

# URGENT ACTION

## SEVEN IRANIAN JOURNALISTS RELEASED

**Of 13 Iranian journalists for whom Amnesty International has campaigned since the disputed presidential elections on 12 June, seven are free on bail. At least five remain in custody. They are prisoners of conscience, held for the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression.**

Two women are among those released: **Zhila Bani Ya'qoub** and **Mahsa Amrabad**. Zhila Bani Ya'qoub was released on 19 August from Evin prison in Tehran on bail equalling approximately US\$128,000. She is a member of the One Million Signatures Campaign, a movement advocating women's rights. Mahsa Amrabad, who is pregnant, was released on 24 August on bail equalling approximately \$US 200,000. The other five freed journalists are all men. Editor of the newspaper *Gilan-e Emrooz*, **Mojtaba Pourmohsen**, and freelance journalist **Fariborz Soroush** were released on 29 June. **Iason Athanasiadis-Fowden**, a British-Greek journalist, was freed on 5 July and has left Iran. **Mostafa Qavanloo Qajar**, who works for the monthly magazine *Sepideh Danaei*, was released on 6 July. **Abdolreza Tajik**, editor of the weekly magazine *Farhikhtegan*, was freed on bail on 29 July.

At least five other journalists, all male, who remain in custody, have been denied legal assistance. Zhila Bani Ya'qoub's husband, **Bahman Ahmadi Amou'i**, is in solitary confinement, but was able to phone his family on 14 August. The editor of the *Etamad-e Melli* newspaper, **Mohammad Ghouchani**, is in Evin prison. Despite the payment of bail for his release, on 25 August he appeared at a televised trial hearing. His family was not informed of the trial. **Maziar Bahari**, a Canadian-Iranian reporter for the magazine *Newsweek*, and **Saeed Laylaz** a writer for the magazine *Sarmayeh*, were among some 100 people tried alongside Mohammad Ghouchani before the Revolutionary Court in Tehran, accused of organizing protests against the presidential election result. Maziar Bahari was shown on Iranian television "confessing" to his alleged participation in a "Velvet Revolution". **Keyvan Samimi Behbehani**, editor of the banned *Nameh* magazine, is held in Section 209 of Evin Prison. His family has visited him twice. Amnesty International has no further news of **Rouhollah Shahsavar**.

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

- ✓ Acknowledging the release on bail of the seven journalists (naming them) and seeking details of any charges they may be facing;
- ✓ Calling for the immediate and unconditional release of all those detained or on trial for peacefully protesting the disputed official result of the presidential election, as they are prisoners of conscience;
- ✓ Urging the authorities to ensure all others receive fair trials in accordance with recognized international fair trial standards and without recourse to the death penalty.

### PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 09 OCTOBER 2009 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: 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

#### Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Sadeq Larijani  
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: Via website:**  
<http://www.dadiran.ir/tabid/81/Default.aspx>

First starred box: your given name;  
second starred box: your family name;  
third: your email address

Salutation: Your Excellency

#### And copies to:

Speaker of Parliament  
His Excellency Ali Larijani  
Majles-e Shoura-ye Eslami  
Baharestan Square, Tehran, Islamic  
Republic of Iran

Fax: +98 21 3355 6408

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INTERNATIONAL**



**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.** Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 171/09 (MDE 13/062/2009). Further information: [www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/062/2009/en](http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/062/2009/en)



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In the days following the 13 June 2009 announcement that incumbent Mahmoud Ahmadinejad had won the presidential election, hundreds of thousands of Iranians took part in mass and generally peaceful demonstrations throughout the country, disputing the election results. The authorities quickly imposed sweeping restrictions on freedom of expression, association and assembly and telecommunication and internet systems were severely disrupted. Iranian publications were banned from publishing information about the nationwide unrest and foreign journalists were banned from the streets, their visas not renewed and others arrested or expelled from the country.

In response to the mass protests, security forces, notably the paramilitary Basij, were widely deployed. At least 4,000 arrested in the three to four weeks following the 12 June 2009 election, including prominent political figures close to either presidential candidates Mir Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karroubi, or former President Khatami, who supported Mir Hossein Mousavi's campaign. Some human rights defenders and journalists were also detained. They have been denied access to legal representation, but have generally been able to meet family members.

Security forces used excessive and lethal force against demonstrators, killing dozens of protestors and injuring hundreds more. Some died later of their injuries. Others have been injured and died as a result of torture while in custody.

Mass trial sessions of hundreds starting on 4 August 2009 were grossly unfair, including the latest of which was held on 25 August. Detainees "confessed" to vaguely worded charges, which are often not recognizably criminal offences. These "confessions", apparently obtained under duress, were accepted by the court. Some of those on trial were filmed making similar "confessions", which were aired on TV before their trials took place. Some of those on trial could face the death penalty.

Iranian officials have confirmed that at least some of those detained after the post-election protests have been tortured or otherwise ill-treated, and that abuses took place in at least one detention centre, Kahrizak, a centre outside of Tehran. On 29 July, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei ordered its closure and the head of a detention facility and three guards, thought to have worked at the Kahrizak detention centre, were reportedly dismissed and possibly detained. On 15 August, Parviz Sorouri, the Head of the Special Parliamentary Committee to review post-election arrests, told the Islamic Labour News Agency that 12 police officials and a judge who had been involved in transferring detainees to Kahrizak would be arrested and tried for their role, "as the detention centre was intended for drug dealers".

Amnesty International has received reports consistent with a statement made by Mehdi Karroubi. He has complained that both women and male detainees have been tortured, including by rape, by security officials. His allegations were initially denied by Farhad Tajari, a member of the Special Parliamentary Committee, but on 26 August 2009, one of the members of the Special Parliamentary Committee told the website Parlamen news on condition of anonymity, "It has definitely become evident to us that some of the post-election detainees have been raped with batons and bottles."

Further information on UA: 171/09 Index: MDE 13/092/2009 Issue Date: 28 August 2009

