

PUBLIC

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Further Information on UA 246/06 (MDE 13/128/2006, 28 November 2006) and follow-up (MDE 13/101/2006, 12 September 2006) – Fear for safety/Unfair trial/Possible prisoner of conscience

IRAN **Reza Abbasi (m), human rights defender**

Human rights defender Reza Abbasi was released on 16 May, a month before the end of his sentence.

He is a founder member of an organization which has been active in promoting democracy and human rights, ASMEK (Committee for the Defence of Azerbaijani Political Prisoners), and of the Alumni Association of Iran (*Sazman-e Danesh Amukhtegan-e Iran-e Eslami (Advar-e Tahkim-e Vahdat)*).

In an interview the day he was released with journalist and blogger Haq, Reza Abbasi said that the previous day prison authorities had asked him to "demand" his freedom, which he refused to do. On 16 May he was summoned from his cell and told that he would be transferred to another prison and that before this he would be able to meet with his family. The prison vehicle brought him to his house, where, without explanation, he was freed. He had not been scheduled to be released until 22 June.

Reza Abbasi had been sentenced to one year's imprisonment in mid-October 2006: six months for "insulting the Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran" and another six months for "propaganda against the system". He had been held in Zenjan Central Prison since his arrest, on 27 June 2006. Amnesty International considered him a prisoner of conscience, held solely on account of his peaceful activities on behalf of the Iranian Azerbaijani community in Iran.

Writing to Amnesty International, a colleague of Reza Abbasi said that "We are well aware that your appeals, aimed at increasing the pressure about him, were very effective and for that we are very thankful."

No further action is requested from the UA network. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.