

URGENT ACTION

JOURNALIST BROTHERS DETAINED

Brothers Khosro and Masoud Kordpour, both journalists and from Iran's Kurdish minority, were arrested in March 2013 and later charged with vaguely worded national security offences. They are currently held in Mahabad Central Prison. Their last court hearing is due to be held on 28 October.

Khosro Kordpour, the manager of the Mukrian News Agency, an online news agency reporting on human rights violations in the Kordestan province, and his brother **Masoud Kordpour**, a freelance journalist, have been charged with the vaguely worded offences of "gathering and colluding against national security", "insulting the Supreme Leader", "spreading propaganda against the system" and "spreading lies in order to disturb the public opinion" in relation to their criticism of the authorities through their reporting and interviews they have given. Khosro Kordpour is also facing the additional charges of "enmity against God" (*moharebeh*) and "corruption on earth" (*ifsad fil-arz*) which can carry the death penalty. According to the response of the Iranian government to the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran, they have been accused of cooperating with terrorist groups.

Both men were officially informed of the charges against them on 26 June 2013. They did not have access to a lawyer during their first four months in detention. Their first court hearing was held on 5 August before Branch 1 of the Revolutionary Court of Mahabad in the north-western province of Kordestan. The court acquitted both men of "propaganda against the system" and "insulting the Supreme Leader" and disqualified itself from investigating the charge of "spreading lies in order to disturb the public opinion" stating that the Press Court would be the competent body to investigate the latter charge. Amnesty International understands that the evidence brought against both men is mainly based on reports by the Ministry of Intelligence and is chiefly related to their activities as journalists, including giving interviews to the media outside Iran on the human rights situation in the Kordestan province.

Please write immediately in Persian, Arabic, English, or your own language:

- Calling on the Iranian authorities to drop the charges against Khosro and Masoud Kordpour as they appear to be linked to the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression;
- Urging them to allow the men regular visits from their family and lawyers of their own choosing;
- Calling on them to ensure that the men are protected from torture and other ill-treatment and are granted any medical attention they may require.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 5 DECEMBER 2013 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
Twitter: @khamenei_ir
Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani
c/o Public Relations Office
Number 4, 2 Azizi Street intersection
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: info@dadiran.ir (Subject line: FAO
Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani)
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Secretary General High Council for
Human Rights
Mohammed Javad Larijani
c/o Office of the Head of the Judiciary
Pasteur St, Vali Asr Ave
South of Serah-e Jomhouri
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: larijani@ipm.ir (Subject line: FAO
Mohammad Javad Larijani)

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Khosro Kordpour, the manager of the Mukrian News Agency, was arrested on 9 March 2013 in Mahabad, Kordestan. The security forces searched his home and removed some of his possessions. Two days later, they arrested his brother, Masoud Kordpour, when he visited the Mahabad office of the Ministry of Intelligence to seek information about the arrest and detention of Khosro Kordpour.

Both brothers were taken to a Revolutionary Guards detention centre in the city of Orumiyeh, north-west of Iran, on 16 March, where it is believed they were held in solitary confinement. Despite repeated inquiries, the families of both men were unable to obtain information about their whereabouts until 2 May, when they were permitted to visit them. The brothers told their relatives that those who had arrested them had given no reason. Khosro Kordpour started a hunger strike on 19 April, in protest at being denied access to his lawyer. He ended his hunger strike on 13 May at the request of his family and friends and after he was transferred from solitary confinement to a cell with other detainees. On 26 June, they were transferred to Mahabad Central Prison.

Journalists expressing views contrary to those of the authorities have long been persecuted in Iran. In recent years, dozens have been harassed, detained and imprisoned after unfair trials. A number of journalists imprisoned because of their non-violent professional activities in the run-up to and aftermath of the June 2009 Presidential election have not yet been released. In his October 2013 report, Ahmed Shaheed, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran expressed concern about the arrest of Khosro and Masoud Kordpour. According to his report, at least 40 journalists as well as 29 bloggers and online activists are currently serving prison terms in Iran.

Iran's Kurdish minority live mainly in the west and north-west of the country. They experience discrimination in the enjoyment of their religious, economic and cultural rights. Parents are banned from registering their babies with certain Kurdish names, and religious minorities that are mainly or partially Kurdish are targeted by measures designed to stigmatize and isolate them. Kurds are also discriminated against in their access to employment, adequate housing and political rights, and so suffer entrenched poverty, which has further marginalized them. Kurdish human rights defenders, community activists and journalists often face arbitrary arrest and prosecution. Others - including some political activists - suffer torture, grossly unfair trials before Revolutionary Courts and, in some cases, the death penalty.

In its concluding observations in May 2013, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed concern that ethnic minorities in Iran including Kurds, Arabs, Azerbaijanis and Baluchis, face discriminatory procedures which impact on their equal enjoyment of their rights to cultural life as well as to employment and education.

Iran is a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 27 of which states: "In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language." In September 2010, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), in its concluding observations, urged the Iranian authorities to "take the necessary steps to achieve effective protection from discrimination against, inter alia, Arab, Azeri, Balochi and Kurdish communities and some communities of non-citizens... in various domains, in particular, employment, housing, health, education and freedom of expression and religion".

For more information on human rights violations against the Kurdish minority in Iran, see: *Iran: Human rights abuses against the Kurdish minority*, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE13/088/2008/en/d140767b-5e45-11dd-a592-c739f9b70de8/mde130882008eng.pdf>

Name: Khosro Kordpour, Masoud Kordpour
Gender m/f: m

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