

PUBLIC

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14 April 2008

Further Information on UA 297/07 (MDE 13/130/2007, 7 November 2007) Prisoners of Conscience/Fear of Torture or other ill-treatment

IRAN **Ronak Safarzadeh (f)**
Hana Abdi (f), aged 21, student

Women's rights activist Ronak Safarzadeh's trial began on or around 13 March, in a session her lawyer attended, where the charges against her were set out. She is accused of being *mohareb* (at enmity with God), which can carry the death penalty. No further court dates have been announced.

In December 2007 an investigating judge, quoted by the Iranian news agency IRNA, said that she had been "arrested for acting against national security by taking part in attacks in [the north western town of] Sanandaj, and for being a member of the [Kurdish armed opposition group] PJAK". Her lawyer has said the allegations are baseless and Ronak Safarzadeh's "confessions" were extracted under duress during three months that she spent in solitary confinement at a detention facility run by the Ministry of Intelligence in Sanandaj, and were therefore inadmissible in court.

Hana Abdi, like Ronak Safarzadeh, spent the first three months of her imprisonment in solitary confinement in a detention facility run by the Ministry of Intelligence, and is now detained at the women's section of Sanandaj prison. She has been charged under Article 498 of Iran's Penal Code, which states that anyone who joins a group of more than two persons with the objective of "disrupting Iran's security" will be sentenced to between two and 10 years' imprisonment. The investigators have only recently passed her file to the court, and no trial date has yet been set.

Both women are active members of the Campaign for Equality, which is seeking an end to legalised discrimination against women, and of the NGO Azar Mehr Women's Organization of Sanandaj, which is affiliated to the Campaign for Equality.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Dozens of activists and supporters have been arrested in connection with their activities for the Campaign for Equality, some while collecting signatures for the petition aiming to end legal discrimination against women in Iran. The authorities have frequently refused permission to hold public meetings, and Campaign for Equality activists usually hold their meetings in the homes of sympathizers. The Campaign's website was blocked by the authorities at least seven times (see: <http://www.change4equality.com>).

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

- asking what exactly Ronak Safarzadeh and Hana Abdi have been charged with and when and before which courts they are expected to be brought to trial;
- urging that both Ronak Safarzadeh and Hana Abdi are released immediately and unconditionally if they are prisoners of conscience, detained solely for their peaceful activities in support of equal rights for women in Iran;
- reminding the authorities that they are obliged to ensure that Ronak Safarzadeh and Hana Abdi are not ill-treated in custody.

APPEALS TO:Head of the Judiciary

His Excellency Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi

Howzeh Riyasat-e Qoveh Qazaiyeh / Office of the Head of the Judiciary

Pasteur St., Vali Asr Ave., south of Serah-e Jomhouri, Tehran 1316814737, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: info@dadgostary-tehran.ir (In the subject line write: **FAO Ayatollah Shahroudi**)

Salutation: **Your Excellency**

Minister of Intelligence

Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejeie

Ministry of Intelligence, Second Negarestan Street, Pasdaran Avenue,

Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Salutation: **Your Excellency**

Governor of Kordestan Province

Esmail Najjar

Email: **In Persian and Kurdish, send via feedback form on the website:**

http://www.ostan-kd.ir/Default.aspx?tabId=150&cv=4@0_1

In English, French or other languages, use the feedback form on the website: <http://en.ostan-kd.ir/Default.aspx?TabID=59>

Salutation: **Dear Governor**

COPIES TO:President

His Excellency Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

The Presidency

Palestine Avenue, Azerbaijan Intersection

Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: **+ 98 21 6 649 5880**

Email: **via website: <http://www.president.ir/email/>**

Director, Human Rights Headquarters of Iran

His Excellency Mohammad Javad Larijani

C/o Office of the Deputy for International Affairs

Ministry of Justice,

Ministry of Justice Building, Panzdah-Khordad (Ark) Square,

Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: **+ 98 21 5 537 8827 (please keep trying)**

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 27 May 2008.