

URGENT ACTION

SEVERAL ARRESTED BEFORE IRAN PROTEST

Hundreds of people, including journalists and political activists, were arrested in Iran in advance of a demonstration called by opposition leaders and held on 14 February. The arrests appear to have been intended to prevent them participating. Their whereabouts are unknown.

Those arrested include writer and journalist **Taghi (also Taqi) Rahmani**, member of the banned political party Melli Mazhabi (National Religious Alliance), who was arrested on 9 February by four or five plain-clothed individuals. They entered his family's apartment and failed to show them either identification or an arrest warrant. The residence was subsequently searched and his documents were confiscated. According to some reports, Taghi Rahmani is being held in Evin Prison in Tehran. Narges Mohammadi, Taghi Rahmani's wife, has been summoned to court on Sunday, 20 February, though the reasons for the summons are unknown.

Mohammad-Hossein Sharif-Zadegan, a close aide to opposition leader Mir Hossein Mousavi during the presidential election of 2009, was arrested on 10 February. He is a lecturer in Law at Mofid University in Qom, north-west Iran, and formerly minister of welfare between 2000 and 2004. **Fariba Ebtehaj**, secretary and office manager to Massoumeh Ebtekar, the head of Iran's Environmental Protection Organization and a former vice-president and advisor to former President Mohammad Khatami, was arrested on 11 February. **Gholamhossein Mahmoudi**, a member of the Islamic Iran Participation Front, a political party linked to former President Khatami, was detained at his home on 10 February. **Sayed Sadreddin Beheshti**, an advisor to Mir Hossein Mousavi, was detained at his office on 10 February.

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

- Expressing concern at the arrest of all these individuals (naming them) and calling for their immediate and unconditional release if they are held solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression and association;
- Seeking clarification as to the whereabouts of all those detained and calling on the Iranian authorities to ensure that all are protected from torture and other ill-treatment while held, and are granted immediate access to their families and their lawyers;
- Reminding the authorities that, as a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Iran is obliged to uphold the rights to freedom of expression and association.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 1 APRIL 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 Jomhour, Tehran
1316814737, Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: info@humanrights-iran.ir (In
subject line: FAO Mohammad Javad
Larijani)

Salutation: Dear Sir

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

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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.

Mehdi Karroubi and Mir Hossein Mousavi, and Mir Hossein Mousavi's wife, Zahra Rahnavard, remain effectively under house arrest. Parliamentarians have called for them to be tried and for the "most severe" punishment to be imposed. Judicial officials have made statements that "the heads of sedition" will face trial. Others have called for the two men to be executed.

Taghi Rahmani was an advisor to Mehdi Karroubi during the 2009 presidential election. He is also a writer and a journalist and a member of the Melli Mazhabi (National Religious Alliance), which is associated with the Iran Freedom Movement (IFM), a banned political party which advocates social and political reform... Since the 1980s, Taghi Rahmani has been arrested and imprisoned as a prisoner of conscience for a total of 14 years for his membership of the Melli Mazhabi and his writings on reforming religion. His wife, Narges Mohammadi, is the deputy head of the Centre for Human Rights Defenders (CHRD), headed by Nobel Laureate Shirin Ebadi, who has herself been banned from travel and arrested (see UA 133/2010, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/065/2010/en> and follow ups). Following a previous arrest of her husband, Narges Mohammadi became gravely ill. After his latest arrest, she suffered a nervous breakdown and was taken to Tehran's Iranmeh hospital.

The leader of the Melli Mazhabi, 80-year-old Ebrahim Yazdi, was initially arrested on 28 December 2009, and was released for medical treatment in February 2010. He was rearrested at a private memorial ceremony on 1 October 2010 in the city of Esfahan, south of Tehran. He suffers from cancer and other illnesses and his health is said to be precarious. He is now reported to be held in a "safe house" controlled by the Ministry of Intelligence (see *Iran: Need for restraint as anniversary of Ashoura demonstration approaches*, Index: MDE 13/113/2010, 14 December 2010, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/113/2010/en>).

Many others were arrested in the demonstration held on 14 February, and some afterwards, although some have since been released (see UA 31/2011, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/019/2011/en>).

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