

URGENT ACTION

SOME JOURNALISTS FREED, MANY STILL IN PRISON

Maziar Bahari and Mohammad Ghouchani were released on bail on 17 and 29 October respectively. At least three other journalists are still detained in Evin prison, Tehran, where they are at risk of ill-treatment. They are prisoners of conscience.

Mohammad Ghouchani, the editor of the newspaper *Etemad-e Melli*, was released on the night of 29 October, two months after payment of one billion rials (approx. US\$100,000) bail. **Maziar Bahari**, a Canadian-Iranian reporter for the magazine *Newsweek*, was released on bail of three billion rials. He was allowed to leave Iran and arrived in the UK three days later, in time for the birth of his first child.

Bahman Ahmadi Amou'i, husband of journalist Zhila Bani Ya'qoub (who was released on 19 August) has been held without charge since his arrest on 20 June. **Saeed Laylaz**, a writer for the magazine *Sarmayeh*, appeared before Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran on 23 September to appeal against a two-month extension of his detention order, despite an earlier order setting bail at two billion rials. He is still in solitary confinement, despite a court order for him to be moved to an open section of the prison. He was allowed to phone home on his birthday, 1 October, and his wife visited him briefly in prison on 5 October. **Keyvan Samimi Behbehani**, editor of the banned magazine *Nameh*, is in solitary confinement in Section 209 of Evin Prison. In August, during a family visit, he said he had been severely beaten, requiring treatment in the prison's medical facility. **Rouhollah Shahsavari** is now known to have been released on 25 June.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Persian, Arabic, English, French or your own language:

- Welcoming the release on bail of Mohammad Ghouchani and Maziar Bahari, and asking for details of any charges they may be facing;
- Calling on the authorities to release Bahman Ahmadi Amou'i, Saeed Laylaz and Keyvan Samimi Behbehani immediately and unconditionally, as they are being detained solely for their peaceful exercise of the right to freedom of expression;
- Urging the authorities to ensure they are not tortured or otherwise ill-treated, and that reports of torture or other ill-treatment are thoroughly investigated and anyone found responsible is brought to justice in fair proceedings.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 8 DECEMBER 2009 TO:

Leader of the Islamic Republic

Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei
The Office of the Supreme Leader
Islamic Republic Street – End of
Shahid Keshvar Doust Street, Tehran,
Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: via website: <http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/index.php?p=letter> (English)
<http://www.leader.ir/langs/fa/index.php?p=letter> (Persian)
Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Sadeq 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, Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: via website
<http://www.dadiran.ir/tabid/75/Default.aspx>
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Head of the Iranian Journalists' Association
Rajabali Mazrooei
No. 87, 7th St., Kabkanian St.
Keshavarz Boulevard
Tehran
Islamic Republic of Iran
E-mail: generalsecretary@aoij.org
Fax: 98 21 896 35 39
Salutation: Dear Mr Mazrooei

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the third update of UA 171/09 (MDE 13/062/2009). Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/062/2009/en and <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/092/2009/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

After 65 days of solitary confinement in Evin Prison, Bahman Ahmadi Amou'i was moved in late August to a cell in Section 209 of the prison, measuring 3.5 m² which he shares with two other detainees. His lawyer has been unable to meet him or access his file. Branch 2 of the Revolutionary Court only acknowledged they were investigating him at the beginning of October but as the investigation was still incomplete they would not allow the lawyer to see the file. Bahman Ahmadi Amou'i has been allowed three family visits.

Detainees in Section 209 of Evin Prison are only allowed out into the open air three times a week, for a maximum of 20 minutes. They have limited access to toilets and showers: they can only use the toilets four times a day at set times. Consequently many have developed kidney and bladder infections. Access to medical treatment is limited and health care is sometimes denied, apparently to increase pressure on detainees.

In the days following the 13 June announcement that incumbent Mahmoud Ahmadinejad had won the presidential election, hundreds of thousands of Iranians took part in generally peaceful mass demonstrations throughout the country, disputing the election results. The authorities quickly imposed sweeping restrictions on freedom of expression, association and assembly and telephone and internet systems were severely disrupted. Iranian publications were banned from publishing information about the nationwide unrest and foreign journalists were banned from the streets, their visas not renewed and some arrested or expelled from the country. Around 20 journalists detained since the disputed presidential elections on 12 June are believed to be still detained or imprisoned.

In response to the mass protests, the security forces, notably the paramilitary *Basij*, were widely deployed. At least 4,000 were arrested in the three to four weeks following the election, including prominent political figures close to either presidential candidates Mir Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karroubi, or former President Khatami, who supported Mir Hossein Mousavi's campaign. Some human rights defenders and journalists were also detained. They have been denied access to legal representation, but have generally been able to meet family members. Arrests of others have continued sporadically, including students who have continued to protest on campuses since the new academic year began in September.

The security forces used excessive force, killing dozens of protestors and injuring hundreds more. Some died later of their injuries. Others have been injured and died as a result of torture while in custody.

Mass trial sessions of hundreds that started on 4 August were grossly unfair, including the latest, which was held on 25 August. Detainees "confessed" to vaguely worded charges, often not recognizably criminal offences. These "confessions," apparently obtained under duress, were accepted by the court. Some of those on trial were filmed making similar "confessions," which were aired on TV before their trials took place. At least four people have been sentenced to death, and more could face the death penalty. Dozens are said to have been sentenced to prison terms, including at least one of 15 years.

Iranian officials have confirmed that at least some of those detained after the post-election protests have been tortured or otherwise ill-treated, and that abuses took place in at least one detention centre, Kahrizak, outside Tehran, since closed on the order of Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei. Twelve police officials and a judge who had been involved in transferring detainees to Kahrizak are said to be facing trial for their role in the abuses. On 9 September, Farhad Tajari, a member of the Iranian parliament's Special Parliamentary Committee set up to review post-election arrests, told the *Fars News Agency* that a "court hearing for addressing law violations by suspects in the Kahrizak case will be held in the near future."

On 7 September, Iranian security officials closed the office of the committee co-founded by Mehdi Karroubi and Mir Hossein Mousavi. They confiscated testimonies the committee had gathered on abuses of protestors and detainees in the course of the demonstrations following the presidential election. Amnesty International expressed concern that its confiscation would place those who had provided testimony at risk of reprisals by the security forces (see: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/iranian-rape-and-torture-victims-renewed-risk-20090910>).

Further information on UA: 171/09 Index; MDE 13/115/2009 Issue Date: 30 October 2009

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