

PUBLIC

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Further Information on UA 150/09 (MDE 13/056/2009, 15 June 2009) Fear of excessive use of force/torture

IRAN Demonstrators against announcement of re-election of President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad

Demonstrations in Iran continued following the Iranian presidential election on 12 June. Iran's state media reported that on 20 June, at least 475 people were arrested during post-election clashes and that up to 13 people died, and many more were injured. The true number may be higher. The security forces also used tear gas and water cannons against the protesters who were also beaten with truncheons. Amnesty International believes that those arrested are at risk of torture or other ill-treatment, and that other demonstrators are at risk of unlawful killing or even extrajudicial execution. The authorities are unlawfully restricting freedom of expression, assembly and association.

The death on 20 June of a young 26 year-old woman, Neda Agha Soltan, was captured on video and widely circulated on the Internet. Philosophy student Neda Agha Soltan was in a car with others, when they got stuck in traffic caused by protests on Kagar Avenue in Tehran. According to reports she got out of the car because of excessive heat and was then shot in the chest by an unidentified gunman, possibly a member of the *Basij* militia. Her family buried her the next day, but a memorial ceremony was reportedly cancelled after officials expressly forbade it. All other mosques in the Tehran area have been warned against holding services in her memory.

On 22 June, the Revolutionary Guards posted a statement on their website stating: "In the current sensitive situation ... the Guards will firmly confront in a revolutionary way rioters and those who violate the law" after Presidential candidate Mir Hossein Mousavi called on his supporters to stage more demonstrations. He also urged them to refrain from violence and show self-restraint. Later on the internet, Mir Hossein Mousavi's supporters then urged people to carry black candles with green ribbons to demonstrate solidarity with the victims of the unrest. They also encouraged motorists to turn on their headlights for two hours from 5 pm to "show their solidarity with families of those killed during the recent events". At least a thousand demonstrators gathered in Tehran, defying the authorities' ban on demonstrations. Police fired tear gas and several arrests took place.

During his televised address to the nation during the 19 June Friday prayers in Tehran, the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, called for an end to street protests against the outcome of the election. Instead of instructing security forces, including the volunteer *Basij* militia, to act with restraint and in accordance with the law, he warned that if people continued to take to the streets, the consequences would lie with them.

On 22 June the official news agency IRNA quoted Ebrahim Raisi, a senior judiciary official, as saying on state television on 22 June that more than 450 people were detained during clashes with police in Tehran on 20 June in which at least 10 people were killed. He added that "those arrested in recent events will be dealt with in a way that will teach them a lesson," and that a special court was studying the cases. Amnesty International urges the authorities to urgently open investigations into the killings both that are confirmed and reported.

The crackdown on media continues and the foreign media are banned from covering demonstrations.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In the days following the Iranian presidential election on 12 June, hundreds of thousands of Iranians took part

in marches and demonstrations across the country, protesting against both the process and outcome of the election. After the Supreme Leader's speech on Friday 19 June clashes between demonstrators and security forces dramatically increased. The police and security forces, including the volunteer *Basij* militia, have used excessive force, including beating protestors with truncheons to end demonstrations. In some cases, demonstrators have been shot with live ammunition. The death toll is rising. Since the presidential elections a total of up to 21 killings have been confirmed by state media and scores of politicians, journalists, academics, students and human rights defenders have been detained, some briefly, across Iran.

The *Basij* militia is a volunteer paramilitary force of men and women under the control of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC). Its members are found in schools, universities, state and private institutions, factories, and even among tribes. *Basij* forces are widely used to help to maintain law and order and control dissent, and have frequently been accused of using extreme brutality.

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

- calling on the authorities to ensure that security forces exercise restraint in the policing of any further demonstrations in connection with the election result, and that firearms are not used except as a last resort where strictly unavoidable in order to protect life;
- calling on the Iranian authorities to stop using the *Basij* militia to police demonstrations with immediate effect;
- stressing that all those detained, including the 475 arrested on 20 June, must be protected from torture or other ill-treatment, allowed access to their families, lawyers and any necessary medical treatment and should be brought before a judge without delay so they may challenge the basis of their detention;
- urging the authorities to order an independent and impartial investigation into the policing of the demonstrations, particularly into all deaths which have been reported;
- calling for anyone detained solely for their peaceful expression of their views regarding the outcome of the election to be released immediately and unconditionally;
- asking the authorities to stop unlawfully restricting the freedoms of association, assembly and expression, including the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of the Interior

Sadegh Mahsouli

Ministry of the Interior

Dr Fatemi Avenue

Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: +98 21 8 896 203/ +98 21 8 899 547/ +98 21 6 650 203

Salutation: Your Excellency

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 Jomhouri, Tehran 1316814737, Islamic Republic of Iran

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

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES 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?p=letter> (English)

<http://www.leader.ir/langs/fa/index.php?p=letter> (Persian)

Salutation: Your Excellency

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 4 August 2009.