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No.: 358/2006

Date: 2 August 2006

MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES

8, Rue Saint Sabin

75544 PARIS Cedex 11

France

CC:

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Special Rapporteur on the right to health

Special Rapporteur on torture

Amnesty International, London

And to be published in selected websites

Dear sir/madam,

Re South Azerbaijani Prisoners of Conscience are under Life Threatening Conditions

More than ten prisoners of conscience are introduced to you as victims of physical and psychological torture, comprising our peaceful Southern Azerbaijani compatriots engaged in a life-and-death struggle against racist policies of the Iranian regime. The presentation of the cases of these victims also includes an introduction to the Southern Azerbaijani struggle against discriminatory racist policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran, albeit briefly. These victims are extremely vulnerable. Therefore, we request your assistance to undertake direct examination of these victims and offer them your humanitarian medical attention.

As colleagues of MSF, we, the Union of Azerbaijani Doctors and Academics (UADA), find highly commendable your humanitarian mission to alleviate many of the injustices faced in modern times. We are well conversant that you meet humanitarian demands under difficult conditions irrespective of language, religion, creed, race and politics. Clearly, your initiatives complement the functions of the United Nations and organisations like Amnesty International but the scope of your activities often reaches beyond their capabilities.

This letter is appended with the profiles of 11 vulnerable Southern Azerbaijanis in desperate need of medical attention for being denied by prison authorities. These people were arrested in the process of peacefully protesting against the racist policies of the Iranian regime, and then subjected to physical and psychological tortures. Some of these victims have resorted to hunger strike while in detention as a continuation of their protest; their deteriorating levels of health are now of grave concern.

It is possible that you have not heard of these individuals, attributable in part to successful Iranian disinformation that restricts the outward flow of news to the democratic world. This is reflected in the portfolio that we have compiled for your perusal comprising:

- Part 1: This covering letter
- Part 2: The profiles of the victims of torture
- Part 3: Relevant statements issued by organisations such as Amnesty International
- Part 4: Background information on South Azerbaijan
- Part 5: The May 2006 mass protests leading to arbitrary detention of the mentioned victims
- Part 6: Relevant letters/statements issued by the undersigning DunAzHAK

We would like to emphasise that the individuals described in this portfolio are vulnerable and cannot stress enough the precarious point to which their health has deteriorated. They are in need of medical attention which we feel you are ideally placed to assist and advise with. We trust that you will regard this matter seriously.

Please do not hesitate to contact us for any clarification. We look forward to your timely and rapid action.

Yours faithfully

The Union of Azerbaijani Doctors and Academics

C/O Dr Gharevi



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The Committee for the Defence of the Rights of the World Azerbaijanis (DunAzHAK)

PART 2

The Profile of Some of the Activists Known to be in Life threatening Conditions

1. The Profile of Mr. Abbas Leysanli (Lisani)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health: After a total of 51 days of hunger strikes he is now in a life threatening condition – see below for the chronology of the events since his imprisonment 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrested: 3 June 2006 at his home by 30 plain-cloth agents • Prison: the Erdebil Prison, solitary confinement Wing 4 or the secure unit of the hospital attached to the prison; File No.: Unknown • The City of Residence: Erdebil • Age: 39 • Marital Status: Married with two children • Occupation: self-employed 	
<p>A visionary activist, poet, writer, and publisher who promotes only democratic means to secure national rights of Southern Azerbaijan.</p>	

Reverse Chronology of the Ordeal on Mr. Leysanli

Date	Events
29 July 2006	Mrs. Ruqeyye Leysanli, the wife of Mr. Leysanli was finally allowed to visit her husband in the secure unit of the Erdebil Prison. She showed him a letter undersigned by prominent Southern Azerbaijani activists (including the Society of Southern Azerbaijani Academics (AzBilTop) and the Committee for the Defence of Political Prisoners of Southern Azerbaijan – ASMEK) to break his hunger strike. Finally, Mr. Leysanli obliged to the delight of the nation.
26 July 2006	Mr. Leysanli was taken to the trial court. He challenged all the charges against him and emphasised that he only advocates civil approaches and democratic means for the attainment of the national and human rights of Southern Azerbaijan and charges against him are false.
22 July 2006	The Message from Mr. Leysanli smuggled out of Prison: “The purpose behind my hunger strike including my refusal for the intake of water is to convey the message of the nation of (Southern) Azerbaijan to the world – freedom. Should I die, then let me join the rank of those who pay the ultimate price of life for the nation of Azerbaijan.”
21 July 2006	A statement issued by 19 Members of the European Parliament (MEP), asking Iran to release the political prisoners of Southern Azerbaijan.
16 July 2006	Mr. Leysanli’s family has finally managed to visit him lately in the Erdebil Prison. His conditions were described as deeply worrying, as he was even unable to stand up or sit on a chair. He has been transferred to the hospital in Erdebil and being injected continually with IV drips after being on hunger strike for 35 days with a further 11 days he has even refused the intake of water/liquid. He is extremely pale; his vision is impaired; and due to his continuous hunger strikes, his digestion and kidney systems are extremely upset. His weight is now 85 kg, reduced by 30 kg within 46 days of hunger strike.
8 July 2006	After approximately 20 days of hunger strike, his physical conditions was reportedly grave and at this time he was transferred for a secure unit in the prison hospital and the prison authorities prevented him to be transferred to a hospital.
3 July 2006	Mr. Leysanli resumes his hunger strike, as a protest against the behaviour of the prison authorities in mistreating the political prisoners of Southern Azerbaijan.
30 June 2006	Mr. Leysanli breaks his hunger strike after the insistence of friends and his family members.
27 June 2006	Mr. Leysanli smuggles a message out of prison on the occasion of the Babek Assembly: “Freedom or Death, as I know of no other way.”
23 June 2006	Mr. Leysanli was transferred to a Secure unit of the Erdebil Prison.
12 June 2006	Statements issued or questions raised by various European parliamentarians including: Jonas

to 14 June 2006	Sjostedt and Eva-Britt Svensson in Sweden, European Parliament and Amnesty International.
11 June 2006	Mr. Leysanli is forced fed by Intravenous (IV) Drips.
10 June 2006	He is banned from receiving any visitor (due to being tortured).
9 June 2006	Mr. Leysanli refuses the intake of water on top of his hunger strike.
8 June 2006	Mrs. Ruqeyye Leysanli was threatened and was ordered not to campaigning for her husband.
5 June 2006	The authorities shut down Mr. Leysanli's business.
4 June 2006	Mr. Leysanli starts his hunger strike.
3 June 2006	Mr. Leysanli was arrested after security agents broke into his home midnight and subjected him to torture in front of his young children and wife and confiscated his computers, poems, writings and his personal belongings.
31 May 2006	He gave a long telephone interview to GunAzTV and predicted that he would be imminently arrested.
27 May 2006	He gave a moving speech to the mass protesters in Erdebil, where 200,000 people were participating and he called them for calm in their anti-apartheid movement.
24 May 2006	A leaflet was distributed in Erdebil calling them to take part in a mass protest on 27 May 2006.

2. The Profile of Mr. Hesen Azerbaijan (also known as Herguli)

- Health: Hunger strikes in detention, suffers from known heart problems
- Arrested: 26 May 2006 (he has also suffered imprisonment 3 years ago)
- Prison: the Tebriz Prison; File No.: Unknown
- The City of Residence: Tebriz
- Age: 65
- Marital Status: Married, with 3 children
- Occupation: A successful businessman; singer, musician and composer



With a lifelong devotion to the Azerbaijani music, Mr. Azerbaijan is its bastion. He has composed songs and operas (the last one called Settar Khan, which was staged in Tebriz last winter). He now even manages to find time in detention to teach music to his fellow activists while not under torture or not in hunger strike. Does this not reveal his formidable character and devotion?

3. The Profile of Mr. Saleh Kamrani

- Health: known to suffer from heart problems
- Arrested: was kidnapped on 14 June 2006 at approx. 3.00 p.m. Prison: a detention centre in Tehran; File No.: Unknown
- The City of Residence: Tehran
- Age: 34 years old
- Marital Status: married
- Occupation: human rights lawyer



A human rights defender from Southern Azerbaijan, who sees no boundaries for applying his skill in defending human rights; who selects his clients not for a material return but for safeguarding human rights. He is now subject to the arbitrary treatments.

4. The Profile of Mr. Elyaz Yekenli

- Definitely in a life threatening condition – see his letter smuggled from the prison, see Letter 5, Part 6. He describes his conditions as follows:

“I was subjected to both severe physical and psychological torture. Having sustained tens of different methods of psychological and physical tortures in this period and due to being poorly in the past, I have now lost my balance and my composure with their systemic impacts on my heart conditions, kidney and passing water, digestion systems and on my impaired hearing and vision.”

Waiting for his picture

- Arrested: 17 (or 16) June 2006
- Prison: solitary confinement in the Tebriz Prison and now in the Qirkhlar Prison in Merend
- Merend or Urmu
- Age:
- Marital Status: Married 3 children,
- Occupation: Journalist, publisher

- He contributed to the publication of the newspaper: *Urmu Sesi* (the voice of Urmu) in 2000.
- He has prepared the publication of 3 or 4 Turkic Azerbaijani calendars
- He has prepared numerous posters and published on a variety of topics including distinguished Azerbaijani personalities, Azerbaijani places to see, Azerbaijani castles, etc.
- Early this year, he worked with others on a project to screen the event of Temurlane which took place in *Qala Daghi* (translated as the Castle Mountain) near Yeken (his birthplace). He had worked hard for this purpose.

5. The Profile of Mr. Chingiz Bekhtaver

- Health: in a life threatening condition due to being tortured and undergoing repeated hunger strikes

- Arrested: 24 May 2006; he was imprisoned in the past
- Prison: the Tebriz Prison, Wing 5; just transferred back to the Tebriz Prison from the Evin Prison
- The City of Residence: Tebriz
- Age: 50
- Marital Status: married with 1 daughter and 2 sons, one in captivity
- Occupation: Civil servant in the National Powers, Tebriz



A cultural activist who has suffered a previous 5 years of imprisonment and two years ago while all his family members were scaling up to Babek Castle on the occasion of the Babek Assembly, security agents looted their musical instrument *saz*. Mrs. Bekhtaver had shouted “take me or my son but never my sacred *saz*.”

6. The Profile of Mr. Jahanbekht Bekhtaver

- Health: he has been savagely tortured and because of being in a life threatening condition; kept in secure unit with no access to visit him.

- Arrested: 27 June 2006 by plain-cloth agents raiding his home
- Prison: the Tebriz Prison, Wing 5; File No.: Unknown
- The City of Residence: Tebriz
- Age: 35
- Marital Status:
- Occupation: a civil servant in the Bank of “keshaverzi”



This cultural activist is a victim of someone else’s confession under torture. He has been tortured to reveal his fellows taking part in the Babek Assembly and he is known to be in a life threatening condition.

7. The Profile of Mr. Javad Abbasi

• Health: developed throat problems while in captivity and he is known to be tortured and be in a life threatening condition

- Arrested: 24 May 2006, tortured, in a life threatening condition; was also arrested two years ago for taking part in the Babek Assembly
- Prison: the Urmu (apparently now in Salmas) Prison; No access to lawyer
- The City of Residence: Urmu
- Age: approx 37
- Marital Status: married, 2 sons – Atabek 8 yrs and Babek 5 yrs
- Occupation: a teacher in Arabic in Salmas, Kung-fu trainer, musicologist



Now we know that the reason for not releasing this honourable teacher and an expert of music even after meeting the bail of 10 million Tumen, was that he is in a secure unit for being severely tortured.

8. The Profile of Mr. Eli Bedeli

• Health: it has just come to attentions that he has been tortured for sometimes and his conditions have been described as very poor.

- Arrested: 1 June 2006; this was found out only recently.
- Prison: the Tebriz Prison; No access to lawyer
- The City of Residence: Tebriz
- Age:
- Marital Status:
- Occupation: a university student in Tebriz (University of Peyam Nur)

No photo available

9. The Profile of Mr. Hesén Rashidi

• Health: he suffers from stomach problems

- Arrested: 2 July 2006, based on a confession under torture;
- Prison: the Evin Prison, kept in Wing 209 and now transferred to Wing 77; File No.: 1/ DT / 7918
- The City of Residence: Karaj
- Age: approx 47
- Marital Status: Married,
- Occupation: Engineer



A distinguished writer and journalist. His arrest is strongly attributed to a chain of persecutions, apparently some have given his name based on reading his articles.

10. The Profile of Mr. Hesén Erk (Hesén Eli Ebulu)

• Health: poor conditions

- Arrested: 24 May 2006
- Prison: the Evin Prison, transferred back to the Tabriz Prison; File No.: Unknown
- The City of Residence: Tebriz
- Age: 47 or 48 or possibly 53
- Marital Status: married
- Occupation: self employed in the business of handicrafts of bags



He is a thinker and an arduous writer and his fellow cultural activists owe a great deal to his stimulating contributions. He lost his father when he was just detained.

11. The Profile of Mr. Eli Hamid Iman

- Health: poor conditions

- Arrested: after 22 May 2006, (he was also jailed in the past for 2 years)
- Prison: the Evin Prison, possibly transferred back to the Tabriz Prison; File No.: Unknown
- The City of Residence: Tebriz
- Age: 38
- Marital Status: married
- Occupation: Journalist and an editor of Shams-Tabriz news and website



He is an arduous journalist and his very last writing in freedom in his website shasm-Tabriz was: “Farewell until the next greetings.” Undoubtedly, when he was typing these last words, he was hearing the fate knocking the door, as skirmishes of the storming troops of the Iranian apartheid agents were forcing their way in.

PART 3
Relevant Examples of Urgent Actions/Statement
By Amnesty International

Public Statement – AI Index: MDE 13/074/2006; Date: 29 June 2006

Urgent Action on Abbas Lisani (Leysanli) – AI Index: MDE 13/063/2006 ; Date 08 June 2006

Urgent Action on Saleh Kamrani – AI Index: MDE 13/071/2006 ; Date: 23 June 2006

Urgent Action, collective – AI Index: MDE 13/055/2006; Date: 26 May 2006

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Public Statement

AI Index: MDE 13/074/2006 (Public)
News Service No: 168
29 June 2006

Iran: Authorities should exercise restraint in policing Babek Castle gathering and address human rights violations against Iranian Azeri Turks

As the annual Babek Castle cultural gathering of Iranian Azeri Turks approaches on 30 June 2006, Amnesty International is urging the Iranian authorities to exercise restraint while policing the gathering. In addition, it is calling on the authorities urgently to address increasing human rights violations being committed by Iranian security forces and others against members of Iran's Azeri Turkish minority (who sometimes refer to themselves as Iranian Azerbaijanis).

The largest ethnic minority in Iran, the Azeri Turkish community is believed to number between 25-30 percent of the total population and is found mainly in the north-west. Mostly Shi'a Muslims, like the majority of the population, they are not subject to as much discrimination as minorities of other religions, and are well-integrated into the economy. In recent years, however, they have increasingly called for greater cultural and linguistic rights, such as the right to be taught in Turkish and to celebrate Azerbaijani culture and history at events such as at the annual Babek Castle gathering and Constitution Day, celebrated in October. A small minority advocate the secession of Iranian Azerbaijani provinces and union with the Republic of Azerbaijan. Activists who promote Azeri Turkish cultural identity are viewed with suspicion by the Iranian authorities, who often charge them with vaguely worded offences such as "promoting pan-Turkism".

The annual Babek Castle gathering has reportedly been held for the last six years at Babek (or Bazz) castle in the town of Kalayber, north-western Iran. Each year, thousands of Azeri Turks gather in Kalayber and walk up to the castle to celebrate the birthday of Babek Khorramdin, who lived in the ninth century and is regarded as a hero by Iranian Azeri Turks. These gatherings have frequently met with repression on the part of the Iranian authorities. In 2005, for example, scores of people were reportedly arrested and at least 21 were sentenced to prison terms of up to one year, though some of these were suspended.

Mass demonstrations broke out in towns and cities in north-west Iran following the publication on 12 May 2006 of a cartoon in the state-owned daily newspaper, *Iran*, which offended many in the Azeri Turkish community. The government suspended publication of the newspaper on 23 May and both the editor-in-chief and cartoonist were arrested. Protests began on a small scale mainly among Azeri Turkish students in universities in Tehran and Tabriz, but rapidly to Azeri Turkish areas. A huge demonstration took place in Tabriz on 22 May and further demonstrations were held in other places in the following days. Most of these protests were peaceful, but some ended with attacks on government buildings and cars. Some Iranian Azeri Turkish sources have claimed these attacks were instigated by government agents. The Iranian government has accused the United States (US) and other outside forces of stirring up the unrest. The US government has denied this.

The Iranian authorities reportedly used excessive force to disperse demonstrators, including beatings

and lethal gunfire. Amnesty International has received the names of 27 people who are alleged to have been killed, including seven in Tabriz and 14 in Naqadeh (known as Sulduz by Iranian Azeri Turks). One, 26-year-old Jalil Abedi was reportedly shot in the left side of his head by a member of Iran's Intelligence service in Meshkin Shahr (known as Khiyov in Azeri Turkish) during a demonstration on 25 May, and left to die by security officials who would not let a doctor treat him. His family were reportedly prevented from holding his funeral in a mosque and only a few of them were permitted to attend his burial. The Iranian authorities have generally denied that any deaths occurred during the demonstrations, although a police official acknowledged publicly on 29 May that four people had been killed and 43 injured in Naqadeh.

Hundreds, possibly thousands, of demonstrators, are reported to have been detained, of whom Amnesty International has received the names of almost 200. On 23 June, Hojjatoleslam Aghazadeh, Head of the Office of the Ministry of Justice in East Azerbaijan province, told the press that some 330 people had been arrested in Tabriz, most of whom had already been released, although as many as 85 would be tried later. He said that 20 to 25 people had been identified as playing a major role in the disturbances and that some were Baha'is, some Tudeh party members (communists) and two had "links with Israel".

While many protestors have been released, scores are believed to remain in detention, including Changiz Bakhtavar, Dr Ahmad Gholipour Rezaie (known as Dr Heydaroglu) and Hassan Ali Hajabollu (known as Hassan Ark), all of whom were detained after the Tabriz demonstration on 22 May. Hassan Damirchi, aged 65, a businessman and a well-known musician from Tabriz (also known as Hassan Azerbaijan) and his son Babak were arrested at home on 26 May and Gholam Reza Amani was detained on 28 May; he is now reported to be on hunger strike. Some or all of these may have been transferred to Evin prison in Tehran for questioning but their current whereabouts are unclear. Some detainees are reported to have been tortured, including Davoud Maghami, held in Parsabad (known as Mughan in Azeri Turkish) who is said to have required hospital treatment as a result. He has now been released.

Other prominent Azeri Turkish activists who are reported to have been detained include Abbas Lisani (or Leysanli), who was arrested on 3 June when he returned home after hiding for a week following a demonstration in Ardebil in which he was beaten by security forces. He is reportedly on hunger strike and his condition is causing concern. His home telephone line has apparently been cut, possibly to prevent his wife publicising his plight. Abbas Lisani has previously been detained several times because of his political activities on behalf of the Azeri Turkish community, including during or following the Babek Castle gatherings in 2003 and 2005. He was severely tortured during his arrest at a sit-in protest by Azeri Turks at the Sarcheshme Mosque in Ardebil in June 2004.

In advance of this year's Babek Castle gathering, Iranian security forces are reported to be carrying out arrests, possibly to prevent certain individuals attending. One, Akbar Qorbani, was reportedly arrested on 26 June at his workplace in Ardebil by unidentified men in plain clothes (*lebas-e shakhsi*), having previously been threatened by such people since he took part in the demonstration in Ardebil. Another, political activist Ebrahim Ja'farzadeh, was reportedly arrested on 26 June in Khoy after being summoned to an Intelligence Ministry facility; he was released the next day. On 27 June, Reza Abbasi, a member of ASMEK (Association for the Defence of Azerbaijani political prisoners) and of the Office for Strengthening Unity (Daftar-e Tahkim-e Vahdat), a student body, was reportedly arrested in Zenjan after he refused to comply with a verbal summons to attend an Intelligence Ministry facility for interrogation. On the same day, Jahanbaksh Bekhtavar, the brother of Changiz Bekhtavar (see above) was reportedly arrested at his home in Tabriz by Intelligence Ministry officials who are also said to have confiscated his books and other personal belongings. Also on 27 June, 'Isa Yeganeh, the managing director of the suspended newspaper *Payam-e Sulduz* was reportedly arrested in Naqadeh, Sayed Mehdi Sayedzadeh was arrested in Tabriz and at least five people released after the May demonstrations in Miandoab were reportedly redetained.

Amnesty International recognizes that the Iranian authorities have a right and a responsibility to bring those suspected of criminal offences to justice. However it is concerned that many of those detained may be prisoners of conscience, detained solely on account of their peaceful exercise of their right to

freedom of expression and association, or on account of their peaceful political activities on behalf of the Iranian Azeri Turkish community.

Amnesty International is calling on the Iranian authorities to

- respect international human rights standards in relation to the policing of the Babek Castle gathering and ensure that those responsible for law enforcement conform at all times with standards such as the United Nations Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials
- release all prisoners of conscience immediately and unconditionally. Other detainees should be released unless they are to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence and brought to trial promptly and fairly
- grant all detainees prompt and regular access to lawyers of their own choosing and their families and to appropriate medical care if necessary
- investigate all allegations of torture or ill-treatment promptly and thoroughly. The methods and findings of any such investigation should be made public. Anyone implicated in human rights violations should be brought to justice promptly and fairly and victims of torture and ill-treatment should be granted compensation
- ensure that any trials respect, as a minimum standard, the relevant provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- investigate all possible unlawful killings or extra-judicial executions promptly and fairly in accordance with the UN Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extralegal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions, and bring to justice, fairly and promptly, any members of the security forces responsible for unlawful killings or other grave violations of human rights.

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AI Index: MDE 13/063/2006 8 June 2006

URGENT ACTION**Iran: Incommunicado detention/Fear of torture/Medical concern, Abbas Lisani (or Leysanli) (m)**

PUBLIC AI Index: MDE 13/063/2006

08 June 2006

UA 163/06 Incommunicado detention/Fear of torture/Medical concern
 IRAN Abbas Lisani (or Leysanli) (m), aged 38, activist

Abbas Lisani, a prominent activist for the rights of Iranian Azeri Turks, was arrested on 3 June and is held at an unknown location, where he is at risk of torture. He may require medical attention for injuries he suffered during a demonstration before he was arrested.

He was arrested at his home in the north-western town of Ardebil. His wife reportedly said that more than 30 plainclothes security officials shot the lock off their door and entered the house without showing any warrant, which is required by law. She said they beat Abbas Lisani in front of her and their two young sons, and insulted her when she asked them not to beat him. Saying they had orders allowing them to shoot him, they handcuffed him and took him away. They also took two mobile phones, CDs, books and a computer.

There has been unrest, sometimes violent, in the Iranian Azeri Turkish community since 12 May, when the state-owned daily newspaper Iran published a cartoon which many of them found offensive. The community (who sometimes call themselves Iranian Azerbaijanis) live mainly in the north-west of the country. In cities in the region there were demonstrations, sometimes violent, which have reportedly led to hundreds of people being arrested (see UA 151/06, MDE 13/055/2006). Some of those detained have allegedly been tortured. Publication of the newspaper was suspended on 23 May and the editor-in-chief and the cartoonist were arrested, but despite this there was a demonstration in Ardebil on 27 May. Abbas Lisani was reportedly injured during this demonstration, but managed to escape and went into hiding for about a week. He was arrested after he returned home. Before he was arrested, he told his family and friends he would go on hunger strike if detained.

Azeri sources have claimed that dozens have been killed and hundreds injured by the security forces. On 29 May a police official acknowledged that four people had been killed and 43 injured in the town of Naqada. Amnesty International recognizes that criminal damage occurred during at least some of the demonstrations, and that governments have a right and a responsibility to bring to justice those responsible for recognizably criminal offences. However, the Iranian authorities are also obliged to act in accordance with international human rights law and human rights standards, including those relating to the policing of demonstrations, the prohibition of torture and fair trial standards.

Abbas Lisani has been arrested several times since 1997 in connection with his political activity. He has been subjected to psychological and physical torture in custody, and harassed when he is at liberty. He told Amnesty International in May that the most severe torture he experienced was in June 2004, when he took part in a sit-in protest by Azeri Turks at the Sarcheshme Mosque in Ardebil. After the security forces took control of the mosque, they beat him severely and suffocated him until he passed out. He spent a month in custody, 20 days of which were in solitary confinement. He had severe injuries, including broken ribs and a broken nose, for which he was denied medical treatment. He went on hunger strike twice to demand medical care, but without success. After two days in custody he was taken before Branch 7 of the Revolutionary Court in Ardebil, where the judge refused to order medical treatment for him and told him that the Intelligence service "should have done worse". On release he was fined 800,000 Rials (approx US\$87,000) and given a suspended sentence of 15 lashes. He is still suffering health problems caused by the torture.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Iranian Azeri Turks, at around 25-30% of the population, are the largest minority in Iran and live mainly in the north-west. Mainly Shi'a Muslims, like the majority of the population, they are not subject to the same kinds of discrimination as minorities of other religions, and are well-integrated into the economy, but in recent years there has been a growing demand for greater cultural and linguistic rights, such as the right to be taught in Turkish. A small minority advocate the secession of Iranian Azerbaijani provinces and union with the Republic of Azerbaijan. Activists who promote Azeri Turkish cultural identity are viewed with suspicion by the Iranian authorities, who often charge them with vaguely worded offences such as "promoting pan-Turkism".

The Iranian authorities have accused outside forces, particularly the USA, of stirring up the unrest in Iranian Azeri provinces. The USA has denied this.

AI Index: MDE 13/063/2006 8 June 2006

Further information

[AI Report 2005 entry](#)

Urgent Actions

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PUBLIC

**AI Index: MDE 13/071/2006
23 June 2006**

Further Information on UA 171/06 (MDE 13/067/2006, 16 June 2006 Fear for safety/ Health concern/ Possible prisoner of conscience)

IRAN **Saleh Kamrani(m)**, lawyer and human rights defender, aged about 34

Azeri Turkish lawyer Saleh Kamrani is reportedly held without charge in Evin Prison in Tehran. In an interview on 19 June 2006 on Araz Radio, broadcasting from Sweden, Saleh Kamrani's wife, Mina Esgeri, said that she had been allowed to meet with her husband in detention on 18 June. He reportedly needs medication for a heart condition. He may be held solely for his work as a lawyer and human rights defender, in which case Amnesty International would consider him a prisoner of conscience.

Saleh Kamrani had reportedly called his wife at their house in Tehran at around 3pm on 14 June to say that he was on his way home. He should have arrived by 4.30 or 5pm, and when he did not she tried to call him, but found his mobile phone switched off, which was unusual for him. She called all the hospitals and police stations in Tehran but did not find any trace of him. In the evening, she called Ministry of Intelligence officials who at that time reportedly refused to confirm whether they were holding her husband.

Saleh Kamrani has practised as a lawyer since 1999 and has defended a number of Iranian Azeri Turks (who sometimes refer to themselves as Iranian Azerbaijanis) who have been detained in connection with their political or cultural activities. One of his clients, activist Saleh Malla Abbasi was arrested on 17 April (see UA 115/06, MDE 13/045/2006, 3 May 2006). Saleh Kamrani has also defended members of other ethnic groups. He has reportedly suffered harassment at the hands of the Iranian security forces, including phone calls threatening him with arrest and in 2005 was detained for three days with his brother in the town of Oromieh. He has also reportedly written articles on human rights and has helped to organise training in human rights for lawyers and students. Saleh Kamrani's brother, Maharam Kamrani, was arrested on 30 March, and reportedly tortured during his 19 days in detention (see UA 86/06, MDE 13/039/2006, 12 April 2006).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In May 2006, massive demonstrations took place in towns and cities in north-western Iran, where the majority of the population is Azeri Turkish, in protest at a cartoon published on 12 May by the state-owned daily newspaper Iran which many Azeri Turks found offensive. Hundreds were arrested during or following the demonstrations (see UA 151/06, MDE 13/055/2006, 26 May 2006 and UA 163/06, MDE 13/063/2006, 8 June 2006). Some of those detained have allegedly been tortured, with some requiring hospital treatment. Publication of the newspaper was suspended on 23 May and the editor-in-chief and the cartoonist were arrested. Azeri sources have claimed that dozens were killed and hundreds injured by the security forces. The security forces have generally denied that anyone was killed, although on 29 May a police official acknowledged that four people had been killed and 43 injured in the town of Naqada.

Iran: Incommunicado detention/ fear of torture and ill-treatment

PUBLIC AI Index: MDE 13/055/2006
26 May 2006

UA 151/06 Incommunicado detention/ fear of torture and ill-treatment

IRAN Dr Ahmad Gholipoor Rezaie, known as Dr Heydaroglu, (m) aged 47 or 48
Hasan Ali Hajabollu, known as Hasan Ark, (m) aged 47 or 48
Hassan Shahi (m)
Ahmad Soltani (m)
Changiz Bakhtave (m)
Babak Bakhtave (m)
Ebrahim Dashti (m)
Hussein Sababi (m)
Javad Abbasi (m)
Saber Beytallahi (m)
Ali Husseinejad (m)
Bahman Nasirzadeh (m)
Ali Halmi (m)
Mohsen Damirchi (m)
Asgar Akbarzadeh (m)
Ismail Rezaie (m)
and hundreds of others

The above named individuals and hundreds of others, who are members of the Azeri Turkish minority community, have been arrested during and following widespread and ongoing demonstrations in north-western Iran. They are reportedly held incommunicado and it is feared that they are at risk of torture and ill-treatment.

The demonstrations began following the publication of a cartoon in the daily state-owned newspaper Iran on 12 May which offended many in the Azeri Turkish community (who refer to themselves as Iranian Azerbaijanis). The newspaper was suspended on 23 May and the editor in chief and the cartoonist arrested.

Azeri Turkish students at universities in cities such as Tehran and Tabriz were the initial demonstrators. However, protests spread throughout cities such as Tabriz, Oromieh, Ardebil, Maragheh and Zenjan in north-west Iran, where the population is predominantly Azeri Turkish.

Demonstrations have grown dramatically, and in Tabriz alone around 300,000 to 500,000 people are said to have taken part in protests on 22 May. Hundreds of demonstrators are said to have been arrested and on 24 May, the Commander for Law Enforcement Force confirmed that around 60 people had been detained at each of the disturbances.

Demonstrators were reportedly beaten by members of the Special Forces and the plain clothes militia called the Basij. Scores were injured, and some or all of those injured are reportedly detained in a military hospital where they are not permitted visits from family members. It has been alleged that some demonstrators were killed after Special Forces opened fire in the city of Tabriz. However, this has been denied by the authorities.

Azeri activists Saber Beytallahi, Ali Husseinejad, Bahman Nasirzadeh, and Mohsen Damirchi were detained by Ministry of Intelligence officials in the city of Maku on or around 18 May. No further details about them are known to Amnesty International. Ahmad Soltani and his brother were arrested at his home by officials from the Ministry of Intelligence around 22 May. The officials searched Ahmad Soltani's home, and seized Turkish language books, CDs and papers. It is believed that the brothers are detained at the Ministry of Intelligence facility in Tabriz. Changiz Bakhtave and Hassan Shahi were arrested in Tabriz on 22 May. It is not known however where they are detained. Azeri activist, Dr Ahmad Gholipoor Rezaie, (also known as Dr Heydaroglu) was also arrested on 22 May, along with Hasan Ali Hajabollu (also known as Hasan Ark) after they attended a demonstration in Tabriz. Officials from the Intelligence Ministry arrested them at around 6pm, as they were getting into a car. They were taken initially to the police station, before being transferred to a Ministry of Intelligence detention facility in Tabriz. They have been denied access to their family and lawyer. Since his arrest, Dr Rezaie's family have visited the detention centre daily in order to get news about him.

Javad Abbasi, a teacher and well-known Azeri activist was arrested on 24 May at his home in the city of Salmas. Ministry of Intelligence officials searched his house, and took Turkish books and CDs, as well as the family's address book and computer, prior to arresting him. His family believe that he is detained at a Ministry of Intelligence detention facility in Oromieh, but neither they nor his lawyer have been able to see him. Javid Abbasi began a six-month prison in December 2005 after conviction of "promoting separatism and connection with pan-Turkic groups". He did not however serve the full term and was released on 12 March.

Ebrahim Dashti was detained at his house in Tabriz by plain-clothed members of the Ministry of Intelligence officials on 25 May. His family have not heard from him since, but believe he is held at the Ministry of Intelligence detention facility. His two sons were arrested when they went to the detention facility to ask for information about their father. Amnesty International has learnt that one of the sons is called Babak Dashti, but the name of the other son is currently unknown. Hussein Sababi was arrested at his workplace in Ardebil by plain-clothes officials from the Ministry of Intelligence on 25 May. He had earlier been distributing flyers for a demonstration to be held in Ardebil on 27 May. Asgar Akbarzadeh was arrested in the street the same day for distributing flyers for the demonstration.

Ismail Rezaie was arrested at his home in Tabriz on 26 May by plain-clothed individuals who failed to identify themselves. The men are believed to be officials from the Ministry of Intelligence, who reportedly beat his wife during the arrest.

Urgent Actions
Amnesty International's global Urgent Action network provides an effective and rapid means of preventing some of the most life-threatening human rights violations against individuals. Join the Urgent Action network

PART 4

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Who are Azerbaijanis?

It is a common error to limit Azerbaijan to the boundaries of Republic of Azerbaijan with a population of less than 8 million. In reality, Azerbaijan is a vast territory and besides Republic of Azerbaijan, as shown in the map in Page 16, Southern Azerbaijan with a population of 35 million stretches from the banks of Caspian Sea to its borders with Turkey and Iraq. For further information, please refer to:

- [http://www.unhchr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/0/40FC68CD8A9A97F9C1256B8100525F97/\\$File/G0210126.pdf?OpenElement](http://www.unhchr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/0/40FC68CD8A9A97F9C1256B8100525F97/$File/G0210126.pdf?OpenElement)
- http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=Iran

Why did Azerbaijanis not instate their identity until recently?

The alienation of Azerbaijani national interests and culture is approximately eighty years old. The country known as Iran now used to be called the *Protectorates* from medieval times up to the emergence of modern nationalism. The *Protectorates* were normally ruled by Turkic dynasties based on a philosophy of mutual respect. Modernism was embraced wholeheartedly in Azerbaijan but only to the displeasure of European colonial powers, who favoured reactionary Persian elements, such as the Pahlavi dynasty that assumed power in the 1930s and renamed the Protectorate to Iran in March 1935. Since then Southern Azerbaijan has a somewhat rough ride.

A Brief overview of the struggle of Southern Azerbaijanis

Southern Azerbaijan has a history of 80 years in search of its modern identity and the struggle for its statement. Prior to this, Southern Azerbaijan was the only progressive and the main overall player in the political makeup of the Protectorate and was determined to secure a constitutional approach to governance rather than theocratic approaches as favoured by Persians.

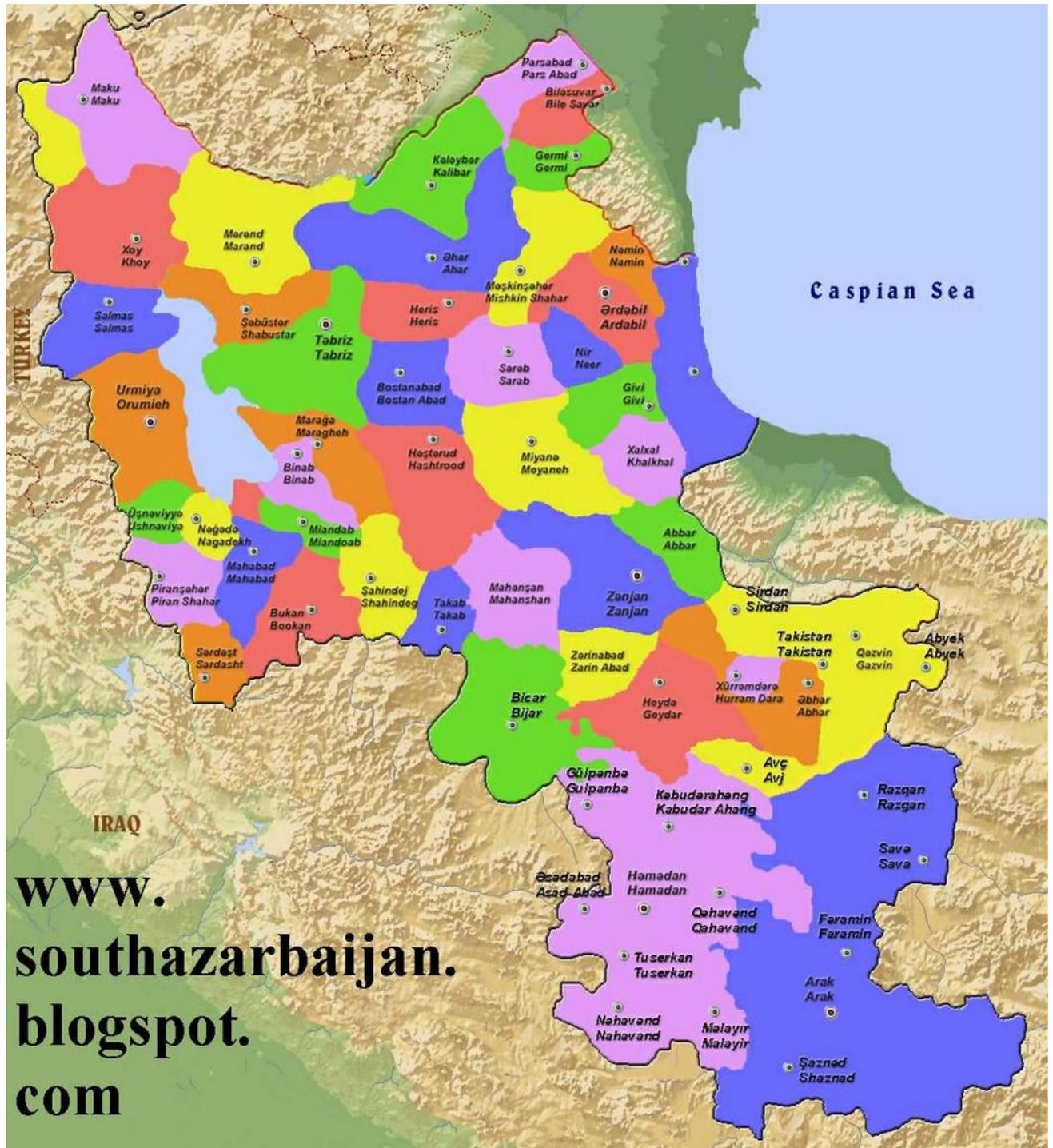
The reign of Pahlavides and the Islamic Republic of Iran has meant a continual erosion of the Azerbaijani identity by the emerging Persian-centred racist policies of Iran, much to displeasure of Southern Azerbaijanis. Azerbaijanis have continually preferred secularism, pluralism and democracy in Azerbaijan, as opposed to other nationalities in Iran often lingering behind and rallying behind reactionary elements. To verify these claims it is just sufficient to outline various modern movements that initiated from Tebriz to the rest of Iran and these include:

- The emergence of first printing industry, newspapers and modern schools in Tebriz
- The emergence of modern industries in Tebriz
- The spread of European style theatres and liberal and social ideologies in Tebriz
- The emergence of modern political parties in Tebriz

There was always a phase difference between the progressive ideology fermented in Tebriz and those in Persia and as a result, Tebriz was transformed to the wellspring of dissidents with a rich history of struggle for the instatement of our identity. The following chapters are integral parts of our history:

- The declaration of Independence by Mehemmed Khiyabani in 1920
- The proclamation of the National Government by Jefer Pisheveri in 1945-46
- The first credible opposition against the Islamic republic of Iran emerged in Tebriz in 1984, referred to as the Popular Muslim Party, advocating a secular governance to Southern Azerbaijan
- The Babek Assembly, where for the last 10 years up to 100,000 people gather to celebrate the birth of our national hero, Babek, who fought against the Arab occupation of Azerbaijan in the 8th century
- And now mass protests, as discussed below

The Map of Southern Azerbaijan



PART 5

THE MASS PROTESTS IN MAY 2006

TRANSFORMING OUR NATIONAL MOVEMENT TO THE NATIONAL UPRISING

The victims introduced in Part 2 were activists in the national movement of the 2 million Southern Azerbaijanis engaged in a peaceful protest demanding our national and human rights. The events were rolled out as follows:

- **The 22nd of May 2006:** The population of Tebriz, the historic capital of Azerbaijan, joined the student protests, reaching an estimated number of more than 250 thousands as a culmination of the protests against the state sponsored abuse of non-Persian Turks. The news of this incredible mass protest reached the Azerbaijani Diaspora but hardly to other Southern Azerbaijani cities due to the imposed disinformation.
- **The 23rd of May 2006:** The population of Urmu, the second largest Southern Azerbaijani city, was turned into the wellspring of a similar protest, whilst in dark with the events in their capital city of Tebriz.
- **The evening of 23rd of May 2006:** The state radio and television urged everyone to march through Tebriz to express their solidarity with the state against unrests instigated, so to speak, by the so called foreign agents. The intrigued people all over Southern Azerbaijan immediately phoned one another and learned about the ongoing mass protests much outside the scale of student protests.
- **The evening of 23rd of May 2006:** The national movement immediately devised the strategy of: (i) boycotting the state sponsored protests at 11.00 in Tebriz on 24th May 2006 and (ii) called everyone for an all-Azerbaijani mass protest in the afternoon of the same day.
- **a.m. 24th of May 2006:** The turnout for the state-sponsored march was a dismal figure of less than two thousand, exposing the rag-tag nature of the support for the government;
- **p.m. 24th of May 2006 – a historic date:** Mass protests were materialised all over Azerbaijan, reaching its outpost cities of Qezvin, Hemedan and Bijar, revealing the maturity of the national movement of Southern Azerbaijan.
- **25th and 27th of May 2006:** The confused Iranian regime deployed the similar trick of stage-managed marches through Urmu and Erdebil (the third largest Azerbaijani city), respectively. These rag-tag marches of not more than 2000 were rebuffed by mass protests of Azerbaijanis in the afternoon at both cities at the respective days, exceeding 300,000 participants.
- **28 May 2006 – Sunday, today:** Mass protests are being staged throughout Azerbaijan, as well as in Tehran with the single focus of proclaiming the national rights of Southern Azerbaijan.
- It is remarkable that some of the security agents of Iranian government has already deserted their posts and joined the protesters in Tebriz on 22 May 2006. The racist Iran deployed mercenaries imported from foreign countries and Persian provinces of Iran to maintain the grip of their iron-fist racist policies over peaceful demonstrators.



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Part 6 Relevant Representations by DunAzHAK

The Committee for the Defence of the Rights of World Azerbaijanis (DunAzHAK) have a track record in making representations to democratic organisations and providing them with authentic information describing the violation of national and human rights of Southern Azerbaijanis. DunAzHAK is a signatory to this submission and a below we select a number of letters submitted by DunAzHAK to Amnesty International or to the United Nations, illustrating the cases in this submission. The following letters are included:

List of the Selected Letters

Letter 1: DunAzHAK Ref: 353/2006 on 24 July 2006

The case of Mr. Abbas leysanli – a prisoner of conscience symbolising the resistance of southern azerbaijan

Letter 2: DunAzHAK Ref: 354/2006 on 29 July 2006

Update on the case of Mr. Saleh kamrani

Letter 3: DunAzHAK Ref: 351/2006 on 23 July 2006

The case of Mr. Saleh Kamrani

Letter 4: DunAzHAK Ref: 348/2006 on 7 July 2006

UN Request of Information Concerning Mr. Saleh Kamrani

Letter 5: DunAzHAK Ref: 350B/2006 on 19 July 2006

Arbitrary Detentions, Deprivation of Detainees from Access to Lawyers under Persian Racist Policies



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Letter 1:

Say (No.)

: 353/2006

Tarix (Date): 24 July 2006

CC Mrs. Harrison, Amnesty International, London
Ms. Milano, OHCHR, Geneva

The Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights, Geneva

Please circulate this letter among the following working groups:

Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (also for Fair Trials)
Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism
Independent Expert on Minority Issues



Dear Sir/madam,

**Re THE CASE OF MR. ABBAS LEYSANLI – A PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE
SYMBOLISING THE RESISTANCE OF SOUTHERN AZERBAIJAN**

We have represented the case of Mr. Abbas Leysanli (also written as: Lisani or Lesani), a prisoner of conscience, and his case has been verified by the various urgent actions and statements of Amnesty International, e.g. AI Indices: MDE 13/063/2006 on 8 June 2006 and MDE 13/074/2006 on 29 June 2006.

His resistance continues to date, as confirmed by our own sources and described by the news item in his weblog. The English translation of this news item attached below for your information. We would like to bring to your attention that any law and human right provision that are applicable for the protection of any individual, have been floated or excessively broken in the case of Mr. Leysanli. To list but few are:

- In the course of the last 3-4 years, Mr. Leysanli has been arrested several times in an arbitrary fashion, without bringing any charge against him. As you will be informed below, there are five files open against him, none of which is a recognizable political or criminal but an arbitrary charge. One example of his cause of struggle is his mother tongue and his exchange with the persecutor is reflected in our letter to His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan Ref: 278/2005 on 12 May 2005.
- As of the very recent case: security agents made a forced entry into Mr. Leysanli's house without following any legal procedures or observing any civil liberties; after violently breaking into his house midnight, he was beaten up and tortured in front of his young children and wife; his personal belongings including his writings and computer were confiscated. Now the telephone line to his house has been cut off.
- Mr. Leysanli has been denied the status of a political prisoner and he has immediately entered into hunger strike as a protest for illegal detention of his Southern Azerbaijani compatriots.
- The authorities have tortured him even under hunger strikes.



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- The right of access to the members of family has been continually denied to Mr. Leysanli, to the extent that his wife and his immediate family members have not been able to visit. The obstinacy of the authorities has been so excessive that his brothers have been detained when insisting to visit Mr. Leysanli. His wife has been threatened in numerous occasions to keep quiet and ordered not to talk to any Azerbaijani media.
- Mr. Leysanli has not been given access to a lawyer until very recently.
- He was apparently taken to court but the judge did not turn up. It appears that in this kangaroo court befitted the disorderly fashion of the Iranian authorities.

Mr. Leysanli is now the heart-and-mind of Azerbaijanis and the nation is anxiously waiting for your timely intervention under the UN authority. You are kindly requested to take up the case of Mr. Leysanli with utmost urgency and provide him any legal assistance or support as you can. In the first place, we would urge you to initiate the dispatch of a MSF (*Medecins Sans Frontieres*) for examining his wellbeing as a humanitarian gesture. In particular, we are very concerned that there is an epidemic influenza in the Erdebil Prison and the secure hospital unit attached to the prison and therefore the health of Mr. Leysanli is under extra risk.

Yours faithfully

Boyuk Resuloglu

For and on behalf of
The Committee for the Defence of the Rights of the World Azerbaijanis

**THE TRANSLATION OF THE NEWS ITEM ON THE LATEST
SITUATION OF MR. ABBAS LEYSANLI, AS PUBLISHED IN
<http://lesani.blogfa.com/> or <http://lisaniabbas.blogspot.com/>**

Leysanli subsists on Intravenous (IV) Drips

Mr. Leysanli's family has finally managed to visit him lately in the Erdebil Prison, who has created a new front in the resistance in demanding for the Azerbaijani identity. According to the statements given by his deeply worried wife and mother, Abbas's conditions are very worrying and he is even unable to stand up or sit on a chair. He has been transferred to the hospital in Erdebil and being injected continually with IV drips after being on hunger strike for 35 days with a further 11 days he has even refused the intake of water/liquid. His weight is now 85 kg, reduced by 30 kg within 46 days of hunger strike.



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Mr. Leysanli's physical conditions are extremely concerning. He is extremely pale; his vision is impaired; and due to his continuous hunger strikes, his digestion and kidney systems are extremely upset. He is determined to carry on with his hunger strike through his vow on campaigning for the reinstatement of the rights of political prisoners of (Southern) Azerbaijan struggling against the Iranian apartheid regime; and on this, the plea of his sincerest friends and members of his family has not even softened his resolve.

Abbas Leysanli, a fighter, writer and a poet, is a distinguished figure of the national movement of (Southern) Azerbaijan. A glimpse of his daring activities includes:

- Publishing a Turkic Azerbaijani Calendar (2000),
- Delivering speech and performing in the national theatre as part of the Babek Assembly (June 2002),
- Leading the sit-in protest in the Sarcheshme Mosque in Erdebil (20 July 2003) as a symbol of anti-Dashnak (the sentiment of Southern Azerbaijanis),
- Taking part again in the Babek Assembly (June 2005),
- Taking part in the Anniversary of Baghir Khan, the national hero of Southern Azerbaijan. This was in Tebriz in August 2005.

For each of the above activities, he has endured untold sufferings following the detention by the authorities. Currently, there are five files actively open against Mr. Leysanli, persecuted by the Revolutionary Court. Various sentences have been passed against him including being fined, lashed, imprisoned and exiled to Masjid-Suleyman.

Abbas Leysanli was threatened with his life by security agents of Iran, two days in advance of the 200,000 (two hundred thousands) taking part in the mass protests of Erdebil on 27 May 2006. He was warned that if he would become visible on the streets, he would be killed by two bullets. In spite of these illegal threats and the staged-managed meagre pro-government march before the noon in Erdebil, Leysanli joined the rank-and-file of and led the mass protesters spearheading the campaign of pro-Azerbaijani identity on that day. He gave a daring speech in defence of the rights of the nation of (Southern) Azerbaijan and the necessity of replicating this movement throughout Erdebil. After the successful all-city mass protest of Erdebil, he took a low profile in his home but on 3 June 2006, thirty armed security agents besieged his home, broke the door and forced their way in, and in front of his family members; took him into captivity; confiscating his writings, as well as his computers and personal belongings. In parallel with this the business of Mr. Leysanli has been padlocked where he earns his subsistence for his family including his wife and three children. Since then they have withdrawn his licence for his business. In this connection, security agents have also arrested Mr. Mehdi Mehemed pur (his nephew) and Mr. Jefer Subhani (his colleague). Mr. Arif Lisani (his brother) has also been detained for a variety of reasons. His wife (Mrs. Ruqeyye Leysanli) has also been repeatedly threatened to be detained for giving interviews to the various media.



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Mr. Leysanli is being transformed into the symbol of resistance of the nation of Azerbaijan. We request all the foundations safeguarding human rights to defend Mr Abbas Leysanli in any way they can.



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Letter 2

Say (No.) : 354/2006
Tarix (Date): 29 July 2006

CC Mrs. Harrison, Amnesty International, London
Ms. Milano, OHCHR, Geneva
The Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights, Geneva,
Please circulate this letter among the following working groups:
Special Rapporteur on Independence of Judges and Lawyers
Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (also for Fair Trials)
Independent Expert on Minority Issues



Dear Sir/madam,

Re UPDATE ON THE CASE OF MR. SALEH KAMRANI

We have a further update for the case of Mr. Saleh Kamrani for your urgent attention based on published news in his weblog. We remind you that according to our sources he was transferred into the notorious Evin Prison, Wing 209.

We trust that this worrying news update on his health will be sufficient for you to accelerate your actions for the protection of Mr. Kamrani's wellbeing and human rights. We believe you fully understand the ongoing intolerable situation in Southern Azerbaijan inflicted by Iran. The nation of Southern Azerbaijan is looking forward to the United Nation to take an effective step in securing the wellbeing of this human right lawyer.

Yours faithfully

Boyuk Resuloglu

For and on behalf of

The Committee for the Defence of the Rights of the World Azerbaijanis

**THE TRANSLATION OF THE NEWS ITEM ON MR. SALEH KAMRANI
PUBLISHED ON <http://salehkamrani.blogspot.com/>**

HEART TROUBLES OF MR. SALEH KAMRANI RESTARTED

Heart troubles of Mr. Saleh Kamrani have restarted. Mr. Kamrani was detained for more than 35 days by the Iranian authorities without issuing any reason and this was extended for two months. His family is extremely worried, since the restarting of his heart problems.

It should be noted that Mr. Kamrani has objected to being detained and has requested that his detention is at least converted to the release on bail.

The news item was posted on 26 July 2006.



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Letter 3

Say (No.) : 351/2006
Tarix (Date): 23 July 2006

CC Mrs. Harrison, Amnesty International, London
Ms. Milano, OHCHR, Geneva

The Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights, Geneva,
urgent-action@ohchr.org

Please circulate this letter among the following working groups:

Special Rapporteur on Independence of Judges and Lawyers
Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (also for Fair Trials)
Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism
Independent Expert on Minority Issues



Dear Sir/madam,

Re THE CASE OF MR. SALEH KAMRANI

We have a short update for the case of Mr. Saleh Kamrani for your attention based on published news items and confirmed by our own sources. In addition, our sources show that Mr. Kamrani has been transferred into the notorious Evin Prison, Wing 209. The translation of the text published on 20 July 2006 is given below, which shows that his detention has been inexplicably extended for two months.

This case has special importance for revealing how the system for the defence of human rights can be undermined in Iran. Inevitably, therefore this delay tactic is upsetting for all who are monitoring the violation of human rights against Mr. Kamrani and we hope it leads to your effective reaction. It is hard to read the mind of the authorities dealing with this case but it is likely that the Iranian authorities have reached the point of no return in their single-minded racist policies and will keep escalating their arbitrary acts.

We hope you fully understand the ongoing situation in Southern Azerbaijan and find it intolerable that Iran, as an under-signatory of the UN conventions on human rights, acts so intransigently, floats its obligations and violates the terms of the UN declarations. Without any effective UN response, Iran will remain appeased, the Iranian authorities will keep regarding Southern Azerbaijan within their free range of their arbitrary actions, and Southern Azerbaijanis will keep suffering as Mr. Kamrani does. Our nation is anxiously waiting for timely UN interventions specially in the case of Mr. Kamrani and we believe the time is now.

Yours faithfully

Boyuk Resuloglu

For and on behalf of
The Committee for the Defence of the Rights of the World Azerbaijanis



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**THE TRANSLATION OF THE NEWS ITEM ON MR. SALEH KAMRANI
PUBLISHED IN VARIOUS WEBSITES, e.g. IN SOUTH AZERBAIJAN NEWS
BLOG:**

<http://sa-news.blogfa.com>

THE DETENTION OF SALEH KAMRANI IS EXTENDED BY TWO MONTHS

According to the received information, the detention of Ssleh Kamrani was extended by two months. He is a distinguished (Southern) Azerbaijani lawyer, who was undertaking the defence of a number of prominent activists of the national movement of (Southern) Azerbaijan, including Mr. Emani and Mr. Lisani. Kamrani disappeared on 14 June 2006 when leaving his office. After persistent enquiries of his family, it became clear that he was in detention in the Ministry of Intelligence. It is worth mentioning that his lawyer, Mr. Yusuf Movlai, has not been allowed to visit Mr. Kamrani.

The news item was sent on 20 July 2006.



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Letter 4

Special Rapporteur on Independence of Judges and Lawyers

Dear Mrs. Milano,

Re UN REQUEST OF INFORMATION CONCERNING MR. SALEH KAMRANI

Thank you for your communication on Thursday, 6 July 2006, taking interest in the case of Mr. Saleh Kamrani, a Southern Azerbaijani human right lawyer.

We are pleased to be able to provide you with the latest information regarding Mr. Kamrani consisting of two texts published in the weblog of Mr. Kamrani:

<http://www.salehkamrani.blogspot.com/>

The first text is a general statement and the second text is based on the information issued by Mrs. Mina Kamrani, speaking up for her husband, Mr. Kamrani. In addition, we would like to provide you the link to the telephone interview that Mrs. Kaamrani had with GunAzTV on Wednesday 5 July 2006. If you wish to have a transcript of this interview, we will be able to provide you that, although we can prepare it by the next Monday. The Link is:

<http://www.azadtribun.net/MinaXanim.mp3>

We hope that you will take effective steps against Iranian authorities who dare to go this far to undermine justice.

Yours sincerely,

Boyuk Resuloglu

Chairperson

The Committee for the Defence of the Rights of the World Azerbaijanis

The English Translation of the First Document

Published in the weblog of Mr. Saleh Kamrani

THE DETENTION OF SALEH KAMRANI HAS BEEN PROLONGED

Mrs. Mina Kamrani, the wife of Mr. Saleh Kamrani stated that, although I had the bail ready for the release of my husband, after hours of waiting (from 9.00 a.m. until 2.00 p.m. on



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Wednesday 6 July 2006), the judge of the court disregarded his own verdict and issued a new determination to continue the detention of my husband.

Mr. Saleh Kamrani, a lawyer and activist of human rights, has been detained since Wednesday 14 June 2006. Although more than 20 days have passed since this detention, Mr. Saleh's lawyer has not been able to visit him, also his lawyer has not been given the files compiled against him. In spite of numerous calls and requests of his wife Mrs. Mina Kamrani to visit her husband, she has only succeeded once. Although the bail was set initially to 10 million Tumen (100 million Riyals), then the judge increased this amount to 50 million Tumen. At the end, upon meeting this increased bail, the judge has voted to indefinitely detain Mr. Kamrani for the excuse of continued interrogation, without determining any time limit for the release of Mr. Kamrani.

The English Translation of the Second Document

Published in the weblog of Mr. Saleh Kamrani

THE INTERVIEW WITH Mrs. MINA ESGERI (Mrs. KAMRANI), THE WIFE OF Mr. SALEH KAMRANI

(A note by the translator: married females use their maiden name, as well as their marriage name and hence Mrs. Esgeri is the maiden name of Mrs. Kamrani.)

“The accusation against my husband is: *taking steps to overthrow the system (or the order) by way of giving publicity against the system.* These were the words of Mrs. Mina Esgeri that today on 6 July 2006, further expressing that “my husband was not released today, despite the promise of the court.” She added that my husband called on Saturday 1 July 2006 and told me that there has been agreement to release under bail and the bail will be 10 million Tumen. I therefore referred to the court on Sunday 2 July 2006 counting on the strength of his word. I was stunned to find out that the bail was raised to 50 million Tumen. I prepared the 50 million Tumen bail after a great deal of trouble. After 4-5 hours back-and fro, they told me that the judge is on leave and will be back on Tuesday. You too come back on Tuesday to see him released.

Therefore, today (6 July 2006), since 8.00 a.m., I together with my family members and a number of friends have referred to the Revolutionary Court of Interrogation, Branch 14, in *Teachers Street* but after getting there we noticed that the judge has not come today.



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After one hour of waiting, we were told that Mr. Judge will not be coming today and apparently he has gone to the meeting with a higher authority. The Judge will probably be back tomorrow.

It should be mentioned that still there is no permission for the lawyer of Mr. Kamrani to meet him. Upon requesting a meeting, his lawyer went to the Interrogation Centre on 28 June 2006 but was refused. He was informed that Mr. Kamrani's release will take place within this week and there is no need for a lawyer. Also Mr. Saleh Kamrani was not permitted to sign himself the document referred to as "power of attorney."

Later during the interview, Mrs. Esgeri also pointed out to her visit with the judge that: after I left the court, I came across the judge purely by coincidence and came to realize that he is on leave.

When I asked the judge regarding my husband, he said that the interrogation of my husband is not over yet and therefore he has to remain in custody and it is highly unlikely that he will be released so soon.

At the end of the interview, Mrs. Mina Esgeri announced regarding her husband that the only accusation by the court against my husband is "taking steps for the overthrow of the system by way of publicity against the system."

This news was sent on 6 July 2006



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Letter 5

Say (No.)

: 350B/2006

Tarix (Date): 19 July 2006

CC Amnesty International, London

The Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights
Geneva, urgent-action@ohchr.org

Please circulate this letter among the following working groups:

- Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism
- Special Rapporteur on Independence of Judges and Lawyers
- Special Rapporteur for Arbitrary Detention (also for Fair Trials)

Dear Sir/madam,

**Re ARBITRARY DETENTIONS, DEPRIVATION OF DETAINEES FROM
ACCESS TO LAWYERS UNDER PERSAIN RACIST POLICIES**

Further to our letter Ref:350/2006 on 16/07/2006, we have just received a further supporting evidence adding substance to our attached documents. This new letter is from a Southern Azerbaijani political prisoner, who articulates the ordeal which he has been subjected to and the background for it. This letter reveals the voice of human consciousness from the abyss of human ills. Is it not that the UN mandates on human rights are designed to protect human consciousness against human ills? We are confident that you will treat the message contained in this letter with utmost urgency.

May we also bring to your kind attention that the name of this political prisoner writing the attached letter is not even in our list, signifying that hundreds are there in the prison, which we simply have no details yet.

Yours Sincerely

Boyuk Resuloglu

For and on behalf of
The Committee for the Defence of the Rights of the World Azerbaijanis



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THE TRANSLATION OF A LETTER BY A SOUTHERN AZERBAIJANI POLITICAL PRISONER

A shocking letter by Elyaz Yekenli from the Merend Prison

(Southern) Azerbaijani Activists are subjected for forced confessions and for falsified interviews

UrnuNews (Tuesday 18 July 2006): It is now 35 days since Sahibeli Khudabekhesh (Elyaz Yekenli), a political activist of (Southern) Azerbaijan, has been detained in a secret dungeon in Tebriz set up by security agents. He has written a letter, presumably smuggled out of the prison, describing his grave conditions and has requested that this letter to be published for the attention of international organisations and of organisations within the country. Here he describes the ordeal that he has been subjected to and requests that the international organisations investigate the matter. The full text is as follows:

Re To the Nation of Azerbaijan and to the Organisations Addressing Human Rights

I, Sahibeli Khudabekhsh (Elyaz Yekenli), am striving to be heard by you, while I am simply deep in pain in a secret dungeon facilitated by the Security Office in Tebriz. The reason for my being here is that I am defending my mother tongue, my culture and my identity, as a Turkic Azerbaijani. As you may have been informed by now, mass protests swept through (Southern) Azerbaijan by the 30 million (Southern) Azerbaijanis in response to premeditated abuse embracing Persian chauvinism, which was sanctioned by the official newspaper of the Iranian state called *Iran*. These mass protests were orchestrated towards demanding our rights. This national movement of (Southern) Azerbaijanis was the alarm to despotic Persian rulers and their local agents betraying their own motherlands, so that they have a second thought about their devilish acts against natural rights of the nation of Azerbaijan.

It is relevant to mention that, I am a cultural and political activist of (Southern) Azerbaijan but I was detained solely for the sake of defending my national culture and my national identity by Iranian security agents. Having endured with 30 days of solitary confinement I was deprived of all the rights conferred to political prisoners. Notwithstanding all these sufferings, I was subjected to both severe physical and psychological torture. Having sustained tens of different methods of psychological and physical tortures in this period and due to being poorly in the past, I have now lost my balance and my composure with their systemic impacts on my heart conditions, kidney and passing water, digestion systems and on my impaired hearing and vision. I was then transferred to *Qirkhlar Prison* of Merend (A note of translation: Merend is a city in Southern Azerbaijan and near the capital, Tebriz) directly because of these illnesses and following the medical report of the security office of the Province of Western Azerbaijan. According to the statements of the doctor and as recorded in



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the medical report, the continuation of these conditions and failing to seek proper medical treatments, can lead to life threatening conditions, including heart attack or death.

O, the Nation of Azerbaijan and the Organisations Addressing Human Rights

I hold that this is a fact that defending the identity and culture of a nation is not a crime, nowhere in the world, not even within the framework of internal laws of Iran, and there are no declarations of the United Nations against this fact. It is therefore clear that the intention of the State Security Office in Western Azerbaijan is to stop my cultural and political activities (contravening my human rights) by instigating such charges as pan-Turkism, spying for foreigners and publicity against the order of Islam. When I object to these belligerent tortures inflicted upon me, the excuse of these agents is that they are under their orders from Tehran. These exchanges take place whilst I am not the only one but hundreds of (Southern) Azerbaijani activists are tortured by a range of techniques. These security agents demand that we, the Southern Azerbaijani victims, to sign a document undertaking false confessions and then go in front of cameras to collude with the authorities in these false confessions. These agents have the illusion of declaring to the world that we the victims were apparently receiving payments from foreign sources and they dare to force us to say that we apparently were working for the interests of foreigners. Do these interrogators not know that confessions under duress are rejected outright by the world community?

I am writing this letter under extreme mental and physical hardships, for the purpose of requesting an appropriate response from organisations safeguarding human rights. I live with the hope of rapidly eradicating any system injustice

Sahibeli Khudabekhsh

The Qirkhlar Prison, Merend

Note that the word “Southern” was added by the translator not to incriminate the Republic of Azerbaijan with this the subject of this letter, as the republic is not a party for this subject matter.