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The Problem of Southern Azerbaijan

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The Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights, Geneva

Please circulate this Briefing Note to the following:

- Working Group on arbitrary detention (also for Fair Trials);
- Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression
- Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance
- The Independent Expert on Minority Issues
- Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges;

CC Mr Dyke and Mrs. Harrison, Amnesty International, London

Also: Human Rights Watch and Human Rights Server

Dear sir/madam,

Briefing Note: SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF THE MAY 2006 MASS PROTESTS IN SOUTHERN AZERBAIJAN AGAINST IRANIAN RACISM

This is a Briefing Note to keep you informed of the ongoing situation of Southern Azerbaijan in relation to the second anniversary of the May 2006 Mass Protests against the Iranian racist policies. Building on the strength of the Urgent Action by Amnesty International on the second Anniversary (MDE 13/078/2008, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/078/2008/en>), we would like to draw your attention to a number of further issues related to the anniversary and to the events since our General Communication 2 (Ref.: 487/2008 on 25 February 2008). We hope to provide you with detailed information on each of these issues as soon as our resources allow us.

We have consistently provided you evidence that the Iranian governance in Southern Azerbaijan is tantamount to an arbitrary rule, reminiscent of colonialism, as there is no authority to hear the voice of Southern Azerbaijanis. For instance, we informed you of up to 30 Southern Azerbaijani individuals were extra-judicially killed by the Iranian militia (Ref.: 344/2006 on 28 June 2006); and have reported that the nation of Azerbaijan demands an enquiry on these killings (e.g. Ref.: 420/2006 on 4 December 2006). Two of these victims in May 2006 were Huseyn Fethi-pur and Tovhid Azeriyyun but two years on, according to the reports (<http://www.oyrenci.com/News.aspx?newsId=2983>) their brothers (Rehim and Esger Fethipur and Husein Azeriyyun) were badly beaten up in an unprovoked manner by Special Guard units of the Iranian authorities under supervision of Lieutenant Eynollah Novruzpour (عین الله نوروزپور) in public at the hometown of the victims, Sulduz. They were reportedly transferred to a detention facility in Sulduz and were released on bail after two days. The point is that, the manner in which these victims were treated would be reminiscent of colonial rules by rage and as such they portray the fate of the nation of Southern Azerbaijan.

This incident is against the background, where the peace-loving nation of Southern Azerbaijan were preparing to mark the second Anniversary of May 2006 Mass Protests but the Iranian authorities militarised Southern Azerbaijan, reminiscent of colonial rules and repressed the



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anniversary by violating the human and national rights of the nation of Southern Azerbaijan. This repression too came at the expense of arresting more than 100 individuals and activists before, during or after the anniversary on 21 May in each of provincial Azerbaijani capital cities of Urmu, Erdebil, Zengan and Tebriz and their satellite cities of Sulduz, Qoshachay, Khoy, and many other cities and towns of Southern Azerbaijan. Many have been held incommunicado and still remained unaccounted. Students were active and in Hemedan, Tebriz and other cities, where they managed to stage gatherings.

At the onset of the repression, the Iranian authorities staged a trial of prominent activists (http://www.savalansesi.com/2008/05/blog-post_909.html) in the Revolutionary Court, Branch 105 in Tehran on 9 May 2008. The trial was held in a close session and was brought against Abdulla Abbasi Javan, Behruz Seferi, Mrs. Leyla Seferi, Elirza Metinpur, Jelil Qenilu, Yaqub Merendli, Mehemed Nusreti, Mir Qasim Seyyidin zade, Saleh Kamrani, Seid Metinpur and Dr Mehemed Eli Heyderi. We have presented Communications on most of these individuals, although have not updated when they were released on bail due to our limited resources. It is clear that this trial was to gag these activists and on a similar note hundreds were summoned in Urmu, Tebriz Zengan and Erdebil seeking written note for not to take part in the oncoming anniversary.

The arbitrary acts of the Iranian authorities also included an all round suppression of Southern Azerbaijani students in various forms, including their temporary or permanent expulsion, deprivation from taking part in the examination, removing their publication licences. Resources allowing, we endeavour to prepare a full report on the suppression of Southern Azerbaijani students by the Iranian authorities.

Another act of the Iranian authorities against the marking of the anniversary of the May 2006 Mass Protests was the massive blackout of the news on the ongoing repression through disinformation. Although Southern Azerbaijani activists broke this blackout and published in the Internet various accounts of the news as they rolled out, we are still hoping to establish detailed account on the detainees. We also wish to bring to your attention that the Iranian centric opposition groups, inside or outside the country, showed to be in unison with their government by resorting to silence. This is effective evidence that non-Farsi speaking nations within Iran are excluded by the Iranian-centric organisations and the defence of these nations are only within your mandates.

Finally, since our General Communication² on (Ref.: 487/2008 on 25 February 2008), there has been many activist suffering arbitrary detentions and we are aim to compile another general communication to keep you informed of violation of their human rights. We trust that you will defend the national and human rights of the nation of Southern Azerbaijan, in every opportunity.

Yours faithfully,

Boyuk Resuloglu

The Committee for the Defence of the Rights of World Azerbaijanis



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