

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 13/172/2008
28 November 2008

Further Information on UA 264/08 (MDE 13/140/2008, 19 September 2008) Fear of torture or ill treatment/incommunicado detention

IRAN Dr Mehdi Zakerian (m), academic

Dr Mehdi Zakerian was released around 20 October 2008. He has since returned to his post as an assistant professor at Islamic Azad University in Tehran, from which he was dismissed in September 2007, without explanation.

Dr Mehdi Zakerian was detained on or around 15 August in a “Ministry of Intelligence detention centre” according to the Iranian online publication Rooz. On 6 or 7 September, Dr Mehdi Zakerian was able to meet his family in Branch 12 of the Revolutionary Court, in Tehran. The meeting took place in a courtroom under the supervision of court officials and possibly Ministry of Intelligence officials as well. It is not clear whether this was also a formal court appearance. At the meeting, family members learned that Dr Mehdi Zakerian had been accused of offences relating to national security including espionage, but had not been charged.

Dr Mehdi Zakerian is a scholar of international relations and international law. He was an assistant professor at Islamic Azad University in Tehran until September 2007, when he was dismissed from the post without explanation. He had taught for over 10 years, holding posts at a number of important Iranian universities, and has written numerous articles. Dr Mehdi Zakerian was recently appointed chair of the International Studies Association of Iran (ISAI), also known by its French name and acronym *Association iranienne des études internationales* (AIEI), an independent body aimed at promoting the teaching, research and debate on international relations. Its board members are leading academics in the field of international relations. The ISAI has over 200 members and publishes a quarterly journal, of which he was the editor. He had recently accepted a fellowship at the University of Pennsylvania, USA, and was awaiting his visa when he was detained.

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