

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 13/029/2009
03 April 2009

Further Information on UA 61/09 (MDE 13/017/2009, 05 March 2009) Enforced disappearance/ Fear of torture/ ill-treatment

IRAN Abbas Hakimzadeh, (m) member of Central Council, Office for the Consolidation of Unity
Mehdi Mashayekhi (m), Amir Kabir University Islamic Students Association (ISA) member
Nariman Mostafavi (m), ISA member
Ahmad Qasaban (m), ISA member

New Name: Yasser Torkman (m), ISA member

A fifth student from Amir Kabir University in the capital, Tehran, was arrested on 9 March, and was allegedly beaten by security officials. The reason for the arrest and the whereabouts of Yasser Torkman, who is a member of the Islamic Students Association (ISA) of Amir Kabir University remain unknown. All five detained students are at risk of torture or other ill-treatment.

Yasser Torkman had been summoned to one of the university gates, where university security staff informed him that he was banned from classes and could no longer enter the campus grounds. Eyewitnesses report that the two state security officials beat him before taking him away.

Four other Amir Kabir university students, Abbas Hakimzadeh, Mehdi Mashayekhi, Nariman Mostafavi and Ahmad Qasaban, are now known to be held in solitary confinement in Section 209 of Tehran's Evin prison, a section which is under the supervision of the Ministry of Intelligence. According to the Amir Kabir University website, on 28 March, Ahmad Qasaban and Nariman Mostafavi were permitted a brief telephone call to their families.

The four were arrested at their homes on 24 February, following their alleged involvement in demonstrations at Amir Kabir University. Mehdi Mashayekhi, Nariman Mostafavi and Ahmad Qasaban are members of the ISA. Abbas Hakimzadeh is a member of the Office for the Consolidation of Unity, another student union.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since December there have been waves of arbitrary arrests and harassment, particularly directed against members of Iran's religious and ethnic minorities, students, trade unionists and women's rights activists. These measures may in part be intended to stifle debate and to silence critics of the authorities in advance of the forthcoming presidential election in June 2009.

More than 70 students were arrested on 23 February during a peaceful demonstration held by students at Tehran's Amir Kabir University in protest at the government's burial on campus of soldiers' remains

The burial of the unknown soldiers on the university campus has widely been seen as a move by the government to seek to control student groups opposed to its policies. Burial of soldiers, called martyrs on account of their sacrifice in fighting against Iraqi forces, appears to enable non-students to enter the campus without being required to show evidence that they are students, a normal requirement for access to university premises. Students groups fear that the presence of the graves would allow unrestricted access to the campuses by security forces, including the Basij mobilization forces who are under the control of the Revolutionary Guards.

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

- urging the authorities to ensure that all students held following demonstrations at Amir Kabir University on 23 February are not tortured or otherwise ill-treated;
- calling for all the detained students to be allowed immediate access to their family, legal representation and any medical attention that they may require;
- seeking specific details of the reasons for the arrest of Abbas Hakimzadeh, Mehdi Mashayekhi, Nariman Mostafavi, Ahmad Qasaban and Yasser Torkman; and any legal proceedings they might be facing;
- seeking immediate clarification of the whereabouts of Yasser Torkman;
- noting that if any of the students are held solely on account of the peaceful exercise of their rights to freedom of expression and assembly, then they are prisoners of conscience and should be released immediately without condition;
- reminding the authorities that confessions extracted under duress are prohibited by Article 38 of the constitution of Iran, which states that "All forms of torture for the purpose of extracting confession or acquiring information are forbidden," and that Iran as a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), is bound by Article 7 which states that "No one shall be subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment".

APPEALS TO:

Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi

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: shahroudi@dadgostary-tehran.ir (In the subject line write: FAO Ayatollah Shahroudi)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Director, Human Rights Headquarters of Iran

Mohammad Javad 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, Iran

Fax: +98 21 3390 4986 (please keep trying)

Email: info@dadgostary-tehran.ir (In the subject line write: FAO Javad Larijani)

Salutation: Dear Mr Larijani

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 15 May 2009.