

URGENT ACTION

RIGHTS DEFENDERS PRESSURED TO “CONFESS”

Seven members of an Iranian human rights organization, the Committee of Human Rights Reporters, are being held in detention in Tehran. They are under pressure to “confess” to links with a banned opposition group, in which case they might face charges which can carry the death penalty. Three of the seven were among those arrested on a bus on its way to the funeral of a dissident cleric in December.

Seven members of the Committee of Human Rights Reporters (CHRR) have been detained since 30 November 2009 and are currently held in Evin Prison, Tehran. At least two of them, **Kouhyar Goudarzi** and **Mehrdad Rahimi**, have been accused of *moharebeh* (being at enmity with God), which can carry the death penalty, although they are not known to have been formally charged.

The CHRR has reported on human rights violations in Iran since 2006. The authorities have accused the CHRR of having links with the banned opposition group, the People’s Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI), which the CHRR denies. Mehrdad Rahimi told his family during a visit on 28 January that he was under pressure to make a televised “confession”. Amnesty International fears that any such “confessions” would pave the way to anyone involved with the CHRR being charged with *moharebeh*, which could put them at risk of execution.

The other five CHRR activists in Evin prison are **Shiva Nazar Ahari**, **Saeed Kalanaki**, **Saeed Jalalifer**, **Saeed Haeri** and **Parisa Kakaei**. Shiva Nazar Ahari is held in solitary confinement. All are at risk of torture or other ill-treatment. They have all been denied access to a lawyer since their arrests. Two other members of the CHRR are in hiding.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Persian, English, Arabic, French, or your own language:

- Calling on the Iranian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release the seven members of the CHRR, Kouhyar Goudarzi, Mehrdad Rahimi, Saeed Kalanaki, Saeed Jalalifar, Saeed Haeri, Parisa Kakaei, Shiva Nazar Ahari, as they are prisoners of conscience held solely for their peaceful human rights activities;
- Urging the authorities to ensure that they are protected from torture and other ill-treatment and are granted immediate and regular access to a lawyer, their families and any medical treatment they might require;
- Reminding the authorities that confessions extracted under duress are prohibited under Article 38 of the Constitution of Iran and by Article 14(g) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Iran is a state party.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 19 MARCH 2010 TO:

Leader of the Islamic Republic

Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei
The Office of the Supreme Leader
Islamic Republic Street – End of
Shahid Keshvar Doust Street, Tehran,
Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: info_leader@leader.ir

via website:

<http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/index.php?p=letter>
(English)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary in Tehran

Mr Ali Reza Avaei
Karimkhan Zand Avenue
Sana'i Avenue, Corner of Ally 17, No
152
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: avaei@Dadgostary-tehran.ir

Salutation: Dear Mr Avaei

And copies to:

Director, Human Rights Headquarters
of Iran

His Excellency Mohammad Javad
Larijani
Bureau of International Affairs, Office
of the Head of the Judiciary, Pasteur
St., Vali Asr Ave. south of Serah-e
Jomhuri, Tehran 1316814737,
Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: bia.judi@yahoo.com

Fax: + 98 21 5 537 8827 (please keep
trying)

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The CHRR was founded in 2006 and campaigns against all kinds of human rights violations, including against women, children, prisoners, workers and others. On or around 21 January, Abbas Ja'fari Dowlatabadi, the Tehran prosecutor told Shiva Nazar Ahari's family in a meeting that: *“Experts of the case have reported that the website for the Committee is linked to “hypocrites” (the Iranian authorities' name for the PMOI), and any collaboration with the Committee is considered a crime.”* In January 2010, a CHRR member currently in hiding wrote to Amnesty International. *“I am writing to you from a place of hiding since I have been summoned for my activities with the CHRR. We work to publicize human rights concerns, not political matters. With my friends and colleagues imprisoned, it is not long before they will succeed in closing the CHRR. But we will not stop our activities because of threats and arrests, we are human rights reporters and this is our mission.”*

Saeed Kalanaki and Saeed Jalalifar were both arrested on 30 November 2009 and are being held in a public section of Evin prison. Saeed Kalanaki was arrested in his office by plainclothes security officials. He was taken to his home, which was searched and some of his personal belongings were seized, including his computer and a collection of photographs. Both men were forced to telephone two other CHRR members urging them to close the CHRR website. During the exchange, interrogators took the telephone away from them and threatened the other CHRR activists, telling them that if they did not stop posting information, they would be dealt with “either within prison or outside”. Saeed Jalalifar was allowed a family visit on 31 December.

Saeed Haeri, Kouhyar Goudarzi and Shiva Nazar Ahari were arrested on 20 December by police officers and officials from the Ministry of Intelligence in Tehran. They were taken from a bus which was about to drive to the northern city of Qom, where the funeral of Grand Ayatollah Montazeri took place on 21 December. They are held in Section 209 of Evin prison, which is under the control of the Ministry of Intelligence. Shiva Nazar Ahari, who also spent three months in detention after the 2009 June election, is in solitary confinement (see also <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/132/2009/en>). Another two people were arrested on the same bus on their way to the funeral in December: Ahmad Qabel and Mohammad Nourizad. Ahmad Qabel was reported to be on hunger strike in January and has had no contact with his family since his arrest. Amnesty International has no information about where or how Mohammad Nourizad is.

Following the telephone threats the Ministry of Intelligence summoned four members of the CHRR to their offices in central Tehran on 1 January. Parisa Kakaei and Mehrdad Rahimi presented themselves and were immediately arrested. On 2 January, Parisa Kakaei was permitted to call her family from Section 209 and confirmed her detention. Mehrdad Rahimi is a student activist and deputy head of the Committee for Defence of the Rights of Citizens in the central office of Mehdi Karubi.

Moharebeh (being at enmity with God) often applied to those who wage armed struggle against the state or who are members of banned opposition groups. It can be punishable by one of four methods: execution, cross-amputation, crucifixion or banishment (usually imprisonment in internal exile).

Since the disputed presidential election in June 2009, dozens of people have been killed by security forces using excessive force, thousands have been arrested, mostly arbitrarily and many have been tortured or otherwise ill-treated. Scores have faced unfair trial, including some in mass “show trials”, with over 80 sentenced to prison terms, and at least 12 sentenced to death, although at least one has had his sentence commuted to a prison term. Two of these were executed on 28 January. According to Iranian media reports, Deputy Judiciary Head Ebrahim Raisi said on 1 February that, after the execution of two men last week, the nine others will be executed “soon”, although on 3 February Tehran Prosecutor Abbas Ja'fari Dowlatabadi clarified that their sentences were still subject to appeal. Those sentenced have not been given a fair trial; they were denied access to a lawyer in the initial stages of their detention, and some or all appear to have been coerced into giving confessions (see <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/news/shocking-execution-iran-protesters-condemned-20100128> and <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/news/nine-risk-execution-over-iran-protests-20100202>)

This is the first update of UA 347/09 (MDE 13/132/2009). For more information:
<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/132/2009/en>

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