

PUBLIC

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UA 87/04 Fear for safety/ Fear of torture or ill-treatment

IRAN Arzhang Davoodi (m), aged 46

Arzhang Davoodi, who was arrested after he criticised the Iranian authorities in a TV documentary, has reportedly been severely beaten in detention, and Amnesty International fears that he may be at risk of further ill-treatment or torture.

He was arrested between August and October 2003 (there are conflicting reports as to the exact date). He had assisted the making of a secretly and illegally filmed television documentary about Iran which was widely broadcast in northern Europe in December, and in the Americas in January. He was interviewed in the documentary, and spoke about political prisoners, and the death of Canadian-Iranian photojournalist Zahra Kazemi, who died in custody after she was arrested for taking photos of a demonstration outside Evin prison by families of prisoners. (See 'Iran: Only an independent investigative body can serve justice and human rights', AI Index: MDE 13/026/2003, 1 August 2003)

Following his arrest, Arzhang Davoodi was taken to Evin prison. He was held in solitary confinement for approximately three and a half months. During this time his family did not know where he was, although they tried repeatedly to find out, as did the lawyer they later appointed to represent him. He has reportedly been so severely beaten that he has had to be hospitalised several times because of his injuries. According to his family he remains in ill-health: some of his ribs are broken, and his hearing and vision are reportedly now impaired.

The lawyer Arzhang Davoodi's family appointed for him in January 2004 was not able to gain access to Arzhang for almost a month: under Iran's Code of Criminal Procedure, a lawyer's appointment is not official until the client has signed a document to this effect. The lawyer has never been present when Arzhang Davoodi has been interrogated: according to the Code of Criminal Procedure, lawyers are not permitted to be with their clients at interrogations before they are formally charged, and it is not known if charges have been brought against him. According to information received by Amnesty International, the lawyer has told Arzhang Davoodi's family that he is accused of being a spy, and working with an unspecified 'dark organisation' ("*sazman-e siyah*"). It is not clear what this means.

According to his family, Arzhang Davoodi was one of the prisoners who met the United Nations Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression and Opinion, Ambeyi Ligabo, when he visited Evin prison during his five day fact-finding visit to Iran in November. According to press reports, prisoners who spoke to Ligabo have alleged that they were punished afterwards.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Arzhang Davoodi, who has reportedly been ill-treated in detention;
- asking why Arzhang Davoodi has been detained, and asking for details of any charges against him;
- seeking assurances that Arzhang Davoodi will be humanely treated while in custody, and given any medical treatment he may need;
- reminding the authorities of their responsibilities as a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), of which Article 7 says "No one shall be subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment";
- calling for all those found responsible for torture of prisoners to be brought to justice in fair trials;

- urging the authorities to review the provisions in the Code of Criminal Procedure regarding appointment of lawyers and access of lawyers to their clients before they have been charged;

APPEALS TO:

Leader of the Islamic Republic

His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei

The Presidency, Palestine Avenue, Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Telegrams: Leader of Islamic Republic, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Faxes: + 98 21 649 5880 / 21 774 2228 (ask fax to be forwarded to Ayatollah Khamenei)

Email: webmaster@wilayah.org; (on the subject line write: For the attention of the office of His Excellency, Ayatollah al Udhma Khamenei, Qom)

Salutation: Your Excellency

President

His Excellency, Hojjatoleslam val Moslemin Sayed Mohammad Khatami

The Presidency, Palestine Avenue, Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Telegram: President Khatami, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: + 98 21 649 5880

Email: khatami@president.ir

Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary

His Excellency Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahrudi

Ministry of Justice, Park-e Shahr, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: + 98 21 879 6671 (please keep trying; please mark "care of Director of International Affairs, Judiciary")

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

Islamic Human Rights Commission

Mr Mohammad Hassan Zia'i-Far

Secretary, Islamic Human Rights Commission

PO Box 13165-137, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: + 98 21 204 0541

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 13 March 2004.