

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 13/113/2007

21 September 2007

Further Information on UA 110/07 (MDE 13/053/2007, 14 May 2007) and follow-up (MDE 13/064, 1 June 2007; MDE 13/107/2007, 24 August 2007) - Prisoner of conscience/Fear of torture or ill-treatment/Fear for safety

**IRAN Dr Haleh Esfandiari (f), aged 67, academic, joint US-Iranian national
Kian Tajbakhsh (m), aged 45, academic, joint US-Iranian national
Parnaz Azima (f), journalist, joint US-Iranian national
Ali Shakeri (m), aged 59, peace activist, joint US-Iranian national**

Joint US-Iranian national Kian Tajbakhsh, a social scientist and urban planner, was released on 19 September, on bail of one billion Iranian Rials (about US\$ 110,000). He has reportedly been reunited with his family.

Haleh Esfandiari, who was released on bail on 21 August, left Iran on 2 September. She reportedly said that she was never physically ill-treated, but the lights in her cell were left on for 24 hours a day, and she was never told why she had been arrested.

Parnaz Azima had her passport returned on 4 September; and left Iran on 18 September. She is a journalist with the Persian-language Radio Farda, which is run jointly by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and Voice of America.

Peace activist Ali Shakeri is in solitary confinement in Evin Prison. He is not known to have been charged with any offence. He has not been given access to legal representation. He was reportedly allowed to telephone his family on 10 May to tell them he had been arrested: he asked them not to mention it publicly. One of his brothers was allowed to visit him twice on 15 May and again on 2 July. During the second visit, prison officials reportedly told Ali Shakeri's brother that one billion Iranian Rials (about US\$110,000) was required. The bail was reportedly posted. Ali Shakeri was able to briefly telephone his family on 27 August and his son Kaveh Shakeri reportedly said that "He was extremely tired and very weak and depressed."

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In recent months the Iranian authorities have increased pressure on journalists, academics, human rights defenders and others perceived as having links with foreign countries or having been involved in initiatives to build Iran's civil society. In April, Minister of Intelligence Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejeie publicly accused the women's movement and student campaigners of being part of an enemy conspiracy for a "soft subversion" of the government. In May, an official at the Ministry of Intelligence warned Iranian academics not to have contact with foreigners. He said, "Unfortunately our academics are subject to intelligence threats, and, with the methods they use, they first establish an initial contact, and this academic contact soon turns into an intelligence link."

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

- welcoming the release on bail of Kian Tajbakhsh, but calling on the authorities to drop any charges against him arising from his peaceful exercise of his rights to freedom of expression and association, and allow him to travel freely;
- welcoming the fact that Haleh Esfandiari and Parnaz Azima were able to leave the country safely;
- urging the authorities to ensure that Ali Shakeri is not tortured or otherwise ill-treated, and to release him immediately and unconditionally if he is not to be charged with a recognisably criminal offence;
- calling on them to give Ali Shakeri immediate and unconditional access to his lawyer, family and any medical treatment he may require;
- asking for a detailed explanation of why he was arrested, including any charges brought against him;
- calling on the authorities to end the practice of solitary confinement, in line with the recommendations made by the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD) following its visit to Iran in February 2003 (UN document E/CN.4/2004/3/Add.2), which noted that "such 'imprisonment within imprisonment' is arbitrary in nature and must be ended."

APPEALS TO:

Leader of the Islamic Republic

His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei
The Office of the Supreme Leader
Islamic Republic Street - Shahid Keshvar Doust Street
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: info@leader.ir
Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi
Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Justice Building, Panzdah-Khordad Square,
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: info@dadgostary-tehran.ir (In the subject line write: FAO Ayatollah Shahroudi)
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Intelligence

Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejeie
Ministry of Intelligence, Second Negarestan Street, Pasdaran Avenue, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

President

His Excellency Mahmoud Ahmadinejad
The Presidency, Palestine Avenue, Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: dr-ahmadinejad@president.ir
via website: www.president.ir/email

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 2 November 2007.