

PUBLIC

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Prisoners of conscience/ torture

IRAN	Esma'il Javadi (m), aged 31, journalist]	
	Ebulfezl Alilu (m)]	
	Ramin Sadeghi (m)]	Azerbaijani cultural and
	Qahreman Qanbarpour (m)]	linguistic rights activists
	Adel Allahverdipour (m)]	
	Jelil Qanilu (m)]	
	Safar Ali Kho'ini (m)]	
	Ja'far Haqnazari (m)]	

The Iranian Azerbaijani cultural and linguistic rights activists named above were arrested at around the time of peaceful demonstrations marking the 21 February International Mother Language Day, intended to celebrate linguistic diversity. They were arrested in various towns and cities in Iranian Azerbaijan. Amnesty International considers them prisoners of conscience, detained solely for the peaceful expression of their conscientiously held beliefs and their right to freedom of association.

Amnesty International has received the names of approximately 100 Iranian Azerbaijanis who were reportedly detained. Peaceful demonstrations were organised in different parts of Iranian Azerbaijan and elsewhere in the country calling for education in Azerbaijani Turkic. Most of those detained have reportedly now been released, generally on bail, but scores may still be detained incommunicado, and may be at risk of torture or ill treatment. An unknown number of detainees, possibly including minors, have reportedly been tried summarily.

Journalist Esma'il Javadi was detained in Orumiye on 18 February. He is detained in a facility controlled by the Ministry of Intelligence in the Dokkuz Pille area of Orumiye and has been severely beaten. He is in urgent need of medical care. Family members who have been permitted to meet with him have reportedly been threatened by security officials and told that they should not speak about Esma'il Javadi to anyone.

According to ASMEK (*Azərbaycan Siyasi Mahpuslarını Müdafaə Komitəsi*), the Committee for the Defence of Azerbaijani Political Prisoners, up to 50 people were detained in Orumiye on 21 February. Among them was shopkeeper Ebulfezl Alilu. The authorities have shut down his shop in Orumiye Bazaar. He too is reportedly detained in the Dokkuz Pille detention facility, where he has been tortured.

ASMEK has reported that on 21 February at least 25 people were detained in Naqadeh (called Sulduz in Azerbaijani Turkic), including Qahreman Qanbarpour and Adel Allahverdipour. Some of those detained in Naqadeh have reportedly been transferred to detention facilities in Orumiye. They have reportedly been denied access to legal representation and put through summary trials.

ASMEK has also reported scores of arrests in the city of Miyandoab (Qoshachay) including Ja'far Haqnazari, a member of the editorial board of a student publication called *Bulud*.

Human rights activist Ramin Sadeghi was one of around 20 arrested in Ardabil on 19 February. He is believed to have been held in a detention facility run by the Ministry of Intelligence and was reportedly transferred to Section 1 of Ardabil prison on 3 March. He has reportedly gone on hunger strike, but the authorities have denied him any visits. He is believed to be in poor health and in urgent need of medical care.

Jelil Qanilu and Safar Ali Kho'ini were among at least 25 people detained during International Mother Language Day demonstrations in Zenjan on 21 February.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Article 15 of Iran's Constitution states that Persian is the official language of Iran and that "official documents, correspondence, and texts, as well as textbooks, must be in this language and script." It adds that "the use of regional and tribal languages in the press and mass media, as well as for teaching of their literature in schools, is allowed in addition to Persian."

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English, French, Persian, Azerbaijani (Arabic or Latin script), Turkish or your own language:

- calling on the authorities to release the eight men (naming them) immediately and unconditionally, as well as anyone else detained solely for the peaceful expression of his or her conscientiously held beliefs, including peaceful advocacy of the right to education through the medium of Azerbaijani Turkic;
- expressing concern for the health of Esmail Javadi and Ramin Sadeghi;
- calling on the authorities to give Esmail Javadi, Ramin Sadeghi and all other detainees immediate access to all necessary medical treatment, including access to medical treatment outside prison where necessary;
- urging the authorities to grant all those who remain in custody immediate and regular access to their families and legal representation;
- asking for details of any charges that have been brought against any of the eight men.

APPEALS TO:

Leader of the Islamic Republic

His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei, The Office of the Supreme Leader
Shoahada Street, Qom, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: info@leader.ir
istiftaa@wilayah.org

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Intelligence

Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejeie

Ministry of Intelligence, Second Negarestan Street, Pasdaran Avenue, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: iranprobe@iranprobe.com

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

President

His Excellency Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

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

Email: dr-ahmadinejad@president.ir
(via website) www.president.ir/email

Head of the Judiciary

His Excellency Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi

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

Email: Please send emails via the feedback form on the Persian site of the website:

<http://www.iranjudiciary.org/contactus-feedback-fa.html>

The text of the feedback form translates as:

1st line: name; 2nd line: email address; 3rd line: subject heading, then type your email in text box.

Salutation: Your Excellency

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 20 April 2007.