

URGENT ACTION

STUDENT ACTIVIST DETAINED WITHOUT CHARGE

Student leader Milad Asadi has been detained without charge in Evin Prison, Tehran, since 1 December 2009. Amnesty International believes he is a prisoner of conscience, held solely for the peaceful exercise of his rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly. He is at risk of torture or other ill-treatment.

23-year-old **Milad Asadi** is a student of electrical engineering at Khajeh Nasir University and is also a leading member of the Office for the Consolidation of Unity (OCU), a national student body which has been prominent in demanding political reform and an end to human rights violations in recent years. He was arrested shortly before mass demonstrations against the government took place on university campuses on 7 December, which is Students' Day in Iran, marking the anniversary of the killing of three students in 1953 by police.

He told his family during a visit in mid-January that he had been held for 46 days in solitary confinement in a tiny cell only two metres wide and two metres long. According to the website Reporters and Human Rights Activists in Iran, Milad Asadi told his family during a prison visit in February that he would be tried on 3 March, but this is not known to have taken place.

At least three other prominent members of the OCU – Mehdi Arabshahi, Behareh Hedayat and Amin Nazari are also detained. Another – Morteza Samyari - has been released on bail after being sentenced to six years in prison. He was convicted of vaguely worded offences apparently related to his peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression and association, following an unfair trial.

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

- √ Calling on the Iranian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Milad Asadi and any other students held solely for the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression and association;
- √ Urging them to ensure that Milad Asadi is protected from torture and other ill-treatment, and has access to a lawyer of his choice, his family and any medical treatment he may require;
- √ Reminding the Iranian authorities that freedom of expression, association and assembly are guaranteed under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to which Iran is a state party.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 26 APRIL 2010 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: info_leader@leader.ir

via website:

[http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/index.php?](http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/index.php?p=letter)

p=letter (English)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Provincial Judiciary in

Tehran

Ali Reza Avaei

Karimkhan Zand Avenue

Sana'i Avenue, Corner of Alley 17, No.

152

Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: avaei@Dadgostary-tehran.ir

Salutation: Dear Mr Avaei

And copies to:

Secretary General, High Council for

Human Rights

Mohammad Javad Larijani

Howzeh Riassat-e Ghomeh Ghazaiyeh

Pasteur St, Vali Asr Ave., south of

Serah-e Jomhuri

Tehran 1316814737

Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: +98 21 3390 4986

Email: bia.judi@yahoo.com (In subject

line: **FAO Mohammad Javad Larijani**)

Salutation: Dear Mr Larijan

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Milad Asadi sits on the Central Committee of the OCU. At least three other members of the Central Committee of the OCU are currently in detention. They are Mehdi Arabshahi, who is the Secretary of the OCU, arrested on 27 December 2009 - the religious festival of Ashoura - when mass demonstrations against the government took place; Behareh Hedayat, who is also the Chair of the Women's Committee of the OCU, arrested on 31 December 2009, and Amin Nazari, also chair of the OCU Human Rights Committee, arrested on 27 February 2010. Another member, Morteza Samyari, was sentenced to six years in prison on 18 February for "propaganda against the system" and "gathering and colluding with the intent of harming state security", but was subsequently released on bail pending an appeal against his conviction and sentence.

Amnesty International has previously taken action on behalf of Mehdi Arabshahi and Bahareh Hedayat during an earlier detention (See Urgent Action, (Index: MDE 13/095/2007), 27 July 2007, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/095/2007>)

24-year-old Morteza Samyari, arrested on 4 January 2010, appeared in a mass "show trial" of 16 persons on 30 January 2010. All were accused of involvement in orchestrating the Ashoura protests. He was sentenced on 18 February 2010 to one year in prison on the charge of propaganda against the system and a five-year prison sentence on the charge of "gathering and colluding with the intent to act against national security", apparently in connection with a proposed meeting with EU representatives which never took place. He was released on bail of 500 million rials (approx US\$500,000) and a guarantee of a further 100 millions rials (approx US\$100,000) on 7 March 2010, pending an appeal against his conviction and sentence.

Since the disputed presidential election in June 2009, over 5,000 people have been arrested, including over 1,000 during and following the mass demonstrations on Ashoura on 27 December. Those detained include political figures and political activists, students, human rights defenders and journalists. Many have been tried in grossly unfair trials, resulting in long prison term sentences and some sentences of flogging. At least 13 individuals have been sentenced to death, of whom two have been executed and three have had their sentences commuted to prison terms. Those known to be on death row include Ahmad Karimi and Amir Reza Arefi, convicted of "*moharebeh*" (enmity against God) for alleged membership of the Anjoman-e Padashahi Iran, a group which advocates the restoration of a monarchy in Iran, and five unnamed individuals (two women and three men) said to have been tried and convicted in January 2010 of "*moharebeh*" for alleged membership of the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran and organizing the Ashoura demonstrations. 20-year old Damghan university student Mohammad Amin Valian has also been sentenced to death, although his appeal has not yet been heard. He was one of five people charged with "*moharebeh*" during the trial of 16 in which Morteza Samyari was also tried. Video footage of him throwing stones during the Ashoura demonstrations was shown in court and was used as evidence to convict him of "*moharebeh*".

"*Moharebeh*" is a vaguely worded criminal offence in Iranian law, usually applied to those who take up arms against the state. It can carry the death sentence.

The Iranian authorities are continuing to severely restrict freedom of expression in Iran, arresting journalists and human rights activists (of whom scores are believed to remain in detention), imposing restrictions on the use of the internet, including social networking sites, and shutting down newspapers. A renewed campaign of arrests of human rights activists began in early March 2010 (see UA 50/10, 12 March 2010,(Index: MDE 13/029/2010)).

For further information please see Iran: Election Contested, Repression Compounded, December 2009, (Index MDE 13/123/2009).

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