

URGENT ACTION

IRANIAN STUDENTS AMONG ARRESTED PROTESTORS

Scores, if not hundreds, of demonstrators, including three students, Ramtin Meghdadi, Saeed Sakakian and Sirous Zarezadeh, were arrested on 14 February during demonstrations called by opposition leaders Mehdi Karroubi and Mir Hossein Mousavi which took place across Iran, in solidarity with the people of Egypt and Tunisia. Their whereabouts are mostly unknown.

Seventeen year-old school boy, **Ramtin Meghdadi**, was arrested whilst taking part in a demonstration in Babol, a city in northern Iran. He had worked for the Youth Wing of opposition leader Mir Hosein Mousavi's 2009 presidential campaign. **Saeed Sakakian**, a student activist at Qazvin International University, was arrested in Tehran. He had been previously arrested on 7 December 2009 during National Students Day and sentenced to four months' suspended imprisonment on charges of "propaganda against the system" and expelled from university. **Sirous Zarezadeh** is a 22-year-old student who worked with the Student Committee for the Defence of Political Prisoners (SCDPP). Sirous Zarezadeh is believed to have been taken to a building in Haft Tir Square which is used by the volunteer Basij militia, which was responsible for numerous human rights violations in 2009. Others arrested on or since 14 February include at least 16 students from Sharif University of Technology in Tehran.

At least two men were killed, reportedly from bullet wounds, during the demonstrations on 14 February and scores have been arrested across Iran. The authorities have blamed a banned opposition group for the deaths, which could leave protestors accused of involvement in them at risk of execution. Eyewitnesses have indicated, by contrast, that gunfire on the day came from areas where security forces were posted. Further arrests were reported on 16 February 2011 during the funeral of one of those killed.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Persian, Arabic, English, French or your own language:

- Stressing that Ramtin Meghdadi, Saeed Sakakian and Sirous Zarezadeh, and any others detained, must be protected from torture or other ill-treatment, allowed access to their families, lawyers and adequate medical treatment and should be brought before a judge without delay so they may challenge the lawfulness of their detention;
- Calling for anyone held solely for their peaceful participation in the recent demonstrations to be released immediately and unconditionally;
- Calling on the authorities to ensure the policing of any further demonstrations meets international policing standards, including the use of firearms only as a last resort where strictly unavoidable in order to protect life, and to open a full, independent and impartial investigation into the deaths of those killed.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 30 MARCH 2011 TO:

Leader of the Islamic Republic

Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei
The Office of the Supreme Leader
Islamic Republic Street – End of
Shahid Keshvar Doust Street, Tehran,
Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: info_leader@leader.ir
via website:
<http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/index.php?p=letter> (English)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani
[care of] Public relations Office
Number 4, 2 Azizi Street
Vali Asr Ave., above Pasteur Street
intersection
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: bia.judi@yahoo.com (In subject
line: FAO Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani)

Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Secretary General, High Council for
Human Rights
Mohammad Javad Larijani
High Council for Human Rights
[Care of] 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@humanrights-iran.ir (subject
line: FAO Mohammad Javad Larijani)

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 5 February 2011, Mehdi Karroubi and Mir Hossein Mousavi, two unsuccessful candidates in the disputed 2009 presidential election, addressed an open letter to Iran's Interior Ministry, requesting permission to hold a rally on 14 February "[i]n order to declare support for the popular movements in the region, in particular, the freedom-seeking movements of the people of Egypt and Tunisia..." Despite official statements of support for the popular protests in Egypt, the authorities did not grant permission for any demonstration. On 9 February 2011, a Judiciary spokesman said that Iranians should show their solidarity by taking part in official rallies on 11 February, held to commemorate the 32nd anniversary of the Islamic Revolution in Iran.

The two leaders were put under house arrest. On 10 February 2011, police officers surrounded Mehdi Karroubi's home and his sons said that they each tried to enter the house to see their father, but were stopped from doing so. On 14 February Mir Hossein Mousavi and his wife were stopped from leaving their home to join the demonstration in Tehran. Communications links to and from both homes were cut.

The authorities also arrested journalists and political activists in advance of the demonstration to prevent them from attending it. Please see *Iran: Allow peaceful rally to support Egypt and Tunisia protests* (Index: MDE 13/017/2011), 11 February 2011, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/017/2011/en>

On 14 February 2011, thousands took to the streets in several cities around Iran, such as Tehran, Rasht, Esfahan, Shiraz and Kermanshah. The demonstrations began peacefully and silently but were subsequently met by apparently excessive force at the hands of mainly plain-clothes security forces who violently beat protestors and fired tear gas in order to disperse the crowds. Some were seen to fire live ammunition. According to various Iranian news agencies on 15 February, the Deputy Commander of the Iranian Police, Ahmad Reza Radan, stated that some of the 150 people who he said were attempting to cause damage in Tehran had been arrested. By 16 February the State Prosecutor, Gholam-Hossein Mohseni-Ejei, was still unable to confirm the number of arrests although he said that some of those detained had been released. An Iranian human rights organization, the Committee for Human Rights Reporters (CHRR), has suggested that as many as 1,500 arrests took place in Tehran alone. Dozens may have been wounded and the authorities have acknowledged that two demonstrators were killed; they have been named as Sane' Zhaleh (26) and Mohammad Mokhtari (22). The authorities blamed the deaths on the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI), a banned political group, but the PMOI has denied any involvement in them. Eyewitnesses told Amnesty International that gunfire in the vicinity of the area where the two individuals killed were demonstrating came from areas where security forces were posted. Amnesty International is concerned that the Iranian authorities are seeking to blame the PMOI and monarchist groups for the deaths of these protestors, which could lead to some arrested protestors being executed for murder or for alleged links with banned groups. In January 2011, two people were executed for alleged links to the PMOI after participating in demonstrations against the authorities which took place in Iran in late December 2009 during the Ashoura religious commemorations. In January 2010, two other men were executed in connection with alleged membership to the Anjoman-e Padshahi Iran (Kingdom Assembly of Iran), a group which advocates the establishment of a monarchy in Iran.

On 15 February 2011, over 220 parliamentarians signed a statement which was read out in Iran's parliament calling for Mehdi Karroubi and Mir Hossein Mousavi to be tried and for the "most severe penalty" to be imposed. At the same time, a group of parliamentarians shouted slogans such as "Death to Mousavi, Karroubi and [former President] Khatami" and "Mousavi and Karroubi should be executed".

On 16 February 2011, the state broadcaster reported clashes at the funeral of Sane' Zhaleh. At least seven students and a lecturer, Ali Akbar Alizad, were reportedly arrested at Tehran Arts University, where Sane' Zhaleh had been a student. The lecturer was later released.

The authorities imposed severe restrictions on freedom of expression, which includes the right to receive and impart information, during the lead-up to the demonstrations by blocking access to phone services, including SMS messages, foreign media and various internet and social media sites.

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