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## *The Problem of Southern Azerbaijan*

No.: 502/2008  
Date: 10 August 2008

The Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights, Geneva,  
Please circulate this Communication to the Special Representative of the Secretary-  
General on human rights defenders, also this update is of interest to:

- The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention
- Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers
- 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 Related Intolerance
- The Independent Expert on Minority Issues

CC Mr. Dyke and Mrs. Harrison, Amnesty International, London  
Also: Human Rights Watch and Human Rights Server

Mr. Seid Metinpur



Dear sir/madam

### **UPDATE 5: ARBITRARY SENTENCE AGAINST MR. METINPUR**

Further to our Communication 2 (Ref: 458/2007 on 22 July 2007) and its Update No 4 (Ref: 480/2008 on 21 January 2008), please find enclosed Update No 5 to safeguard human rights of Mr. Seid Metinpur, a distinguished human rights defender of Southern Azerbaijan persecuted arbitrarily by Iranian authorities. Attached information comprises:

**Table 1:** presents a chronology of the arbitrary treatments that he suffered, in particular he was released on 27 February 2008, after 279 days of arbitrary detention and torture.

**Table 2:** presents the translation of a succinct and witty letter of thanks by Mr. Metinpur to those who campaigned for him and therefore this is for your attention too.

**Table 3:** presents the report by Reporters Without Borders on the outcome of the arbitrary sentence, passed on 10 June 2008: (i) 7 years of punitive sentence for “maintaining relations with foreigners” and (ii) one year sentence for “publicity against the Islamic Republic.” He was never indicted and therefore we learned of these arbitrary charges for the first time. We failed to make sense of Charge 1; perhaps you are more successful than us! Normally Amnesty International maintains such charges are void in international courts.

**Table 4:** presents the log of our communications and updates in campaigning for Mr. Metinpur.

It is regrettable that while our backlogs were piling up, we missed to issue many important updates. To illustrate this and compensate for our shortfall, we start with the case of Mr Seid Metinpur. We would like to stress that the compilation and submission of this Update is due to our initiative and we have not consulted with Mr. Metinpur, his family members or anyone representing their interests. We have to state this to manage reprisal risks against the victims by the Iranian authorities.

Once again we appeal to your kind attention to this case requesting for the use of your mandates to spoil the Iranian authorities order on gagging Southern Azerbaijani activists, e.g. Mr. Metinpur. We hope you will make a strong representation to the Iranian authorities against their futile attempt undermining national and human rights of the nation of Azerbaijan in Southern Azerbaijan. Thank you in advance for your care.

Yours faithfully,

Eli Tashkent

The Committee for the Defence of the Rights of World Azerbaijanis



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**Table 1 The Chronology of the Arbitrary Violation of Human Rights of Mr Metinpur**

**Arbitrary Court Case 1 Brought against Mr. Metinpur by Iranian authorities**

21 Feb 2007	Arrested in <i>Sebze Meydani</i> , Zengan, on the occasion of the celebration of the International Mother Language Day, together with at least 28 other victims from Zengan alone.
26 Feb 2007	Amnesty International issued a general statement (MDE 13/020/2007 (Public) and named some of the Azerbaijani detainees on the occasion of the celebration of the International Mother Language Day, including his name.
3 March 2007	Released after an arbitrary case was compiled against him.

**Arbitrary Court Case 2 Brought against Mr. Metinpur by Iranian authorities**

25 May 2007	Arrested together with his wife in a street in Zengan, after remanding him in custody but his wife was released. This was in relation to the first anniversary of the May 2006 Mass Protests.
14 July 2008	On the 50 <sup>th</sup> day of this arbitrary detention, Etiyye, his wife, wrote a heartfelt letter stating that: "Here is a modern Prometheus and enchained; enchained for discovering the secret of 'immortality'; but there will come a time for undoing the chains, after which the wounds shall be healed."
End of July 07	After two months of interrogation and torture in the detention units of the Ministry of Information in Zengan, he was transferred to Wing 209 of the notorious Evin prison, in Tehran.
23 Aug 2007	Amnesty International issued an Urgent Action and called him a prisoner of conscience.
Sept 2007	Transferred back to Zengan prison. This took place sometimes before the end of Sept 2007.
4 Dec 2007	ASMEK informed that he was transferred to Evin prison, at which time there was no news on him for 50 days since 16 October 2007.
11 Dec 2007	On the 200 <sup>th</sup> of this arbitrary detention, Etiyye, his wife, issued her heartfelt Letter 2, stating: "O God, please protect Seid and bear witness to how a nation is helpless and isolated and yet how another nation with impoverished national consciousness is indifferent and in a deep hibernation."
17 Dec 2007	Mrs. Etiyye was allowed to visit her husband for the first time on the 207 <sup>th</sup> day of detention. According to her: Seid had massively lost weight and was suffering from a heavy hair loss. He was severely tortured and security officials had exerted unbearable pressures on him to take part in a TV program to confess to the dictated charges.
27 Feb 08	After more than nine months of being arbitrarily detained, to be precise after 279 days of captivity, he was released on bail for 500 million Tumen (approx half a million dollar). This is a massive bail in Iran and set new standards in Iranian (mis)justice. In this period, has was condemned 205 days to solitary confinement and of these, he endured 45 days in a solitary confinement in a completely dark and thoroughly unhygienic cell and was constantly tortured. He suffered from skin infection.
11 May 2008	Trial was held in Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court, Tehran, of course behind closed doors.
10 June 2008	The Prosecutor, Salavati, issued the sentence, in Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court, Tehran: <b>Sentence:</b> eight years of suspended sentence <b>Charges:</b> "maintaining relations with foreigners" and "publicity against the Islamic Republic." See also Table 3



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**Table 2 The Letter of Thanks from Mr. Seid Metinpur for the Campaigners**

<http://zenganli.blogfa.com/post-59.aspx>

Hi,

After all I have been through, the resumption of writing is hard for me but I must have been reborn for this greeting. Hello.

I would like to thank all friends, whether I have seen them or not, who campaigned for me, my brother, my wife and for my family but suffice to these simple words that I can utter today.

I know that my simple utterance of thanks does not do justice, neither as an adequate expression for your sincere attentions, nor commensurate with your deeds. Please allow me to use my words sparingly and just accept my love.

Thank you (in Azerbaijani Turkic)

سلام

با اینکه به سختی می توانم بنویسم اما باید برای این سلام زبان باز می کردم. سلام

از همه دوستان دیده و ندیده که در مدت بازداشت و بعد از آن من، برادرم، همسر و خانواده ام را مورد لطف و محبت ! خود قرار دادند با همین کلماتی که امروز می توانم به کار ببرم تشکر می کنم

می دانم این کلمه تشکر هیچ چیز را خصوصاً مهربانیها و محبتها را نه قادر به بیان است و نه جبران می کند اما با همین بضاعت کلمات حس احترامان به خودتان را قبول کنید. ساغ اولون



**Table 3 The Statement by Reporters without Border on the Arbitrary Sentences Passed Against Mr. Metinpur : [http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id\\_article=27446](http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=27446)**

11 June 2008

Two journalists get suspended jail terms for “publicity” against the government

Reporters Without Borders condemns the suspended prison sentences that have been passed on journalists Said Matinpour and Yaghoub Salaki Nia in separate cases. Matinpour’s jail term was eight years. Nia’s was one year. In each case, the sentences were handed down in closed door hearings without their lawyers being present. They both plan to appeal.

At the same time, the organisation welcomes the news that Masoud Rafai Taleghani of the daily Farhangh Ashati was released at the end of May after being imprisoned arbitrarily for more than a month. The grounds for his arrest were never revealed. His release brings the number of journalists imprisoned in Iran to seven.

“As is customary in Iran, the authorities prosecute and sentence journalists with a complete lack of transparency,” Reporters Without Borders said. “The lawyers were not given the details of the charges against their clients. It is also worrying to see that trials involving journalists are being held behind closed doors with increasing frequency.”

Matinpour, who reports for Yarpagh, an Azeri-language weekly based in Tehran, was given his eight-year suspended sentence by a Tehran revolutionary court today for “maintaining relations with foreigners” and “publicity against the Islamic Republic.” He was arrested at his home in the northwestern city of Zanzan on 28 May 2007 and was held in pre-trial detention for nearly eight months until his family was able to pay the exorbitant sum of 500 million toumen (500,000 euros) demanded as bail.

Nia, a freelancer, got his one-year suspended sentence from the same court for “publicity against the Islamic Republic.” He spent 50 days in Tehran’s Evin prison at the end of last year, until his release on 19 December on payment of 80 million toumen (80,000 euros) in bail.

The news was widely reported in Southern Azerbaijani news media including Savalansesi and Haqqimiz (<http://haqqimiz1.blogfa.com/post-22.aspx>). Haaqimiz reported that the sentence was:

- 7 years for “maintaining relations with foreigners” and
- 1 year for “publicity against the Islamic Republic.”

These charges emerged for the first time and no one yet understands what they mean.



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**Table 4 The Log of our Communications and Updates**

Ref: 446/2007 on 4 March 2007	Communication 1
Ref: 447/ 2007 on 5 March 2007	General Report by DunAzHAK, naming him among 100 named individuals detained arbitrarily for celebrating of the International Mother Language Day
Ref: 458/2007; on 22 July 2007	Communication 2: presenting the details of this arbitrary detention and the translation of Mrs. Etiyye Metinpur's first letter
Ref: 458/2007; on 22 July 200	Update No 1
Ref: 473/2007, on 12 December 2007	Update No 2, presenting the translation of Mrs. Etiyye Metinpur's second letter
Ref: 475/2007, on 21 December 2007	Update No 3 presenting the merging news on torture
Ref: 480/2008; on 21 January 2008	Update 4: Mr. Metinpur was tortured with urgent need to medical care
Ref: 501/2008; on 8 August 2008	This update