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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 Update to the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; also relevant to:

- 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. Elirza Metinpur



Dear sir/madam

UPDATE 2: ARBITRARY SENTENCE AGAINST MR. ELIRZA METINPUR

Further to our Communication (Ref: 468/2007; Date: 11 November 2007) and its Update 1 (Ref: 481/2008 on 22 January 2008), please find enclosed Update 2 to safeguard human rights of Mr. Elirza Metinpur, a Southern Azerbaijani cultural activist, who was arrested by the Iranian authorities and deprived of his liberty.

Mr. Metinpur (Elirza, the junior brother of the prominent human right defender Mr. Seid Metinpur) was detained and tortured twice in 2007 for his activities in promoting the Azerbaijani cultural identity and the second time was on 28 August 2007 and seemingly to pressurise to his brother to confess to terms dictated by Iranian authorities. The events since our Update 1 are as follows:

- **27 February 2008:** released on bail for an incredible surety of 100 million Tumen (approximately \$100,000);
- **11 May 2008:** was tried in a closed court in Branch 115 of the Revolutionary Court, Tehran;
- **10 June 2008:** the passed sentence (<http://haqqimiz1.blogfa.com/post-22.aspx>) comprised an arbitrary determination of one year of punitive sentence for “publicity against the Islamic Republic.” We learned for the first time of the charge. Although the sentence was suspended for five years, it was effectively designed to gag him.

The mandates entrusted on you are the only remaining instrument for spoiling the gagging order instigated by the Iranian authorities against Mr. Metinpur in particular and against Southern Azerbaijani activists in general. We therefore appeal to your kind attention and hope that you will make a strong representation to the Iranian authorities against their futile attempt on undermining national and human rights of the nation of Azerbaijan in Southern Azerbaijan.

Yours faithfully,

Eli Tashkent

The Committee for the Defence of the Rights of World Azerbaijanis