

AI Index: PRE 01/104/2011  
14 February 2011

## **Iran protest crackdown condemned**

Amnesty International has condemned the Iranian authorities for breaking up an apparently peaceful march held in Tehran in support of Egyptian and Tunisian protests. Protests were also reportedly held in other cities across Iran, such as Esfahan, Shiraz and Kermanshah.

Opposition leaders Mir Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karroubi were placed under house arrest by the authorities ahead of the protests on Monday.

“Iranians have a right to gather to peacefully express their support for the people of Egypt and Tunisia. While the authorities have a responsibility to maintain public order, this should be no excuse to ban and disperse protests by those who choose to exercise that right,” said Hassiba Hadj-Sahraoui, Amnesty International’s Middle East and North Africa Deputy Director.

“This crackdown is the latest in a series of moves by the authorities aimed at blocking the work of activists and stifling dissent.”

The march comes amid a wave of pre-emptive arrests of political and other activists over the past several days.