

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 13/027/2003

07 August 2003

Further Information on UA 171/03 (MDE 13/013/2003, 17 June 2003) "Disappearance"/possible forcible return/incommunicado detention/ fear of torture or ill-treatment

IRAN/ SYRIA/ UNITED KINGDOM	Ebrahim Khodabandeh (m), aged 50 Jamil Bassam (m), aged 49] Iranian refugees]
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The Iranian authorities have reportedly confirmed that Ebrahim Khodabandeh and Jamil Bassam are in detention in Iran. The two men are detained incommunicado at an unknown location and remain at risk of torture or ill-treatment.

Ebrahim Khodabandeh and Jamil Bassam, members of the opposition group, the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) were reportedly arrested by security forces on 18 April, while on a visit to Syria. According to a press statement issued by the NCRI from their offices in Paris, the two men were "tortured and harassed" while in detention in Syria. On 12 June they were reportedly forcibly returned to Iran and detained by Iranian intelligence officers. Their whereabouts have remained unconfirmed since their arrest.

The two men had been given rights of residency in the United Kingdom (UK) after being granted refugee status around 1980. Amnesty International has learned that on 3 June 2003, the UK government's Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) told a UK parliamentarian that it had raised concerns on the case with the Syrian government. On 25 July, the FCO told the same parliamentarian that it had received confirmation that Ebrahim Khodabandeh and Jamil Bassam were being held in Iran pending trial. No details are known about any charges faced by the men, or when their trial is scheduled to take place.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) is an umbrella organization of groups opposed to the current government in Iran. Its largest member is the People's Mojahedin of Iran (PMOI), an armed organization based in Iraq, which is illegal in Iran. It has also been banned in the European Union and The United States of America, which consider the PMOI to be a "terrorist" organization.

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

- calling on the authorities to reveal publicly the whereabouts of Ebrahim Khodabandeh and Jamil Bassam;
- calling for their immediate release and return to the UK, where they have rights of residency, unless they are to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence;
- urging that they will be treated humanely and not subjected to torture or ill-treatment;
- seeking assurances that they will be given immediate and unconditional access to their family, legal representation, and any medical treatment they may require.

APPEALS TO:

President of the Islamic Republic of Iran
His Excellency Hojjatoleslam val Moslemin Sayed Mohammad Khatami
The Presidency, Palestine Avenue

Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Telegram: His Excellency Hojjatoleslam val Moslemin Sayed Mohammad Khatami, 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

COPIES 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 September 2003.