

IRAN
CENTRE FOR
HUMAN
RIGHTS
DEFENDERS
UNDER ATTACK

**END REPRESSION OF HUMAN
RIGHTS DEFENDERS**

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



CENTRE FOR HUMAN UNDER

The Centre for Human Rights Defenders (CHRD) was co-founded by the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Shirin Ebadi, along with four other prominent human rights lawyers, **Mohammad Ali Dadkhah, Mohammad Seyfzadeh, Mohammad Sharif and Abdolfattah Soltani**. The CHRD reports on human rights violations in Iran, provides free legal help for political prisoners, and supports their families.

The CHRD has unsuccessfully sought legal registration since its formation in 2001. As a result, Shirin Ebadi and her colleagues have had to work in a legal limbo and under constant threat of closure and reprisals. **They have also faced repeated harassment, intimidation, arrest and imprisonment.**

On 21 December 2008 the CHRD was **forcibly closed** by the authorities shortly before it was due to hold an event commemorating the **60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights**. Undaunted, members have continued to meet and work, raising human rights concerns in Iran.

At least **three members have been detained** following the disputed presidential elections on 12 June 2009. **Abdolreza Tajik**, a journalist, was arrested on 14 June. Two days later **Abdolfattah Soltani**, a lawyer, was arrested at his office in Tehran by plain-clothed security officials without an arrest warrant. The officials also searched his office without a warrant and confiscated his files, briefcase, computer and mobile phone. On 8 July, security officials arrested **Mohammad Ali Dadkhah** at his office.

At the time of writing, in mid-July, the three members were still in detention.

Abdolfattah Soltani was previously detained for 219 days in 2005, 43 of them in solitary confinement. In May 2007, he was **acquitted on appeal** of disclosing confidential documents and “propaganda against the system”, for which he had been sentenced to five years’ imprisonment in 2006. Subsequently, he was **banned from travelling**



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RIGHTS DEFENDERS ATTACK

outside Iran. He has been awarded a human rights prize by the city of Nuremberg in Germany. It remains to be seen whether he will be able to collect this award in person in October 2009.



Abdolfattah Soltani

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Narges Mohammadi, CHRD spokesperson and deputy chair, has also been **barred from travel**. On 10 May 2009 she was banned from travelling to Guatemala where she was due to speak at an international conference organized by the Nobel Women's Initiative. Her **passport was confiscated** and she was summoned to appear before the Revolutionary Court. On 22 May it was announced that Narges Mohammadi had been charged with "propagating" against the country's Islamic system. **She was not permitted to travel to Italy in July 2009 to collect the Alexander Langer human rights award.**

Eight days after the CHRD was **forcibly closed**, officials removed **documents and computers** from Shirin Ebadi's law office in Tehran, despite her protests that the materials contained legally protected lawyer-client information. She was accused of evading taxes in relation to cases on which she worked without receiving any fee.

Shirin Ebadi has also been the target of numerous death threats as well as vilification in the state-owned media. Amnesty International **fears she risks assassination** and her killers could claim immunity under an article in the Penal Code which enables someone who has committed murder to avoid prosecution by claiming that the victim deserved to die, or was someone whose "blood may be spilt without sin".

The **targeting of such an internationally renowned human rights defender**, the forced closure of the CHRD, along with the arrest and harassment of other members, sends a chilling message to Iran's growing movement of human rights activists. International solidarity is urgently needed for these courageous men and women.

MAKING IN DEFENCE OF THE PEOPLE OF PALESTINE,
AFGHANISTAN AND IRAN; AND RAISING OBJECTIONS
VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS BY GOVERNMENTS,
AND OTHER POWERS, IS NOT ONLY NOT INTERFERENCE
AFFAIRS OF ANOTHER COUNTRY WHICH SHOULD NOT
BITED, IT IS IN FACT THE DUTY AND COMMITMENT
FREE INDIVIDUAL ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD.

by Shirin Ebadi on behalf of Narges Mohammadi, Italy 2009



ACT NOW

PLEASE CALL ON THE HEAD OF THE JUDICIARY TO:

- reopen the Centre for Human Rights Defenders and end the harassment and intimidation of its members as well as all other human rights defenders in Iran;
- immediately and unconditionally release Abdolfattah Soltani, Abdolreza Tajik and Mohammad Ali Dadkhah, as Amnesty International considers them prisoners of conscience;
- in the meantime, ensure that they are not tortured or otherwise ill-treated, and are allowed immediate access to relatives, a lawyer of their choice and any adequate medical treatment;
- drop all charges against members of the Centre for Human Rights Defenders that are connected to their peaceful and legitimate human rights work;
- initiate an open and transparent investigation into the harassment of members of the Centre for Human Rights Defenders, particularly the death threats against Shirin Ebadi.

WRITE TO:

Head of the Judiciary
Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi
Howzeh Riyasat-e Qoveh Qazaiyeh
Pasteur Street
Vali Asr Avenue
Tehran 1316814737
Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: shahroudi@dadgostary-tehran.ir
(subject line: FAO Ayatollah Shahroudi)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Amnesty International is a global movement of 2.2 million people in more than 150 countries and territories who campaign to end grave abuses of human rights.

Our vision is for every person to enjoy all the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights standards.

We are independent of any government, political ideology, economic interest or religion – funded mainly by our membership and public donations.

August 2009
Index: MDE 13/075/2009

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Printed by Amnesty International