and defamation have often been used in cases against those who may have expressed dissatisfaction with the government, or those who are known to have political affiliations considered unacceptable by the authorities.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Persian, English, French or your own language:
- expressing concern for the safety of Mohsen Sazegara and Vahid Sazegara, who were detained on 15 June;
- seeking urgent clarification of their whereabouts, and calling on the authorities to ensure they are treated humanely;
- asking why the two men have been detained and details of the charges against them;
- seeking assurance that the two men will be granted immediate access to their families, legal representation of their choice and any medical treatment that they might need;
- calling for their immediate and unconditional release as prisoners of conscience, detained solely for the peaceful expression of their conscientiously held beliefs.

APPEALS TO:
<u>Leader of the Islamic Republic</u>
His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed >Ali Khamenei,
The Presidency, Palestine Avenue,
Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
E-mail: **webmaster@wilayah.org (on the subject line write: For the attention of the office of His Excellency, Ayatollah al Udhma Khamenei, Qom)**
Salutation: Your Excellency

<u>President</u>
His Excellency Hojjatoleslam val Moslemin Sayed Mohammad Khatami
The Presidency, Palestine Avenue
Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
E-mail: **khatami@president.ir (please resend your message if it does not get through the first time)**
Salutation: **Your Excellency**

<u>Head of the Judiciary</u>
His Excellency Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahrudi
Ministry of Justice, Park-e Shahr, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Fax: **+ 98 21 879 6671 (please keep trying; please mark "care of Director of International Affairs, Judiciary")**
Salutation: **Your Excellency**

COPIES TO:
<u>Minister of Foreign Affairs,</u>
His Excellency Kamal Kharrazi
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Abdolmajid Keshk-e Mesri Av
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Fax: **+ 98 21 390 1999 (please keep trying; please mark "care of the Human Rights Department, Foreign Ministry)**

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 30 July 2003.