

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 13/34/00

18 December 2000

Further information on UA 103/00 (MDE 13/20/00; 3 May 2000) and follow-up (MDE 13/16/00, 6 July 2000) - Prisoners of Conscience;

New concern: Medical Concern

IRAN

**Mehrangiz Kar (f), lawyer and women's rights activist
Shahla Lahiji (f), publisher
Ali Afshari (m), student representative**

Mehrangiz Kar, who is on trial in connection with her participation at a social and cultural conference in Berlin, in April 2000, has reportedly been denied permission to seek urgent medical attention outside Iran.

Following her release on bail on 21 June 2000, after approximately two months' detention, Mehrangiz Kar was diagnosed with breast cancer. She has reportedly undergone a mastectomy and a course of chemotherapy in Iran but reportedly now requires urgent medical treatment overseas.

Mehrangiz Kar, Shahla Lahiji and at least 14 others have been, or are currently being, tried, often in closed sessions, on vaguely worded charges relating to "acting against national security" in connection with their participation in and speeches at the conference. If imprisoned, those on trial will be considered prisoners of conscience.

Mehrangiz Kar, who is a women's and human rights activist, reportedly now faces new charges relating "violating observance of Islamic *hejab*" (regulations regarding women's dress in public) and "[disseminating] propaganda against the Islamic Republic of Iran".

On Sunday 17 December, Ali Afshari, a member of the student group, *Daftar-e Tahkim-e Vahdat* (Office for Strengthening Unity) was detained in connection with statements he reportedly made at a students' meeting at Amir Kabir University, Tehran in November 2000. At the meeting, he reportedly called for reforms to the system of governance in Iran.

Ali Afshari, was previously detained in April and released on bail on 25 July. He is also on trial in connection with his participation at the conference in Berlin and has reportedly stated in court that he has been kept from meeting with his lawyer and has requested that a jury be present at his trial.

Shahla Lahiji was released on bail with Mehrangiz Kar on 21 June and has been on trial along with other individuals involved with the conference in Berlin. No verdicts have been announced in those trials which have concluded.

These and other trials of journalists and commentators reflect the ongoing clampdown by judicial officials on freedom of expression in Iran.

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

- urging the authorities to allow Mehrangiz Kar to seek medical treatment overseas as and when required;
- seeking clarification concerning the reasons why Ali Afshari has been re-arrested and what additional charges he now faces;

- asking to be told what specific charges the three face in connection with their involvement at the Berlin conference;
- urging the authorities to allow them unrestricted access to lawyers of their choice and adequate time to prepare their defence;
- noting that Amnesty International considers Ali Afshari a prisoner of conscience, detained for the non-violent expression of his conscientiously held beliefs and that Mehrangiz Kar and Shahla Lahiji, former prisoners of conscience, will once again be considered prisoners of conscience if imprisoned in connection with their involvement at the Berlin conference.

APPEALS TO:

1)President

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

2)Head of Judiciary

His Excellency Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi-Shahrudi
 Ministry of Justice, Park-e Shahr,
 Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Telegrams: Head of the Judiciary, Tehran, Iran
Salutation: Your Excellency

3) Head, Judicial & Legal Affairs Committee

Majles-e Shura-ye Eslami
 Imam Khomeini Avenue
 Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Telegrams: Majles, Tehran
Telex: 21 42 32 ICAI IR
 Fax: +98.21.646 1746 (occasionally difficult to reach, please be patient)

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 29 January 2001.