

URGENT ACTION

ADDITIONAL IRANIAN STUDENT ARRESTED

Student activist Iman Sedighi was arrested in Babol, Iran, on 20 February following a day of nationwide protests and strikes. His whereabouts is currently unknown. He has previously served five months in prison due to his participation in demonstrations following the disputed 2009 presidential election. He was a member of failed candidate Mehdi Karroubi's campaign.

On 29 December 2009, an appeal court upheld a 10-month prison sentence against Iman Sedighi for "acts against national security", apparently in connection with his support for Mehdi Karroubi's campaign and taking part in demonstrations against the outcome of the presidential election of June 2009. He also received a one-year ban from pursuing his studies at Babol's Noshirvan University of Technology. The verdict took effect on 25 February 2010. He was released in July 2010, after serving half of his prison sentence. His attempts to make arrangements for his return to university for when the ban will be lifted have been unsuccessful.

Reports indicate that, on 20 February 2011, armoured vehicles were stationed in front of the university, among several other locations in Babol. When supporters of Mehdi Karroubi and Mir Hossein Mousavi, another opposition leader, gathered on the streets to protest, they were met by soldiers and plain-clothes security personnel, who reportedly used tear gas to disperse them. The break-up of protests on 20 February followed the arrest of a number of opposition leader supporters on 14 February.

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

- Stressing that Iman Sedighi must be protected from torture or other ill-treatment, allowed access to his family, a lawyer of his choice and adequate medical treatment and should be brought before a judge without delay so he may challenge the lawfulness of his 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 in recent protests.

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)

Salutation: Dear Sir

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 31/11. Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/019/2011/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 5 February, 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, nor did it appear to have been formally banned. 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 arrested journalists and political activists ahead of the demonstration to prevent them from attending. See *Iran: Several Arrested Before Iran Protest* (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/020/2011/en>).

On 14 February, 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. 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, 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, 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 he 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.

On 20 February 2011, hundreds, if not thousands, took to the streets in Tehran, Esfahan, Shiraz, Mashhad, Babol and other cities to commemorate the seventh day of mourning for the two demonstrators killed on 14 February 2011. Amnesty International received reports that three people were shot in Tehran, at least one of whom is reported to have died, although this remains unconfirmed. A student was reportedly killed after being thrown off a bridge in Shiraz. An unknown number of people, including Iman Sedighi, were arrested.

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