

PUBLIC

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Further Information on UA 52/07 (MDE 13/021/2007, 5 March 2007) - Prisoners of conscience/Ill-treatment

IRAN Mahboubeh Abbasgholizadeh (f), editor]
 Zhila Bani Ya'qoub (f), journalist] women human rights defenders
 Shadi Sadr (f), lawyer]

Released: 30 women

All but three of the 33 women arrested during a protest in the capital, Tehran, on 4 March have been released. The remaining detainees, Mahboubeh Abbasgholizadeh, Zhila Bani Ya'qoub and Shadi Sadr, have apparently been accused of organizing the protest. Amnesty International considers the three women to be prisoners of conscience, detained solely for the peaceful exercise of their rights to freedom of expression and association.

Eight of the younger detainees were released on 6 March: Niloufar Golkar, Parastoo Dokuhaki, Nahid Entesari, Saqi Lagha'i, Sagher Lagha'i, Sara Imanian, Farideh Entesari, and Parastoo Sarmadi. A further seven were released in the afternoon on 7 March: Maryam Mirza, Nahid Ja'fari, Azadeh Forghani, Zeinab Peyghambarzadeh, Somayeh Farid, Sara Loghmani, and Nahid Keshavarz. Fifteen others were released at about 2am on 8 March: Shahla Entesari, Noushin Ahmadi Khorassani, Sussan Tahmasebi, Parvin Ardalan, Elnaz Ansari, Mahboubeh Hosseinzadeh, Maryam Hosseinkhah, Marzieh Mortazi Langaroudi, Fatemeh Govara'i, Asieh Amini, Jelveh Javaheri, Zara Amjadian, Nasrin Afzali, Mahnaz Mohammadi and Rezvan Moghaddam.

The women were protesting about the trial of five women's rights activists (Fariba Davoodi Mohajer, Shahla Entesari, Noushin Ahmadi Khorassani, Parvin Ardalan and Sussan Tahmasebi) in Branch 6 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran on charges of "propaganda against the system", "acting against national security" and "participating in an illegal demonstration." The charges relate to their involvement in a peaceful demonstration on 12 June 2006 which demanded equal rights in law for women in Iran. The protest was forcibly broken up by security forces, who arrested at least 70 people.

Of the three women still held, Mahboubeh Abbasgholizadeh is the editor of the *Zanan* (Women) quarterly journal and is a key member of the "Stop Stoning Forever" Campaign, launched in September 2006 to end the practice of stoning to death in Iran. She has also served as the director of the NGO Training Center, an organization aimed at strengthening civil society. In November 2004, Mahboubeh Abbasgholizadeh was detained by security forces for over a month in connection with her human rights activities (see UA 306/04, MDE 13/046/2004, 11 November 2004). Zhila Bani Ya'qoub, a journalist, was tried in January 2007 and acquitted of the charge of participating in an illegal demonstration relating to the demonstration on 12 June 2006. Shadi Sadr, a lawyer and journalist, is the director of *Raahi*, a legal advice centre for women. She founded *Zanan-e Iran* (Women of Iran), the first website dedicated to the work of Iranian women's rights activists (<http://www.raahi.org>) and she has written extensively about Iranian women and their legal rights. She has represented activists and journalists and has represented several women sentenced to execution, whose convictions were subsequently overturned.

According to reports, a demonstration for women's rights held in front of Iran's parliament on 8 March, International Women's day, was forcibly broken up by security forces, who are said to have injured several women. The arrests of 4 March may have been an attempt by the Iranian authorities to prevent this event from happening.

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

- welcoming the release of 30 of those detained on 4 March during a peaceful demonstration outside Branch 6 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran, but expressing concern at the continued

detention of Mahboubeh Abbasgholizadeh, Zhila Bani Ya'qoub and Shadi Sadr;
- calling for their immediate and unconditional release as they are held solely for the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression and association;
- calling for all of those detained to be granted immediate and regular access to their families, lawyers and to any necessary medical treatment;
- calling for all charges to be dropped against anyone in connection with the peaceful demonstration on 12 June 2006 which called for an end to legal discrimination against women in Iran, or in connection with the peaceful protest on 4 March 2007.

APPEALS TO:

Leader of the Islamic Republic

Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei,
Leader of the Islamic Republic

The Office of the Supreme Leader, Shahid Keshvar Doost Street, Tehran. Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: +98 251 7774 2228 (mark "For the Office of His Excellency, Ayatollah Khamenei")

Email: Via website, in English: <http://www.leader.ir/langs/EN/index.php?p=sendletter>

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Intelligence

Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejeie

Ministry of Intelligence, Second Negarestan Street, Pasdaran Avenue, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: iranprobe@iranprobe.com

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

President:

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

The Presidency, Palestine Avenue, Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: Via foreign affairs: +98 21 6 674 790 and ask to be forwarded to H.E Ahmadinejad

Email: dr-ahmadinejad@president.ir

via website: www.president.ir/email

Salutation: His Excellency

Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi

Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Justice Building, Panzdah-Khordad Square, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: + 98 21 3390 4986 (please keep trying; send appeals by post or email if you cannot get through)

Email: info@dadgostary-tehran.ir (In the subject line write: For the attention of Ayatollah Shahroudi)

Salutation: His Excellency

Speaker of Parliament

His Excellency Gholamali Haddad Adel

Majles-e Shoura-ye Eslami, Baharestan Square, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: + 98 21 3355 6408

Email: hadadadel@majlis.ir

Salutation: Dear Sir

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 19 April 2007.*****