

URGENT ACTION

IRANIAN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER RELEASED

Abdolreza Tajik, a journalist and member of the Centre for Human Rights Defenders (CHRD), an Iranian NGO, was released on bail on 22 December 2010.

Abdolreza Tajik was released after payment of approximately US\$500,000 bail. He had been arrested on 12 June 2010, after being summoned to the office of the Ministry of Intelligence in Tehran. He told his family that he was tortured or otherwise ill-treated in detention. According to his sister, during a prison visit in July 2010 he said: "When they brought me in, on the first night of detention, [my self respect and dignity] were violated in the presence of the Deputy Prosecutor and the Interrogator of Branch 1 [of the Revolutionary Court]."

The office of the CHRD was forcibly closed in December 2008, although its members have continued to carry out their work in support of human rights. Several of its members have been detained since the 2009 presidential election. Mohammad Sayfzadeh, a lawyer, was sentenced to nine years in prison in connection with his co-founding of the CHRD. Another co-founder, Nobel Peace Laureate Shirin Ebadi, has not returned to Iran since the presidential election, as she believes she would be unable to continue her human rights work. She has received many death threats, and her bank account in Iran containing her Nobel Prize money has been frozen, in contravention of Iranian law.

Abdolreza Tajik was banned from leaving the country in February 2009 when planning to attend a seminar in Spain. He has also been arrested and detained several times. Abdolreza Tajik was awarded the 2010 Journalist of the Year award on 9 December 2010 by Reporters Without Borders, which, in his absence, was accepted on his behalf by Shirin Ebadi.

His sister, Parvin Tajik, was sentenced on 16 November 2010 by Branch 28 of Tehran's Revolutionary Court to 18 months in prison for repeatedly raising concerns about her brother's case, including his treatment in detention, both with the authorities and publicly. She was charged with "propaganda against the system" and "creating unease in the public mind" by giving interviews to foreign media. It is believed that she is currently out of prison pending her appeal against her conviction and sentence. Parvin Tajik had been previously summoned to Evin Prison in September to be notified of the charges against her, but was released on bail.

No further action is requested from the UA network. We will take further action as appropriate if either Abdolreza Tajik or Nargess Mohammadi, also mentioned in the original action, are returned to prison. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.

This is the second update of UA 133/10. Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/076/2010/en>

Further information on UA: 133/10 Index: MDE 13/016/2011 Issue Date: 15 February 2011