

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 13/067/2007

07 June 2007

Further Information on UA 61/07 (MDE 13/027/2007, 09 March 2007) Prisoners of conscience/torture

IRAN	Esma'il Javadi (m), aged 31, journalist	]
	Ebulfezl Alilu (m)	]
	Ramin Sadeghi (m)	] Azerbaijani cultural and linguistic
	Qahreman Qanbarpour (m)	] rights activists
	Adel Allahverdipour (m)	]
	Jelil Qanilu, or (new spelling) Ghanilou (m)	]
	Safar Ali Kho'ini (m)	]
	Ja'far Haqazari (m)	]

---

Jelil Qanilu, or Ghanilou, was reportedly released around 10 days after his arrest in Zenjan on 21 February, but has reportedly now been rearrested. He was among 25 people detained in connection with their participation in events marking International Mother Language Day.

In a 28 May report in the online news service Advar News, Jelil Ghanilou's brother was quoted as saying he had been rearrested at 10pm the previous day.

Amnesty International has no further information about Jelil Ghanilou, who may be a prisoner of conscience, and is concerned for his safety. Secret detention has been shown to facilitate torture and ill-treatment. Prolonged incommunicado detention can in itself be a form of cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment.

A statement issued by the National Movement of Azerbaijan – Zenjan (*Harakat-e Melli-ye Azerbaijan – Zenjan*) on 2 June entitled "Where are Sa'id Metinpour and Jelil Ghanilou?" drew attention to the authorities' failure to provide any information about the men's whereabouts, especially to their families, and to allegations that the authorities were putting pressure on newspapers in Zenjan, particularly *Mardom-e No* (New People), which had attempted to report on the arrests, in order to keep these and other arrests secret.

The rearrest of Jelil Ghanilou took place at around the time of a series of demonstrations that started in late May and which have affected most areas where Iranian Azerbaijanis live. The demonstrations were held following the first anniversary of widespread and often spontaneous demonstrations which took place on 22 May 2006 in protest at the publication in a national newspaper of a cartoon which was offensive to many Iranian Azerbaijanis. In the course of the May 2006 demonstrations up to 19 people were reportedly killed and hundreds arrested.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Iranian Azerbaijanis speak a Turkic language and are mainly Shi'a Muslims. The largest minority in Iran, they are believed to make up 25-30 per cent of the population; they live mainly in the north and north-west of the country, and in the capital, Tehran. There is a growing demand from them for greater cultural and linguistic rights, including implementation of their constitutional right to education through the medium of Azerbaijani Turkic. Those who seek to promote Azerbaijani cultural identity and linguistic rights are viewed with suspicion by the authorities.

Article 15 of Iran's Constitution states that Persian is the official language of Iran and that "official documents, correspondence, and texts, as well as textbooks, must be in this language and script." It adds that "the use of regional and tribal languages in the press and mass media, as well as for teaching of their literature in schools, is allowed in addition to Persian."

International Mother Language Day is an annual event initiated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and is held on 21 February. See: *Iran: Ethnic minorities facing new wave of human rights violations*, (MDE 13/020/200, 26 February 2007) at <http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engMDE130202007?open&of=eng-IRN>

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

- expressing concern at the reports that Jelil Ghanilou has been rearrested and is now in secret detention;
- urging the authorities to grant Jelil Ghanilou immediate and regular access to his family and to lawyers of his choice;
- stating that if the reason for his continued detention is solely related to the expression of his conscientiously held beliefs, then he is a prisoner of conscience, and should be released immediately and unconditionally;
- seeking assurances that Jelil Ghanilou is being protected from torture or ill-treatment and that he has access to any medical treatment he may require.

**APPEALS TO:**

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)

**Fax:** +98 251 774 2228 (mark **FAO Office of His Excellency Ayatollah al Udhma Khamenei**)

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

President

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

**Email:** [dr-ahmadinejad@president.ir](mailto:dr-ahmadinejad@president.ir)

**via website:** [www.president.ir/email](http://www.president.ir/email)

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi  
Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Justice Building, Panzdah-Khordad Square, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Fax:** +98 21 3390 4986 (please keep trying)

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

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

**COPIES TO:**

Speaker of Parliament

His Excellency Gholamali Haddad Adel  
Majles-e Shoura-ye Eslami, Baharestan Square, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Fax:** +98 21 3355 6408

**Email:** [hadadadel@majlis.ir](mailto:hadadadel@majlis.ir)

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 19 July 2007.