

URGENT ACTION

IRANIAN DETAINEE "CONFESSES" IN COURT

After 35 days held incommunicado, male Iranian prisoner of conscience Abdollah Momeni appeared in court in Tehran with five others on 14 September. He is accused among other things of propaganda against the system. The evidence produced against him included "contacts with [the] human rights NGOs Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch". He "confessed" and requested a pardon. Amnesty International fears his statements were made under duress.

Abdollah Momeni, the spokesperson for the Alumni Association of Iran, was arrested on 21 June at the campaign headquarters of Mehdi Karroubi, an opposition candidate in the 12 June Iranian presidential election. Abdollah Momeni appeared at the fifth session of the mass trial of more than 100 people accused of organizing protests against the official election result, after 35 days held incommunicado at an unknown location. He was charged with "propaganda against the system of the Islamic Republic by transmitting news of street protests, and interviews with anti-revolutionary radios and sites"; "disturbing public opinion by distribution of fake and untrue newsletters" and "gathering and colluding to harm national security". He told the judge that he did not want a lawyer to defend him.

In the trial, the public prosecutor alleged that "creating a false atmosphere, publishing false reports and statistics, choosing and magnifying provoking and inciting issues, publicizing the names of the individuals who were killed during the unrests, making false statements against the system's officials and creating a psychological war against the system were among actions which were taken in a calculated and objective manner in order to create and continue street unrest." Official court papers alleged that, among other things, Abdollah Momeni had confessed to undermining the system by questioning the election to cause unrest, and to contacts with anti-revolutionary foreign media, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch in order to conduct propaganda against the system.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in English, Farsi or your own language:

- ✓ calling for Abdollah Momeni's immediate and unconditional release as he is a prisoner of conscience, held solely for his peaceful criticism of the outcome of the recent presidential election and for his human rights activities in publicising human rights violations to international media and NGOs;
- ✓ expressing concern that his "confession" may have been made under duress while held in solitary confinement and that his refusal to have a lawyer may have been coerced;
- ✓ in the meantime, calling for him to be protected from torture and other ill-treatment in custody, and for him to be given immediate and regular access to a lawyer of his choice, family and any medical treatment he may need.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 3 NOVEMBER 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: www.leader.ir/langs/en/index.php?p=letter (English)
www.leader.ir/langs/fa/index.php?p=letter (Persian)
Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary
Ayatollah Sadeqh Larijani
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: Via website: 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

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives of Iran accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 244/09 (MDE 13/099/2009). Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/099/2009>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Alumni Association of Iran (Advar-e Tahkim-e Vahdat) was founded in 2000. This organization, whose membership is open to graduates of Iranian universities, has been active in promoting democracy and human rights in Iran and has links to the student body, the Office for the Consolidation of Unity (Daftar-e Tahkim-e Vahdat).

Abdollah Momeni had previously been detained following demonstrations in June 2003 and July 2007. He was one of the subjects of UA 187/03 (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE13/016/2003/en/49b7f7a3-d6c4-11dd-ab95-a13b602c0642/mde130162003en.html>) and UA 194/07 (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/095/2007/en>).

In the days following the 13 June 2009 announcement that incumbent Mahmoud Ahmadinejad had won the presidential election, mass demonstrations were swiftly repressed with excessive force, in which dozens of protestors were killed, and hundreds more injured. Some died later in detention. At least 4,000 people were detained across the country. Most have since been released, but several hundred are believed to remain detained, and arrests are continuing. Most, if not all, of those detained have been denied access to legal representation while held, and visits by family members appear to have depended on the degree to which the detained person is considered to have "cooperated" with their interrogators. Mass trial sessions of over 100 people, which started on 1 August 2009, have been grossly unfair. Detainees "confessed" to vaguely-worded charges, many of which have not been recognizably criminal offences. These "confessions", apparently obtained under duress, have been accepted by the court. Some of those on trial were filmed making similar "confessions", which were aired on TV before their trials took place. On 20 September 2009, the Supreme Leader said in a sermon, "Any confession in a court, before cameras, before millions of viewers is religiously, and in the eye of wise people, credible." 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 violations took place in at least one detention centre, Kahrizak, located outside of Tehran, since closed on the order of the Supreme Leader. Up to twelve police officials and a judge who had been involved in transferring detainees to Kahrizak are said to be facing trial for their role in abuses. On 9 September 2009, Farhad Tajarri, a member of the Iranian parliament's Special Parliamentary Committee to review post-election arrests, told the Fars News Agency that a "court hearing for addressing law violations by suspects in the Kahrizak case will be held in the near future". On 13 September 2009, Tehran's Military Prosecutor Shokrollah Bahrami said that 90 people had made complaints regarding their treatment in Kahrizak and that seven police officials were in detention in connection with the event, including the head of the detention centre.

Amnesty International has received reports consistent with a statement made by Mehdi Karroubi that both women and male detainees have been subjected to torture, including by rape, by security officials. The authorities appear to be taking measures to obscure the truth: on 7 September, officials closed down the offices of a committee set up by Mehdi Karroubi and others to collect and collate information about torture and other abuses committed against detainees, and several of the committee's members were arrested. Mehdi Karroubi's office and that of his National Trust Party were also closed, as was the office of the Association for the Defence of Prisoners Rights, established by human rights activist, Emadeddin Baghi, which had also been compiling information on torture and other abuses against detainees. On 12 September, a three-person judiciary committee, including the former Minister of Intelligence, dismissed the rape allegations, and recommended that Mehdi Karroubi be prosecuted for harming the system.

Further information on UA: 244/09 Index: MDE 13/100/2009 Issue Date: 22 September 2009

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