

URGENT ACTION

IRANIAN STUDENT LEADER SENTENCED

Iranian student leader Majid Tavakkoli, held since 7 December 2009 after a demonstration, has been sentenced to eight years and six months imprisonment after an unfair trial. He is believed to be appealing against his conviction and sentence. He is a prisoner of conscience, held solely for the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression, association and assembly.

Majid Tavakkoli's trial before the Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran began on 6 January 2010 and his lawyer was not permitted to attend. He met his lawyer for the first time on 11 January. Majid Tavakkoli has only been allowed to contact his family once by phone, after his trial concluded, when he told them he was held in Evin Prison, Tehran. He has not been permitted any family visits. He has been convicted of several offences, including participating in an illegal gathering, propaganda against the system and insulting officials. As well as receiving a prison sentence, Majid Tavakkoli was banned for five years from political activities and from leaving the country..

Majid Tavakkoli was beaten as he was arrested leaving Amir Kabir University of Technology in Tehran on 7 December. He had just given a speech at a student demonstration marking Student Day in Iran, held on the Persian date of 16 Azar, the anniversary of the killing of three students by security forces in 1953. Dozens of students and others were arrested around the time of the 7 December protests, which took place in cities across the country. Many have been released, but some remain in detention. The day after his arrest, pictures of Majid Tavakkoli wearing women's clothing were circulated, apparently intended to humiliate him.

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

- Calling on the Iranian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Majid Tavakkoli, and any others detained around the 7 December demonstrations who are held solely for the peaceful exercise of their rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly;
- Expressing concern that Majid Tavakkoli's trial was unfair as he did not have access to a lawyer and urging that his appeal be heard swiftly, with a view to facilitating his immediate release;
- In the meantime, calling on the authorities to grant him immediate and regular access to his family, his lawyer and any medical treatment he may require;
- Asking them to investigate promptly and impartially the reports that Majid Tavakkoli was beaten during his arrest.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 16 MARCH 2010 TO:

Head of the Provincial Judiciary in
Tehran

Ali Reza Avaei
Karimkhan Zand Avenue
Sana'i Avenue, Corner of Alley 17, No.
152
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: avaei@Dadgostary-tehran.ir
Salutation: Dear Mr Avaei

Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Sadeq Larijani
Howzeh Riyasat-e Qoveh Qazaiyeh
(Office of the Head of the Judiciary)
Pasteur St., Vali Asr Ave., south of
Serah-e Jomhuri, Tehran,
1316814737
Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: Via website:
<http://www.dadiran.ir/tabid/75/Default.aspx>
First starred box: your given name;
second starred box: your family name;
third: your email address

**Salutation: Your Excellency
And copies to:**

Director, Human Rights Headquarters
Mohammad Javad Larijani
Howzeh Riassat-e Ghoveh Ghazaiyeh
Pasteur St, Vali Asr Ave., south of
Serah-e Jomhuri
Tehran 1316814737
Islamic Republic of Iran
Fax: +98 21 3390 4986
Email: bia.judi@yahoo.com (In subject
line: **FAO Mohammad Javad Larijani**)
Salutation: Dear Mr Larijan

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 to UA 341/09 (MDE 13/131/2009). Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/131/2009/en

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Majid Tavakkoli, a member of the Islamic Students' Association at Amir Kabir University in Tehran, where he studied ship-building, was arrested in May 2007 with three others, in connection with student publications said to be insulting to Islam, which the students said had been forged. He was tortured in detention and sentenced to three years' imprisonment for "propaganda against the system" and "insulting the Leader," reduced on appeal to 30 months. He was released in August 2008 and allowed to resume his studies in southern Iran.

He was arrested in February 2009, with around 20 other students, after he took part in a ceremony commemorating the life of the first prime minister to be appointed after the February 1979 revolution, Mehdi Bazargan. Most were soon released, but Majid Tavakkoli and three others were held without trial until June 2009, when they were released on bail. Majid Tavakkoli was the subjects of UA 113/07 and updates, and UA 70/09.

According to his brother Ali in January 2010, Majid Tavakkoli has been sentenced to five years for "participating in an illegal gathering"; one year for "propaganda against the system"; two years for "insulting the Supreme Leader"; six months for "insulting the President" and to five-year ban on any involvement in political activities and on leaving the country.

The day after his arrest, *Fars News Agency*, which is close to the Revolutionary Guards and the judiciary, published pictures of Majid Tavakkoli wearing women's clothing, and said he had been wearing them at the time of his arrest in order to escape detection. Student websites and others, which have claimed that Majid Tavakkoli was beaten at the time of his arrest, have denied that he was wearing the clothes at the time, but suggested he was forced to wear them afterwards to humiliate him.

After Majid Tavakkoli was pictured wearing women's clothes, many Iranian men took pictures of themselves with headcoverings, often holding signs saying, "We are Majid" and posted them on the internet as part of a solidarity campaign calling for his release. See for example http://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=198929939029#/photo_search.php?oid=198929939029&view=all

On 19 January, his mother told Voice of America Persian service, a US government-funded radio and television station in the USA which broadcasts worldwide, "I am worn out after five years. His place is not in prison. His problems should be solved in the university, not in prison. He is entitled to the freedom of speech. For three years, they have had us on a leash. We are constantly worried for our son. He has done nothing, but studied hard. He had only made a critical comment. He doesn't deserve prison. They said we are entitled to freedom of speech. I am looking forward to seeing Majid. I want to hear my son's voice when I see him. For a mother, it is important to see her children. It is hard to wait for children with tearful eyes and an aching heart."

Students have been at the forefront of continuing protests at the disputed outcome of the presidential election in June 2009 as well as at the widespread human rights violations committed as the authorities banned demonstrations and cracked down violently on protestors. Dozens of people were killed by security forces using excessive force, thousands were arrested, mostly arbitrarily and many were tortured or otherwise ill-treated. Scores have faced unfair trial, including some in mass show trials, with over 80 sentenced to prison terms, and at least 12 sentenced to death, although at least one has been commuted to a prison term. Two have so far been executed.

Further information on UA: 341/09 Index: MDE 13/015/2010 Issue Date: 02 February 2010

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