

PUBLIC

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Fear of torture/ ill treatment / prisoner of conscience

IRAN

Esmail Salmanpour (m)]
Majid Tavakkoli (m)] members of Amir Kabir University's
Hossein Torkashvand (m)] Islamic Students Association (ISA)
Koroush Daneshyar (m)]

The four students named above have been held without charge or trial since their arrest on 5 February 2009. They may be held in section 209 of Tehran's Evin Prison, a section under the control of Iran's Ministry of Intelligence. Amnesty International fears they are at risk of torture or ill treatment and considers them to be prisoners of conscience.

The students, all members of Amir Kabir University's Islamic Students Association (ISA), a student body, had taken part in a ceremony commemorating the life of Mehdi Bazargan, the first prime minister to be appointed after the February 1979 revolution. The ceremony is a peaceful gathering which has been held annually for over a decade. Organisers and participants had publicised the event and had informed the relevant state authorities, none of whom expressed any objection. However, as the gathering was getting underway, some 20 participants were arrested. Sixteen of them were later released but the four students continue to be detained and are reported to have started a hunger strike to protest against their arbitrary arrest and conditions of detention.

Majid Tavakkoli, former editor of student journal, *Khat-e Sefer* was previously detained from May 2007 until August 2008.

Amnesty International fears that the four students may be tortured or otherwise ill-treated to force them to 'confess' to having taken part in the organisation of student demonstrations held on 23 February against the burial, on the Amir Kabir University campus, of unknown soldiers who died in the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war. The demonstrations took place more than two weeks after the four were arrested.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In the last three months, Amnesty International has received reports of waves of arbitrary arrests and harassment, directed particularly against members of Iran's religious and ethnic minority communities, students, trade unionists and women's rights activists. These measures may be intended to stifle debate and to silence critics of the authorities in advance of the presidential elections due in June 2009.

More than 70 students were detained on 23 February during a peaceful demonstration at Tehran's Amir Kabir University against the government's burial on the campus of the remains of five soldiers killed during the Iran-Iraq War, 1980-88. Many of those temporarily detained during the demonstration were reportedly ill-treated. Others were taken to Police Station 107 at Palestine Square where some were also reported to have been ill-treated. Female students were said to have been insulted. Most of those detained were released in the hours following their arrest or next morning.

The burial of the unknown soldiers' remains on the university campus has widely been interpreted as an attempt by the state authorities to exercise greater control over students opposed to their policies. Such burials of soldiers, who are deemed martyrs on account of their sacrifice in fighting against Iraqi forces, might

make it easier for members of the security forces, including the Basij mobilization forces under the control of the Revolutionary Guards, to gain access to the university campus without being required to show evidence that they are students and to inhibit or disrupt student criticism or protests against government policy.

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

- calling on the authorities to ensure that the four students (please name them) be protected against torture or other ill-treatment and that they be allowed immediate access to their family, legal representation and any medical attention that they may require;
- seeking specific details of the reasons for their arrest and any charges they may be facing;
- noting that if any of the students are held solely on account of the peaceful expression of their views or the right to freedom of expression and assembly, then they are prisoners of conscience, and should be released immediately and unconditionally;

APPEALS TO:

Head of the Judiciary

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: shahroudi@dadgostary-tehran.ir (In the subject line write: **FAO Ayatollah Shahroudi**)

Salutation: **Your Excellency**

Director, Human Rights Headquarters of Iran

Mohammad Javad Larijani

Howzeh Riassat-e Ghoveh Ghazaiyeh (Office of the Head of the Judiciary)

Pasteur St, Vali Asr Ave., south of Serah-e Jomhuri, Tehran 1316814737, Iran

Email: info@dadgostary-tehran.ir (In the subject line write: **FAO Javad Larijani**)

Salutation: **Dear Mr Larijani**

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 22 April 2009.