

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 13/004/2007

19 January 2007

Further Information on UA 163/06 (MDE 13/063/2006, 08 June 2006) and follow-up (MDE 13/105/2006, 19 September 2006; MDE 13/125/2006 08 November 2006) – Incommunicado detention/Fear of torture/medical concern/prisoner of conscience/fear of flogging

IRAN **Abbas Lisani (or Leysanli) (m), activist for Iranian Azerbaijani rights**
His family

Prisoner of conscience Abbas Lisani began a hunger strike on 1 January, apparently in protest at the Ardabil Prison authorities' refusal to grant him short-term leave, which is commonly granted to Iranian prisoners, and at the harassment of his family. Officials have apparently told him that unless his family stop publicising his case, he will not be granted any prison leave, despite the fact that he needs medical treatment for injuries caused by torture he suffered in 2004. On 13 January 2007 his wife was reportedly allowed to see him in Ardabil Prison to urge him to end his hunger strike, which he refused to do. He apparently looked pale and weak.

In late December 2006 Abbas Lisani wrote a letter to the Prosecutor General of Ardabil in which he criticised the failure to grant him leave, his increased sentence and the manner of his latest arrest. He announced that he would start a hunger strike after three days, if he was not granted leave from prison.

On 16 January, Abbas Lisani was moved from solitary confinement to Section 1 of Ardabil Prison, where he was forced to share a cell with non-political prisoners, some of whom are drug addicts. In Iran, although many prisons have sections for political prisoners, at times political detainees are detained with non-political prisoners, which the authorities believe is a means of increasing pressure on them. It is believed that previously Abbas Lisani has been harassed and threatened by cellmates and may have been subjected to this treatment again. On 18 January, Abbas Lisani was transferred back to solitary confinement, where he is reportedly detained in a very small cell without any heating, in an area where the temperature can reach -10oC during the night. Prison officials have allegedly threatened him.

Abbas Lisani is said to suffer from stomach and kidney problems, and pain in his ribs, which is allegedly a consequence of torture inflicted during previous periods of detention. It is not known whether he has access to adequate medical care.

Abbas Lisani was detained on 31 October 2006, five days after he lodged an appeal against a sentence of 16 months' imprisonment and 50 lashes, imposed after he was convicted of participating in a May 2006 demonstration in Ardabil by Iranian Azerbaijanis protesting against a cartoon in the state-owned daily newspaper *Iran* which many in the community found offensive, and of participating in the destruction of public and state property by encouraging people to participate in the demonstration. After he was arrested, his family were told that after a review of his case, his prison term had been increased to 18 months, with an additional period of time to be spent in exile in Tabas, apparently in response to an appeal by the prosecution. An increase in a sentence is permitted in Iranian law if the prosecutor in a case lodges an appeal against it, but Amnesty International remains concerned that the procedure before the Ardabil Appeal Court may not have conducted a genuine review of Abbas Lisani's case.

Abbas Lisani has been sentenced in two other cases relating to his participation in Iranian Azerbaijani cultural events. He has appealed against both sentences. He is also facing charges in relation to his attendance at another gathering in 2005, but this case is not known to have been concluded.

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

- expressing concern that Abbas Lisani is serving an 18-month prison sentence for his peaceful involvement in a demonstration in Ardabil on 27 May 2006, and pointing out that Abbas Lisani is personally opposed to violence and in no way advocated the use of violence by anyone during the demonstration;
- stating that Amnesty International therefore believes that Abbas Lisani is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for the non-violent expression of his opinions, and should be released immediately and unconditionally;
- asking the authorities to give details of the procedure before the Ardabil Appeal Court, particularly as the review of Lisani's case was conducted so quickly;
- expressing concern that the procedure followed may not have provided a genuine review of Abbas Lisani's case.
- urging the authorities to commute his sentence of flogging immediately, as it amounts to torture;
- calling on the authorities to grant Abbas Lisani immediate and unconditional access to his lawyer, continued and regular access to his family, and access to any medical treatment that he requires;
- expressing concern that the authorities have reportedly been harassing and intimidating Abbas Lisani's family, including threatening to arrest them.

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
istiftaa@wilayah.org

Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary

His Excellency Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi
Ministry of Justice, Park-e Shahr, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

President

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

Fax: (via foreign ministry) +98 21 6 674 790 (mark "Please forward to H.E. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad")

Email: dr-ahmadinejad@president.ir
(via website) www.president.ir/email

Salutation: Your Excellency

Speaker of Parliament

His Excellency Gholamali Haddad Adel
Majles-e Shoura-ye Eslami
Imam Khomeini Avenue,
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: + 98 21 6 646 1746

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 2 March 2007.