

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 13/181/2008
23 December 2008

Further Information on UA 216/08 (MDE 13/108/2008, 6 August 2008) Arbitrary arrest/Detention without charge/Possible prisoner of conscience

IRAN

**Dr Arash Alaei (m), doctor
Dr Kamiar Alaei (m), doctor, brother of Arash Alaei**

Brothers Arash Alaei and Kamiar Alaei, both doctors specializing in the prevention and management of HIV and AIDS, have been charged with “cooperating” with an “enemy government”. The charge is vaguely worded and does not clearly define what constitutes “cooperation” or what is meant by an “enemy government”. The charge appears to be politically motivated and to relate solely to the brothers’ contact with international organizations as part of their work on HIV/AIDS prevention and management.

Amnesty International fears that the brothers may be prisoners of conscience. They could face between one and 10 years in prison if convicted. It is not known when they will face trial.

Arash and Kamiar Alaei have been in custody since their arrest on 22 June and are currently in Tehran’s Evin prison. According to sources in Iran, although they have had regular visits from their relatives, they have had very little contact with their lawyers while in detention and, although under Iranian law they are legally eligible for bail, they have not been granted a bail hearing. The brothers were detained without charge for more than four months.

Arash and Kamiar Alaei are known for their work on HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, especially for their work to prevent the spread of HIV among drug users. Both doctors have travelled abroad as a result of their work. Kamiar Alaei is a doctoral candidate at the State University of New York’s Albany School of Public Health and holds a Masters degree in International Health from Harvard University. Earlier this year, the Asia Society, a US-based NGO, named him as a Fellow, “one of 23 new Fellows identified as being among the most promising trendsetters and emerging leaders in the Asia-Pacific region.” Arash Alaei is the former Director of the International Education and Research Cooperation of the Iranian National Research Institute of Tuberculosis and Lung Disease. Neither man is known to have been involved in political activities.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Iran’s response to HIV/AIDS has been accorded international respect, particularly the preventative measures promoted by Arash and Kamiar Alaei. According to the *2008 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic* (published by UNAIDS on 29 July 2008 and available at www.unaids.org) “the... support for needle exchange projects in countries such as the Islamic Republic of Iran... serve as clear examples of courageous, visionary leadership in the response to HIV”. However, the government of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, which took office in August 2005, has started to remove its support for such centres.

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

- calling on the authorities to ensure that Dr Arash Alaei and Dr Kamiar Alaei are not tortured or otherwise ill-treated;
- urging that they be released unless they are charged with an internationally recognizable criminal offence and promptly brought to trial in proceedings that meet fair trial standards;

- seeking assurances that Iran remains committed to effective treatment and prevention of HIV as promoted by Dr Arash Alaei and Dr Kamiar Alaei.

APPEALS TO:

President

His Excellency Mahmoud Ahmadinejad
The Presidency
Palestine Avenue, Azerbaijan Intersection
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: dr-ahmadinejad@president.ir

Salutation: **Your Excellency**

Minister of Intelligence

His Excellency Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejeie
Ministry of Information
Second Negarestan Street
Pasdaran Avenue
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Salutation: **Your Excellency**

Head of the Judiciary

His Excellency Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi
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: info@dadgostary-tehran.ir (In the subject line write: **FAO Ayatollah Shahroudi**)

Salutation: **Your Excellency**

COPIES TO:

Minister of Health and Medical Education

His Excellency Dr Kamran Baqeri Lankarani
Ministry of Health
Jomhuri-ye Eslami Avenue
Hafez Crossing
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: **+98 21 8836 4100 (unreliable; please try three times and if it fails please send email)**

Email: Lankarani@mohme.gov.ir / minister@mohme.gov.ir / pro@mohme.gov.ir

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 3 February 2009.