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The Problem of Southern Azerbaijan

Say (No.): 538/2011
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The Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights, Geneva

Please circulate this letter to the following:

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

- CC UN Habitat for a Better Urban Future: Christine Auclair, and Günter Karl
- Mr Dyke and Mrs. Harrison, Amnesty International, London
- Also: Human Rights Watch and Human Rights Server



Strangulation of Lake Urmu

Dear sir/madam,

BRIEFING NOTE 2: POPULAR RALLY TO SAVE LAKE URMU (also spelt as Urmia)

Please find enclosed Briefing Note 2 concerning the arbitrary treatment of Southern Azerbaijani environmental campaigners by the Iranian authorities. The campaigners rallied together in many cities of Southern Azerbaijan on 2 April 2011, questioning the policies of the Iranian authorities on Lake Urmu, which is at its last stage of existence. A more detailed report was given on 15 May 2010, Ref 526/2010.

Southern Azerbaijan, dubbed by some European academics as the historic Garden of Eden, is now stricken by salt-dust storms subsequent to the desertification of the vanishing Lake Urmu. The people are alarmed by a looming catastrophe of biblical proportions. For the second year in running, Southern Azerbaijani environmental activists mobilized another popular rally on April the 2nd in many cities to demand action for the rectification of the Iranian policies (for more information, see <http://urmugolu90.blogfa.com/>). Instead, the Iranian authorities resorted to their iron-fist policies and failed to sympathize with the concerns of Southern Azerbaijanis. We would like to bring this sensitive issue to your attention.

The Briefing below is cascaded covering the impending environmental disaster of Lake Urmu within the context of the problem of Southern Azerbaijan, that within the racism in Iran and that within the context of turmoil in the Middle East. The emerging picture is that the mindset in Southern Azerbaijan is conditioned by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and therefore is quite unique in a region which is in turmoil and without any direction. Despite suffering from the Iranian racism and the onslaught of Iranian authorities, no one in Southern Azerbaijan is talking of martyrdom but the activists inflict attrition onto the Iranian authorities by singing the tune of Save Lake Urmu through democratic protests and further evidence is given in Tables 3, 4 and 5. Notably, the activists of *Sayın Qala* and *Tikan Tepe*, Southern Azerbaijani towns, are seen as strong flag-bearers.

We appeal to you to support the human rights of the victims who were arbitrarily detained by the Iranian authorities, where the victims were just exercising their rights to peaceful protests. We also remind you that Mr. Huseyn Nesiri is still in prison (who was arrested on 2 April 2010 when taking part in the first Save Lake Urmu campaign, see Ref 526/2010 Date: 15 May 2010) and urge you to campaign for his release too.

We thank you in advance for your attention and subsequent actions.

Yours faithfully,

Mr. Boyuk Resuloglu
The Committee for the Defence of the Rights of World Azerbaijanis



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BRIEFING NOTE

This Briefing Note is not an analysis but aims to reflect on the grave environmental disaster, which threatens survival of many towns and cities and thousands of lush villages in Southern Azerbaijan. It covers the following:

1. An outline of the Second National Rally to Save Lake Urmu – full details may be found in <http://urmugolu90.blogfa.com/> – a site maintained by the Southern Azerbaijani environmental campaigners and devoted to the ongoing protests related to Lake Urmu.
2. Background to the South Azerbaijani Environmental Campaigns
3. The Southern Azerbaijani Way of Thinking
4. The Iranian Way of Thinking and Response to the Ongoing Turmoil
5. The Context of the Ongoing Turmoil in the Middle East
6. Conclusion

1. An outline of the Second National Rally to Save Lake Urmu

Every day that passes, Azerbaijanis see themselves confronted with an increasingly shrinking Lake Urmu. They see that the heart of Southern Azerbaijan is being transformed from a wetland to a saline wasteland. The alarm of the impacts of this desertification has now been transformed into a popular action and the first wave of this action was orchestrated on 2 April 2010.

The popular campaign was organised by the environmental activists of Southern Azerbaijan and the date of 2 April is called the *Day of Nature*, which has mythological history related to preparedness against catastrophes, the account of which goes as far back as the Sumerian times. This day has now entered into the calendar of the national movement of Southern Azerbaijan, as the campaign day for the environment participated by the Azerbaijani women activists, football fans, linguistic and cultural activists of the national movement of Southern Azerbaijan. The aim was to enjoy the day and call upon the authorities to take the environment of Lake Urmu serious. The participation of women and families with their children is a striking feature of this environmental campaign.

The Iranian authorities acted in their brutish manner and arrested many individuals, an account of which is given by Amnesty international (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/038/2011/en>, UA: 202/11, Index: MDE 13/038/2011). According to Amnesty International, some 70 individuals were rounded up in Tebriz alone. Table 1 presents our compilation of some of the known names of the victims who were detained by the Iranian authorities and Table 2 outlines more information about one victim who has certainly suffered torture by the Iranian authorities.

Southern Azerbaijanis remain defiant of the repression imposed by the Iranian authorities and some evidence for this include those in Tables 4 and 5.

Notably, Mr. Huseyn Nesiri was arrested on 2 April 2010 when taking part in the first Save Lake Urmu campaign. He has been arbitrarily detained and since then he is still in prison. See Ref 526/2010 Date: 15 May 2010.



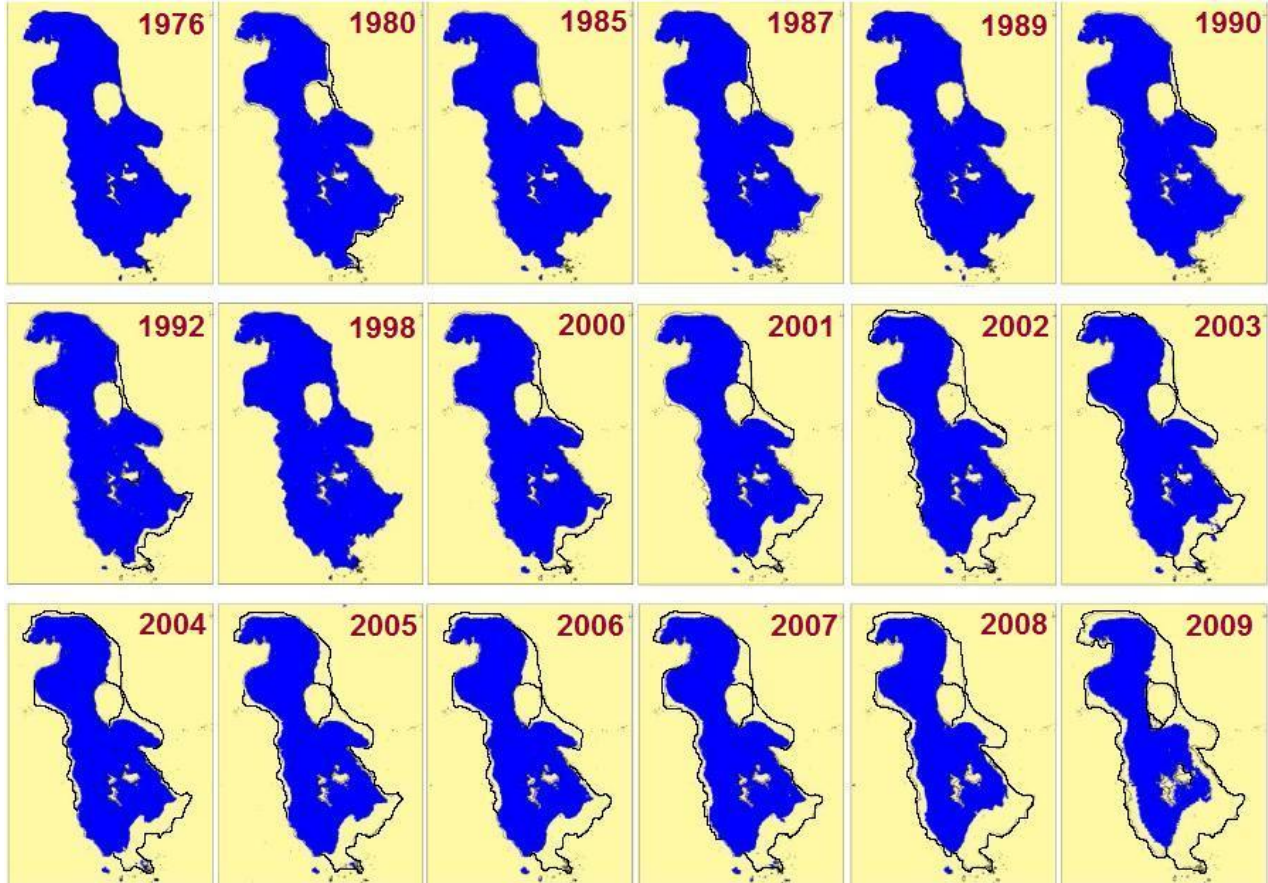


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2. Background to this South Azerbaijani Environmental Campaigns

Lake Urmu is a wetland, registered under the “Convention on Wetlands of International Importance as Waterfowl Habitat.” In reality, this lake is the heartland of Southern Azerbaijan for being a vital link in its ecosystem. Now this ecological subsystem is undermined, see the diagram below.



The pictures below show a sign where used to be inside the lake and impacts of desertification on the capital city, Tebriz some 100 km away.

<http://www.setfa.net/images/qzsmgdmr4duvnx4.jpg>

The sign shows the receding lake



A View of Tebriz Stricken by unhealthy Atmosphere with Wind-blown Particle from the Desertified Lake Urmu by ISNA





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The Convention puts various responsibilities on the parties involved including the formulation and implementation of a plan to the conservation of the lake and its wise use. There is a systemic failure so that:

- The international community do not exert an effective pressure on the Iranian authorities for saving the lake.
- The Iranian authorities are indifferent to the catastrophe as it unfolds but they are not necessary indifferent to matters such as their iron-fist control even over the environmental campaigners.
- The Iranian opposition uses all their machinery to divert the world attention from the protests of Southern Azerbaijanis and both the government and opposition deny the existence of the ethnic nation of Azerbaijan in Southern Azerbaijan, who are more populous than Persians and they are undergoing an environmental catastrophe.
- The most optimistic Southern Azerbaijanis are increasingly becoming aware of the disingenuous nature of the Iranian/Persian approach to Southern Azerbaijan but the majority are now sure that something is seriously wrong. Therefore, the restructuring of mindsets in Southern Azerbaijan is well advanced and is driven by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We will describe this mindset in the next section.

The ethnic nation in Southern Azerbaijan is now focussed on their own self-interests, according to which the unfolding catastrophe is evaluated within the remits of the following factors:

- a. Incompetence of the Iranian authorities,
- b. Mismanagement of water resources
- c. Poor scientific understanding of the Iranian authorities,
- d. Deliberate policies of the Iranian authorities (See also Table 5, which translates an open letter to members of Majlis – the Iranian parliament – of the *Sayin Qala* town in Southern Azerbaijan),
- e. Climate change

Whilst there is no serious scientific study of the catastrophe by independent scientific organisations, the public opinion in Southern Azerbaijan is developing along Items a-d above, and they are not convinced about Item e. Items a and d are high in the public perception.

The above explains the reason that the mindset in Southern Azerbaijan is developing unlike that of the Iranian/Persian mindset. Today, Southern Azerbaijanis are taking their own issues in a very serious manner.



3. The Southern Azerbaijani Mindset

The centre of gravity of attitudes in Southern Azerbaijan is formed by the full account of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This has made the 30 million Southern Azerbaijanis to realise that they are connected to the world in expressing their abhorrence of racism. Driven by the wisdom of this Universal Declaration, this ethnic nation has unearthed the ugly face of the Iranian racism, which unashamedly claims the supremacy of their race.

Today, the youth activists in Southern Azerbaijan have made up of their minds, which goes beyond their elderly generations and as such the remains of patriarchal order has diminished substantially; there are no tribal order in Azerbaijan; religion is exposed by its association with the Iranian authorities; and the Iranian zeal for centralisation is physically preventing the ethnic nations to build capacity for their national organisations, as everything is driven from the Iranian-centric grip of power. The Iranian authorities do everything possible to drive the Southern Azerbaijani youth to extremism but the youth are well aware that this is nothing but a trap, as the National Movement of Southern Azerbaijan has already discovered the magic of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The youth in Southern Azerbaijan have no intention to overthrow the government but they are better organised every day to demand their rights in peaceful ways. They express themselves in the sports arena, in arts, in protests and in the prisons. During the last 10 years, no prisoner of conscience has repented under torture from their intelligently chosen ways.

Today, Southern Azerbaijanis not only have discovered the wisdom of this Universal Declaration but have also acquired its mindset, its mannerism, its worldview. The youth are highly appreciative of the value of their lives. Everyone in Azerbaijan rejects martyrdom but defends fiercely their rights. The youth are driven by issues and not by hot-air political sentiments. This is not a claim but a solid fact. For instance, Table 3 presents a chronology of the build-up towards the 2nd campaign of Save Lake Urmu. We are not asking you to read the contents of this table but a glance through it shows that a critical mass of activists has already been created, which is capable of implementing organised actions. The youth are not being controlled by a single individual but all the activists are spontaneously emerging from all over Southern Azerbaijan and acting in a like-minded manner. The more extreme policies inflicted by the Iranian authorities, the more like-minded the Southern Azerbaijani youth become. We argue that the Southern Azerbaijani mindset is now a reality and this is the triumph of the Universal Human Rights, which is unique in the region.

Southern Azerbaijani youth have been alienated by the Iranian racist policies and therefore the Southern Azerbaijani activists take initiatives on:

- Being engaged on environmental issues and they challenge the authorities for deeds and actions without aiming to overthrow them
- By fighting racism in the real fields of life, such as education and sports
- By being focussed on the gender issues and supporting woman rights
- By fiercely defending their language and ethnic rights
- By exposing the Iranian-centric politics on their disingenuous economical policies
- By not compromising with Iranian racism undermining the territorial integrity of South Azerbaijan

Southern Azerbaijanis are now outspoken in the Iranian politics by their characteristic silence. This is their reciprocity to the Iranian iron curtain of misinformation and disinformation against all the ethnic nations. Southern Azerbaijanis are also clear in campaigning for their environment and their human rights. Even though the Iranian repression is at its full force now, Table 4 shows the defiant Southern Azerbaijanis are campaigning for Saving Lake Urmu by a petition signed by activists.



The Iranian Response to the Ongoing Turmoil

The Iranian-centric worldview has alienated the youth of the ethnic nations in Iran. This worldview keeps bombarding incessantly with their Persian ancestor-worshipping sentiments on the face of Arab, Southern Azerbaijani, or Baluchi youth. The Iranian-centric sentiment is a mishmash of the following traits:

- **Racism and chauvinism:** the country is in its feverish stage on this disease
- **Patriarchy:** This is quite strong especially among the wealthy and the religious Iranians. The strength of religion is often more felt among such Persians.
- **Tribalism:** By renaming the country from the *Protectorate (Memalik-i-Mehruse)* to Iran, The thinking was that the name *Iran* cognately related to the word *Aryan*, where *Aryan* as a term is nothing but fiction of the 19th century and Iran was never the official name of the country. This legitimized the Iranian/Persian tribalism and the emerging Iranian-centric worldview, regarding all the other ethnic nations by their language and as migrants.
- **Feudalism:** Still its cultural relics are striking in the country.
- **Nationalism:** If a healthy version of nationalism can be found in the country, it will be quite sensible trait to do business with but the Iranian nationalism is infested with the other traits.
- **Religious zeal:** This is at its high tide but then Iranian secular groups tend to worship Zoroastrianism forgetting that it was a religion with a cast system.
- **Exaggeration:** The character of exaggeration is legendary in itself in this country.
- **Democracy:** This term is in widespread use and is a cliché replacing the old term of “imperialism” which was another cliché in common usage before the Islamic revolution. All it means in Iran and in a colloquial language is this: “you make the way for me to rule but you should not rule anyway.” The Iranian-centric worldview is devoid of the culture of democracy. The acid test for this is their conception of ethnicity. If they start acknowledging themselves as an ethnic nation in the country but not the master of it, the long process of normalization may start afterwards and only after this there is a chance for the emergence of a democratic culture.

The Persian archetypal character is a composite of the above and they are in no way to compromise with the other ethnic nations in the country and at least accept them for not sharing the above Persian mindsets. It is noteworthy that in the Persian language the word for ethnicity and tribalism are the same Arabic word: “Qovm.” This is a good measure of the Iranian-centric mindset.

5. The Context of the Ongoing Turmoil in the Middle East

The Middle East is now in turmoil where the various countries and societies are being torn apart towards various centres of gravity including:

- Patriarchy
- Tribalism
- Religion
- Nationalism
- Democracy

When one visualises the role of the above centres of gravity in the Middle East, it is difficult to become an optimist for the future of the region. Of course, democracy without the culture of mutual inclusion and debate means very little.



5. Conclusion

The Middle East is in turmoil; Iran follows the illusion of becoming a chemical and nuclear power; each Iranian opposition group sees themselves as the “only legitimate democratic power;” and Southern Azerbaijan braced with coping the unfolding catastrophe by the desertification of Lake Urmu. The voice of Southern Azerbaijan is clear: this unfolding catastrophe is the outcome of the incompetence or deliberate policies of the Iranian authorities. However, still people believe that the catastrophe can be averted.

We therefore appeal to you to use your mandates and campaign for:

- Immediate and unconditional release of the detainees including Mr. Huseyn Nesiri, who is arbitrarily detained since 2 April 2010 for his environmental campaign.
- Assurance from the Iranian authorities that the environmental campaigners are not harassed let alone detained and tortured.
- The planned damming of the tributaries are stopped immediately
- The existing dams are dewatered
- Science-based water resource planning is carried out for Southern Azerbaijan, using international skills and employing democratically-elected Southern Azerbaijani experts rather than appointing self-conceited officials who do not care about the ethnic nations.
- Condemn racism in Iran in strongest terms and by doing so, please be sure that you are doing the best to cure the sick mind of the racist elements riddling Iran.



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Table 1 Names of some of the Individuals who were rounded up when campaigning for Save Lake Urmu
On the *Nature Day* – 2 February 2011 –
According ArazNews (<http://urmugolu90.blogfa.com/post-81.aspx>) estimate the number of arrested
individuals to be 127 individuals in Tebriz.

No	Name/Family Name	The Situation report	Source
Urmu – the capital city of West Azerbaijan and the second city of Southern Azerbaijan			
1	Seid Khizirlu		http://urmugolu90.blogfa.com/post-81.aspx
2	Tahir İmamkendi		
3	Dr Mehbub Azadi	Summoned together with 20 individuals for court due to chanting mottoes for saving Lake Urmu	http://www.araznews.net/2011/04/20.html
4	Qadir Qevi-penje		
Tebriz			
5	Adil Yusifi		http://urmugolu90.blogfa.com/post-81.aspx
6	Babek Rizai		http://urmugolu90.blogfa.com/post-81.aspx
7	Babek Huseyni		http://urmugolu90.blogfa.com/post-81.aspx
8	Davud Shiri	Doubts were expressed on this	
9	Ehed baqiri	Detained, beaten when arrested	
10	Eli Babapur		http://urmugolu90.blogfa.com/post-81.aspx
11	Eli Balende		http://urmugolu90.blogfa.com/post-81.aspx
12	Elyar Shukri – (can be: Ilyas Shukri Astamal)		http://urmugolu90.blogfa.com/post-81.aspx
13	Hamid Huseyni		http://urmugolu90.blogfa.com/post-81.aspx
14	Hebib Purveli	Detained, tried on 29-30 Feb in Tebriz Court 4, Judge: Hashem Zadeh	http://www.araznews.net/2011/04/13-90_20.html
15	Hesen Khoyi		
16	Hesen Khubi		http://urmugolu90.blogfa.com/post-81.aspx
17	Hojjet Mukhtarzade	Detained, tried on 29-30 Feb in Tebriz Court 4, Judge: Hashem Zadeh	http://www.araznews.net/2011/04/13-90_20.html
18	Huseyn Abdullahi		
19	Jelal Berqi		http://urmugolu90.blogfa.com/post-81.aspx
20	Jelil Elemdar Milani	Detained, tried on 29-30 Feb in Tebriz Court 4, Judge: Hashem Zadeh	http://www.araznews.net/2011/04/13-90_20.html
21	Mehemmed-riza Jeferi		http://urmugolu90.blogfa.com/post-81.aspx
22	Mehemmed Khetibi		http://urmugolu90.blogfa.com/post-81.aspx
23	Resul bahari		http://urmugolu90.blogfa.com/post-81.aspx
24	Resul Rezevi	Doubts were expressed on this	http://www.arkqalasi.com/1390/01/14/post-1358/
25	Seid Aghayi		
26	Sefer Aftabi		http://solgunaz.com/
27	Tevekkul Aftabi		http://solgunaz.com/
28	Vehid Purrize		http://urmugolu90.blogfa.com/post-81.aspx
29	Vehid Terebnak	Tortured after detention	http://www.araznews.net/2011/04/blog-post_09.html
30	Semed Kerimi		http://urmugolu90.blogfa.com/post-81.aspx
31	Veli Hebibpur		
Tikmedash (Bostanabad)			



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32	Eli Selimi	Detained, tried on 29-30 Feb in Tebriz Court 4, Judge: Hashem Zadeh	http://www.araznews.net/2011/04/13-90_20.html
33	Kazim Vahidi		http://urmugolu90.blogfa.com/post-81.aspx
34	Seid Siyami	Detained, tried on 29-30 Feb in Tebriz Court 4, Judge: Hashem Zadeh	http://www.araznews.net/2011/04/13-90_20.html



Defiant Jelil Elemdar Milani (Penname: Savalan) when arrested

Maragha: The following victims were detained in relation to supporting Tiraxtur Team

Shehruz ?	Detained on 6 February 2011; tried on 29-30 Feb in Tebriz Court 4, Judge: Hashem Zadeh	http://www.araznews.net/2011/04/13-90_20.html
Taghi Movlevi		http://www.araznews.net/2011/04/13-90_20.html
Behzad Khudayari		http://www.araznews.net/2011/04/13-90_20.html
Firidun Ehmediyan	Detained on 31 March 2011; ; tried on 29-30 Feb in Tebriz Court 4, Judge: Hashem Zadeh	http://www.araznews.net/2011/04/13-90_20.html
Babek Huseyni	Was arrested on 31 March 2011 and there is no much news on him.	



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Table 2 Individual victims who are definitely known to be tortured



Summary of the information on Hebib Purveli (Source: http://www.araznews.net/2011/04/blog-post_6847.html)

- Was arrested and detained on 2 February 2011 in Tebriz on *Nature Day* taking part in the Save Lake Urmu campaign
- He has been physically tortured
- He was being kept in an undisclosed place
- Amnesty International has named him in (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/038/2011/en>)
- He was in good health before detention
- **The other individuals who are known to be tortured include: Eli Selimi, Seid Siyami, jelil Elemdar Milani and Seid Khizirlu**



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Table 3: Chronology of the Build-up towards the Second Campaign of Save Lake Urmu

It is not necessary to read the contents but a glance shows the like-mindedness in organising the campaign.

	Activity, News, Article Source: http://urmugolu90.blogfa.com/posts/?p=1 and http://urmugolu90.blogfa.com/posts/?p=2	Date
1	Beating up the family members of the protestors	5 February 2011
2	Gathering of family members of the detainees in Tebriz in front of the detention centre, the names of 25 detainees	4 February 2011
3	Nice pictures from protests	4 February 2011
4	Reflection of the Repression of the Campaign in other Mieda	4 February 2011
5	The names of some of the detainees	4 February 2011
6	The assaults by the paramilitary groups on the protestors in Urmu	4 February 2011
7	Transfer of the detainees on the Save Lake Urmu campaign to detention centres	3 February 2011
8	Pictures from the gathering in Ankara expressing their support to the Save Lake Urmu campaign	3 February 2011
9	Scenes of a protestor being arrested	3 February 2011
10	The gathering of Qoshachay activists expressing their support to the Save Lake Urmu campaign	3 February 2011
11	Detains Continue in Tebriz	2 February 2011
12	Nice Pictures from the campaign of protests Lake Urmu	2 February 2011
13	Arrests and Casualties against Activists of Tebriz	2 February 2011
14	Another Round of Crackdown of the Protesters in Eller Bagi, Urmu	2 February 2011
15	Silence of Farsi-speaking Media on the Ongoing Repression against Southern Azerbaijanis	2 February 2011
16	Latest News on the Campaign in Urmu	2 February 2011
17	Update of on the name of the individuals arrested in relating to the campaign of Save Lake Urmu	2 February 2011
18	The Communiqué by the Gathering in Ankara for Saving Lake Urmu	2 February 2011
19	Gathering of Azerbaijani Resident of Turkey for Protest Campaign of Saing Lake Urmu	2 February 2011
20	News Correction	2 February 2011
21	Crackdown against Protests by the People of Urmu	2 February 2011
22	Widespread Arrests in Azerbaijan Square, Tebriz	2 February 2011
23	Casualties among the Protesters in Tebriz	2 February 2011
24	Escalation of Conflict Along the Northern Borders of Azerbaijan Square, Tebriz	2 February 2011
25	The Police blockade Roads	2 February 2011
26	Antiriot Police Assault People in Tebriz	2 February 2011
27	15 Individuals Arrested in Tebriz	2 February 2011
28	Intensification of Conflict Between Civilians and the Police in Tebriz	2 February 2011
29	Crackdown agains people taking part in the Campaign	2 February 2011
30	The gathering of Special Forces in Azerbaijan Square, Tebriz	2 February 2011
31	Preliminary news from the Southern Azerbaijani cities Regarding Protests for Lake Urmu	1 February 2011
32	Poster 4	1 February 2011
33	Expression of Support by the Students of Tebriz University for protest campaign on the <i>Day of Nature</i> , 2 February 2011	1 February 2011
34	Expression of Support from Tufarqan activists on the <i>Day of Nature</i> , 2 February 2011	1 February 2011
35	Distributing some 10,000 tracks in the match between Tiraxtur and Foolad	1 February 2011
36	Poster 3	1 February 2011
37	D.A.K. expresses support for the Campaign Regarding Lake Urmu	1 February 2011
38	Campaign by the National Movement of Southern Azerbaijan for Protests Concerning the Drying up of Lake Urmu	1 February 2011
39	The effectiveness of the March in Ankara Campaigning for Lake Urmu	31 March 2011
40	Gathering in Ankara supporting the protest campaign concerning Lake Urmu	31 March 2011



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41	Distributing CD in Merend regarding the <i>Day of Nature</i> , 2 February 2011	31 March 2011
42	The speech by Dr Elemi supporting the protest campaign concerning Lake Urmu	31 March 2011
43	Expression of Support from Merend activists of the national Movement of Southern Azerbaijan on the <i>Day of Nature</i> , 2 February 2011	31 March 2011
44	Statement by the National Unity Council regarding Lake Urmu	31 March 2011
45	The Fear of the Iranian Authorities and Parasite Signals over GünAzTV	31 March 2011
46	Expression of Support from the activists of the national Movement of Southern Azerbaijan on the <i>Day of Nature</i> , 2 February 2011 – Sayın Qala	31 March 2011
47	Expression of Support from the activists of the national Movement of Southern Azerbaijan in Shebuster for the symbolic gathering on the <i>Day of Nature</i> , 2 February 2011	31 March 2011
48	Is the “Green Movement” (the organisation in support of Mr. Moussavi, which is a political movement and not an environmental movement) supporting the protests of Southern Azerbaijan?	30 March 2011
49	Public Opinion in Southern Azerbaijan is Ready for the Campaign	30 March 2011
50	The Tiraxtur and Foolad-e-Khozestan game reverberated expressions of solidarity with Lake Urmu by the fans of Tiraxtur	30 March 2011
51	Statement by Social Democratic movement in Southern Azerbaijan on: Campaign for Lake Urmu	30 March 2011
52	Statement by a Group of Southern Azerbaijani socialists	30 March 2011
53	Statement by a group of young webbloggers of Urmu	30 March 2011
54	Expression of Support from Qoshachay Regarding the gathering on the <i>Day of Nature</i> , 2 February 2011	
55	Statement by the Tebriz Arman Student Organisation on the Gathering in <i>Nature Day</i>	29 March 2011
56	Boyuk Resuloglu: Let Us Prevent the Drying Up of Lake Urmu	29 March 2011
57	Statement by Southern Azerbaijani Activists of Tikme Dash	29 March 2011
58	Proceedings to be Organised in Sweeden Regarding Lake Urmu by AFI	29 March 2011
59	Expression of support of, and call for, the Protest on the <i>day of Nature</i> , 2 February 2011	29 March 2011
60	Statement No 3 of the Coordination Committee Supporting the Gathering on the <i>day of Nature</i> , 2 February 2011	29 March 2011
61	Final Statement of Naational Movement of Southern Azerbaijan – Tebriz Branch	28 March 2011
62	Poster 3	27 March 2011
63	Expression of support by the Southern Azerbaijani Organisation of National Resistance to gather the Day of Nature, 2 February 2011	
64	Expression of Support from Sulduz to gather Eller Baghi in Urmu on the Day of Nature	27 March 2011
65	Expression of Support by Group of Workers in Urmu	27 March 2011
66	Photos from Lake Urmu	27 March 2011
67	OyrenchiNew publishes a Special Issue on Lake Urmu: oyrenchi.dergisi@gmail.com	27 March 2011
68	Expression of Support by Amac for gathering on 2 February 2011 in Azerbaijani cities	27 March 2011
69	Expression of Support by a group of naturalists and supporters of the national movement of Southern Azerbaijan in Tebriz	26 March 2011
70	Statement of Support for the gathering on 2 February 2011 in Urmu by the former writer boards of the UrmuNews group	26 March 2011
71	Distributing the leaflet on the call for the gathering on 2 February 2011 in Urmu	26 March 2011
72	Poster 2	25 March 2011
73	Warning: watch out for bleeding hand	25 March 2011
74	SMS activities among the youth in Urmu	24 March 2011
75	Warning: Suspicious elements may instigate unrest on the <i>Nature Day</i>	24 March 2011
76	Poster 1	23 March 2011
77	Statement by Urmu University Students on the Gathering in <i>Nature Day</i> on 2 February 2011	23 March 2011
78	Gathering Momentum for Protests in other (Southern) Azerbaijani cities	23 March 2011
79	Statement by a group of Urmu Fans of Tiraxtur of Tebriz and of the Urm Volleyball	23 March 2011
80	An Article by Yashar Guneyli: If Lake Urmu dries up can we justify calling ourselves the children of Babek?	23 March 2011
81	Call for Protests by the Urmu Activists	23 March 2011
82	Call for Campaign by Tiraxtur Fans	23 March 2011



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Table 4 Petition by Defiant Southern Azerbaijanis campaigning for Saving Lake Urmu

<http://www.petitiononline.com/UrmuLake/petition.html>

The Petition: Save Lake Urmu and Release its Environmental Protesters

22 April 2011

Over the years, Lake Urmu is led toward a slow death subsequent due to their incompetence. It seems that the relevant authorities are not minded to prevent this catastrophe. Under the circumstances, it has fallen to the caring nation of (Southern) Azerbaijan to undo this unfolding catastrophe.

Noble-minded individuals of our (Southern) Azerbaijan took the initiative of family protest for the first time on 2 March 2011 at the location of the Bridge crossing Lake Urmu. This was orchestrated to show the resolute protests in relation to the emergence of this environmental catastrophe. However, the agents of the Iranian authorities resorted to violence by scattering the protesting individuals, many were treated harshly and various groups were rounded up and detained. Some of these protesters were passed with arbitrary sentences, who are still imprisoned. Still there are others yet to be tried in the coming days. This will take place under the circumstances that the first initiative is reiterated after one both in *Azerbaijan Square* in Tebriz and *Eller Baghi* in the city of Urmu and again the same story, the participants were rounded up and detained.

The undersigned individuals of this statement demand the slow and dreadful death of Lake Urmu must be prevented. We also demand that the detainees must be released immediately and unconditionally. We appeal to other caring individuals to undersign this statement with their real names.

No	Family Name, Name	No	Family Name, Name	No	Family Name, Name	No	Family Name, Name
1	Abdullahi, Elirza	25	Fayizpur, Eli	49	Khelili, Ashiq Jabrayil	73	Quluzade, Behbud
2	Abdullahi, Zaman	26	Ferdi, Emir	50	Khiyavi, Nigar	74	Qurbani, Ekber
3	Ahengeri, Eynullah	27	Ferdi, Solmaz	51	Kudrulu, Jelal	75	Qurbani, Fatime
4	Akson, Babek	28	Ferid, Feranek	52	Lek, Qehreman	76	Rashidi, Hesen
5	Ayrimlu, Jamal	29	Fershi, Elirza	53	Lisani, Abbas	77	Rengrezi, Mahmud
6	Azerdokht, Eqil	30	Feyyaz, Mehemed	54	Lutfi, Ekber	78	Reshidi, Ibrahim (Savalan)
7	Behjet, Sehend	31	Fezli, Mahmud	55	Lutfi, Ismayil	79	Rzayi, Eli
8	Bekhtaver, Jahanbekhsh	32	Hergli, Huseyn	56	Lutfi, Sadiq	80	Rzayi, Yasir
9	Beraderi, Hesen	33	Herisi-nejad, Musa	57	Mededi, Hadi	81	Sadiqi, Aydin
10	Berazish, Settar	34	Heseni, Letif	58	Mehemmedi, Dehqan	82	Sani, Mehemed
11	Berzger, Hashim (Gunevli, Yashar)	35	Heseni, Shahin	59	Mehemmedi, kerim	83	Semedi, Behram
12	Binezir, Ekber	36	Heseni, Yaquub	60	Mehemmedi, Seyyad	84	Serrafi, Elirza
13	Danishjuyi, Reshid	37	Hesenzade, Eli	61	Mehemmedian, Naghi	85	Settarian, Yunis
14	Demirchi, Hesen	38	Heyderi, Huseyn	62	Mehemmedian, Seyyad	86	Shafeyi, Hemid
15	Deshti, Ibrahim	39	Hojjeti, Eli	63	Mehrelibeylu, Ayet	87	Shefii, Khelil
16	Dovletkhah, Mustafa	40	Huseyni, Hemid	64	Menafi-Azer, Hebib	88	Sheykhbeylu, Vehid
17	Ehmedi, Kazim	41	Huseynzade, Eli	65	Menafi-Azer, Rza	89	Sheykhi, Sirus
18	Endelibian, Dariyush	42	Huseynzade, Elirza	66	Muheddis, Ehmed	90	Shiri, Sirus
19	Erhemjani, Jelil	43	Ibrahimi, Qafar	67	Neimi, Seid	91	Subhi, Shayan
20	Erk, Hesen	44	Imani, Siddiqe	68	Nikreman, Abbas	92	Sudber, Javad
21	Esedullahi, Ekrem (Sevil)	45	Javadiay-Sekha, Hale	69	Nurefken, Huseyn	93	Teqevi, Mehemed
22	Esedzade, Eli	46	Jeferi, Husheng	70	Nuri, Mehdi (Elman)	94	Valayi, Ehmed
23	Ezizi, Mehucmehr	47	Keyvan-chehr, Sefer	71	Ojaqli, Mahmud	95	Vusali, Ebulfezl
24	Ezizi, Sejjad	48	Khalitabadi, Eli	72	Qehremani, -	96	Zulqederi, Abbas



Table 5 Excerpt of an Open Letter by Sayin Qala Branch of the National Movement of Southern Azerbaijan to the Sayin Qala Member of the Iranian Parliament (Majlis) <http://sayinqalali.blogfa.com/post-3.aspx>

Open letter by national and cultural activists of Sayin Qala (ShahinDej) to Members of Majlis:

Mr. Jahanbakhsh Mohebbi-niya and Sefer (Mehdi) Isazade on 28 April 2011

From the County of Qoshachay (Miyane-do-ab), Sayin Qala (Shahindej) and Tikan Tepe (Tikab)^{Please see the Note below}

You honourable Members were elected by the caring people of Azerbaijan. We appreciate your effort and know that you mean to care for Qoshachay, Sayin Qala and Tikan Tepe with a successful track record. Our conscience will be bothered if we are indifferent to your care.

At this time, the outstanding problem confronting South of Azerbaijan is the slow death of Lake Urmu by drying up and its subsequent desertification. We want to put you in the picture and therefore first sketch the problem for your information and then we will lay down our demands for your kind attention and campaign.

Excerpts from technical information in the Open Letter

- The imminent salt-dust storms are a time bomb and may go off any time
- The impact is the desertification of the lake bed with 80 billion tons of salts
- This will be quite impossible to control it
- The salt-dust storms are anticipated to give rise to all sort of skin and respiratory problems
- Agriculture in the whole region will be undermined
- The death of the lake is the death of Azerbaijan and the extinction of artemia from the region.

As you know members of Majlis from Tebriz and Urmu (Mr. Munadi from Tebriz and Mr. Seyyid Selman Zakir from Urmu) have made representation on saving Lake Urmu. However, this issue is not in the mind of all the Azerbaijani Members of Majlis. Also, to date, there is no plausible measure to Save Lake Urmu. Behaving irresponsibly by these Members of Majlis has provoked the public opinion and the people are minded with the situation and the question is this: how can the government know less than our nation and 100s of caring scientists? On the grounds of scientific research by caring scientists, the popular perception of discriminatory policies implemented by the Iranian authorities towards all the (Southern) Azerbaijani problems and affairs do seem to be truth and not perception anymore.

The caring nation of (Southern) Azerbaijan has done anything possible to bring the problem into the agenda even though their information media is meagre but the Iranian authorities remain indifferent to the problem. Azerbaijanis have always urged the appropriate authorities to take interest in the problem. Now we cannot overlook some of the learned scientists concluding that the drying up of Lake Urmu is a deliberate policy!



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Today, pressure groups concerned with environmental problems are supported by the governments of the developed countries. We are petrified that in Iran, simply for making protests, individuals expressing their interests in the environmental impacts of Lake Urmu are arbitrarily arrested in tens and detained arbitrarily in detention centres and are subjected to tortures. This year alone, on *Nature Day*, 2 February 2011, the people of our region gathered in Qoshachay, along the River Jighati near Sayin Qala Bridge, and sang the motto in Azerbaijani: ***Let us offer our tears for filling Lake Urmu***; in this way they expressed their solidarity with the rest of Azerbaijan including Tebriz and Urmu; and in this way they expressed their duty of care on this issue. In all cases, the people were faced by abuse of the power of the authorities as some of them are still arbitrarily detained.

Now we address you two popular Member of Majlis, elected by Qoshachay, Sayin Qala and Tikan Tepe and duly request you to contemplate the issues we raise above and rally for your campaign, as follows:

1. Please do not neglect the determination and the will of the nation of (Southern) Azerbaijan, make a representation on the vital issue of Saving Lake Urmu in the Islamic Majlis of Iran and follow up your campaign with all the relevant authorities.
2. Please campaign for the release of the environmental activists who were arbitrarily arrested on 2 April 2011.

Thanking you in advance.

National Movement of (Southern Azerbaijan), Sayin Qala Branch
28 April 2011

Translator's Note: In Iran, even the names of the cities and places are translated into Farsi and those within bracket are translation or look alike of Azerbaijani names and when the translation is not possible they change the pronunciation, e.g. Urmu or Urmia is transcribed as Oroumiyeh!