

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 13/028/2007

12 March 2007

Further Information on UA 52/07 (MDE 13/021/2007, 5 March 2007) and follow-up (MDE 13/026/2007, 8 March 2007) - Prisoners of conscience/ill-treatment New Concern – Fear of torture

IRAN Mahboubeh Abbasgholizadeh (f)]
 Shadi Sadr (f)] women human rights defenders

Released: Zhila Bani Ya'qoub (f), journalist and human rights defender

Prisoners of conscience Mahboubeh Abbasgholizadeh and Shadi Sadr remain detained in solitary confinement in Section 209 of Evin Prison in Tehran. Zhila Bani Ya'qoub was released on bail on 9 March. Mahboubeh Abbasgholizadeh is said to suffer from arthritis and migraine, and Shadi Sadr from chronic stomach pain, possibly an ulcer. It is feared that neither women is receiving adequate medical treatment. Mahboubeh Abbasgholizadeh has not been allowed to contact anyone since her arrest; Shadi Sadr has been allowed to telephone her husband twice.

On 12 March, one of the lawyers representing the two women, Farideh Gheytrat, told the AFP news agency the two women had received one-month temporary detention orders, saying that they both faced "two charges that have not been disclosed to me, in addition to the accusations of disturbing public order faced by all those detained." She added that she had protested against the orders, saying, "Temporary detention should only be ordered when investigations are not enough or it is feared that the accused will flee or destroy evidence. None of these are true in my defendants' case." It is believed that the undisclosed charges may include that of "acting against state security," which carries a sentence of between two and five years' imprisonment.

The two were among 33 women detained on 4 March during a protest in Tehran. Thirty detainees were released without charge between 6 and 8 March, although charges may be made at a later date. Some of those previously released have described the cells in which they were held as damp and cold, without toilet facilities. The detainees were apparently forced to sleep on the floor, and were required to share blankets for warmth. Those detained have also reported being blindfolded and interrogated by security forces during the night, depriving them of sleep. They were also denied access to medical treatment, although their families were told that all necessary treatment was being offered to them.

Mahboubeh Abbasgholizadeh is the editor of the *Zanan* (Women) quarterly journal and is a key member of the "Stop Stoning Forever" Campaign, launched in September 2006 to end the practice of stoning to death in Iran. She has also served as the director of the NGO Training Center, an organization aimed at strengthening civil society. In November 2004, Mahboubeh Abbasgholizadeh was detained by security forces for over a month in connection with her human rights activities (see UA 306/04, MDE 13/046/2004, 11 November 2004). Shadi Sadr, a lawyer and journalist, is the director of *Raahi*, a legal advice centre for women. She founded *Zanan-e Iran* (Women of Iran), the first website dedicated to the work of Iranian women's rights activists (<http://www.raahi.org>) and she has written extensively about Iranian women and their legal rights. She has represented activists and journalists and has represented several women sentenced to execution, whose convictions were subsequently overturned. She is also involved in the "Stop Stoning Forever" Campaign.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Mahboubeh Abbasgholizadeh and Shadi Sadr were among 33 women arrested while protesting about the trial of five women's rights activists (Fariba Davoodi Mohajer, Shahla Entesari, Noushin Ahmadi Khorassani,

Parvin Ardalan and Sussan Tahmasebi) in Branch 6 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran on charges of "propaganda against the system", "acting against national security" and "participating in an illegal demonstration." The charges relate to their involvement in a peaceful demonstration on 12 June 2006 which demanded equal rights in law for women in Iran. The protest was forcibly broken up by security forces, who arrested at least 70 people.

The authorities in Evin Prison have a history of delaying or denying access to medical treatment to detainees, possibly to increase the pressure on them.

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

- welcoming the release of Zhila Bani Ya'qoub, detained on 4 March during a peaceful demonstration outside Branch 6 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran, but expressing concern at the continued detention of Mahboubeh Abbasgholizadeh and Shadi Sadr;
- calling for their immediate and unconditional release as they are held solely for the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression and association;
- calling for both to be granted immediate and regular access to their families, lawyers and to all necessary medical treatment;
- calling for all charges to be dropped against those charged in connection with the peaceful demonstration on 12 June 2006, or in connection with the peaceful protest on 4 March 2007.

APPEALS TO:

Leader of the Islamic Republic

Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei,

Leader of the Islamic Republic

The Office of the Supreme Leader, Shahid Keshvar Doost Street, Tehran. Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: +98 251 7774 2228 (mark "For the Office of His Excellency, Ayatollah Khamenei")

Email: Via website, in English: <http://www.leader.ir/langs/EN/index.php?p=sendletter>

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Intelligence

Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejeie

Ministry of Intelligence, Second Negarestan Street, Pasdaran Avenue, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: iranprobe@iranprobe.com

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

President:

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

The Presidency, Palestine Avenue, Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: dr-ahmadinejad@president.ir

via website: www.president.ir/email

Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi

Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Justice Building, Panzdah-Khordad Square, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: + 98 21 3390 4986 (please keep trying; send appeals by post or email if you cannot get through)

Email: info@dadgostary-tehran.ir (In the subject line write: For the attention of Ayatollah Shahroudi)

Speaker of Parliament

His Excellency Gholamali Haddad Adel

Majles-e Shoura-ye Eslami, Baharestan Square, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: + 98 21 3355 6408

Email: hadadadel@majlis.ir

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 23 April 2007.