

PUBLIC

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UA 123/06 incommunicado detention/ fear for safety/possible prisoner of conscience

IRAN Ramin Jahanbegloo (m), academic, joint Canadian/Iranian national

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Academic Ramin Jahanbegloo, who has joint Iranian and Canadian citizenship, was arrested on 27 April at Tehran's Mehrabad Airport. He is now believed to be held incommunicado in Evin Prison, in Tehran, where he is at risk of torture or ill-treatment. There are unconfirmed reports that he is being held in the hospital wing. He may be a prisoner of conscience, detained solely on account of the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression.

Despite Iran's continuing poor record on human rights, the heightened international tension over Iran's nuclear programme has led to a reduction in international attention to this issue. As a result, the scope for Iranian civil society activists is becoming increasingly restricted, and there are fears that other journalists and intellectuals could be at risk.

The Canadian government is believed to be making representations on his behalf. However, Zahra Kazemi, another Canadian-Iranian national, died in custody in hospital in June 2003 allegedly as a result of torture after being detained in Evin Prison. To date, no one has been brought to justice in connection with her death. For more information see *An independent inquiry must be opened into the death of Zahra Kazemi*, AI Index MDE 13/022/2003, 15 July 2003. It can be viewed at:

<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGMDE130222003?open&of=ENG-IRN>

And: *Only an independent investigative body can serve justice and human rights*, AI Index MDE 13/026/2003, 1 August 2003, which can be viewed at:

<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGMDE130222003?open&of=ENG-IRN>

and *Zahra Kazemi case - justice must be served. Amnesty International welcomes the announcement of a new investigation, but renews its calls for a fully independent investigation*, AI Index: MDE 13/070/2005 17 November 2005, <http://web.amnesty.org/library/eng-irn/index&start=31>

The day after Ramin Jahanbegloo was arrested, Canadian Foreign Ministry officials confirmed that an Iranian-Canadian professor had been detained, without naming him. On 3 May the Deputy Prosecutor of Tehran, in an interview with the state-controlled Iranian Students' News Agency (ISNA), confirmed that Ramin Jahanbegloo was being held in Evin Prison. The Director of the Prison Service in Tehran gave the same information to the Iranian Fars news agency. Neither official gave a reason for the arrest.

The reasons for Ramin Jahanbegloo's arrest are still unclear, although Fars stated that, according to an anonymous source, he had been arrested on security grounds and was accused of espionage. On 4 May the Iranian newspaper *Keyhan*, which is believed to have close links to the authorities, alleged that he had links to monarchist and other opposition groups.

Ramin Jahanbegloo, who is said to be in his forties, is the Head of the Department of Contemporary Studies at the privately-run Cultural Research Bureau in Tehran. The author of over 20 books in Persian, English and French on philosophy and current affairs in Iran, he is also a frequent contributor to international newspapers and journals in which he comments on Iranian affairs. His personal website, the front page of which has been removed, apparently since he was arrested, can be viewed at <http://www.iranproject.info/topfram.htm>.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Fundamental flaws in the administration of justice in Iran facilitate the targeting and harassment of intellectuals, journalists and other human rights defenders. The Penal Code contains a number of vaguely-worded provisions relating to association and "national security" which prohibit a range of activities, including many connected with journalism or public discourse which are permitted under international human rights law. Detainees are often held for weeks or months without access to their families, and are frequently denied access to a lawyer of their choice until the period of interrogation, which has no limits, is completed.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Ramin Jahanbegloo, who is detained incommunicado in Evin prison;
- seeking assurances that he is not being tortured or ill-treated;
- seeking full details of the reasons for his arrest, including any charges that may have been brought against him;
- calling on the authorities to release him immediately and unconditionally if he is not to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence and given a prompt and fair trial.

**APPEALS TO:**

Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic

His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei  
The Office of the Supreme Leader  
Shoahada Street, Qom, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Email:** [info@leader.ir](mailto:info@leader.ir)  
[istiftaa@wilayah.org](mailto:istiftaa@wilayah.org)

Head of the Judiciary

His Excellency  
Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi  
Ministry of Justice, Park-e Shahr,  
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Email:** [via Judiciary website: Iranjudiciary.org/feedback\\_en.html](http://Iranjudiciary.org/feedback_en.html)  
**Salutation:** Your Excellency

**COPIES TO:**

President

His Excellency Mahmoud Ahmadinejad  
The Presidency, Palestine Avenue, Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Fax:** **Via Foreign Ministry: +98 21 6 674 790 (mark: "Please forward to H.E. President Ahmadinejad")**

**Email:** [dr-ahmadinejad@president.ir](mailto:dr-ahmadinejad@president.ir)  
**via website:** [www.president.ir/email](http://www.president.ir/email)

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 16 June 2006.