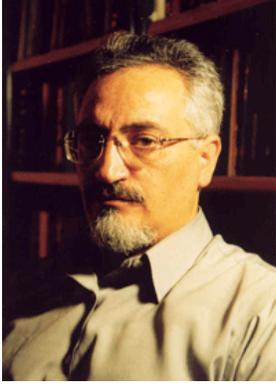




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No: 444/ 2007

Date: 20 February 2007

			
Elirza Serrafi's article is attached explaining the Mother Tongue Day	Hesən Erk arbitrarily arrested	Zakir Hidayet will undergo a hunger strike	Mrs. Zohre Vefai being harassed for publishing books in our mother tongue
Mrs. Harrison, Amnesty International, London			
CC The Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights, Geneva, please circulate this report to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (also for Fair Trials)• The Independent Expert on Minority Issues• Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance• UNESCO and other organisations			

Dear Mrs. Harrison

Please find enclosed an overview of the various initiatives by the Southern Azerbaijani activists to celebrate the international day of mother tongue on 21 February 2007.

The overview report pools together various information items and aims to project an insight into the ongoing events in the context of the national movement of Southern Azerbaijan.

We would like to express our gratitude to your organisations and other similar organisations for their role in defending the national and human rights of the nation of Southern Azerbaijan and look forward to your campaign for the detained activists and calling the authorities to comply with their international obligations towards the nation of Southern Azerbaijan.

Yours sincerely

Boyuk Resuloglu

The Committee for the Defence of the Rights of World Azerbaijanis



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REPORT:
**THE CELEBRATION OF THE MOTHER TONGUE DAY
IN SOUTHERN AZERBAIJAN
AS IRANIAN AUTHORITIES RESORT TO REPRESSIVE ACTS**

	<p>Hesən Erk A journalist, writer and thinker, has also suffered the arrest in the ongoing preparation for celebrating the Mother Tongue day</p>
	<p>İbrahim Jeferzadə Activist</p>
	<p>Hesən Esedi Activist</p>
	<p>Atila Derjezini Activist</p>



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1. Introduction

The nation of Southern Azerbaijan is once again pledging their resolve to secure the reinstatement of the official status of the Azerbaijani Turkic language throughout Southern Azerbaijan. Preparations are underway for a nationwide show of solidarity with our mother tongue.

The national movement of Southern Azerbaijan has now a well established pulse rate, which is a testimony for the health of the movement thoroughly rooted in human rights. The commendable strength of human rights is now a shield for the barehanded Southern Azerbaijani nationalists defiantly resisting racist policies spearheaded by the Islamic Republic of Iran since 1990. Whilst 2006 reached its culmination by the virtue of the May 2006 Mass Protests with 2 million participants granting the necessary mandate for the movement, the year 2007 seems to be the year of increased momentum towards the consolidation of the movement, thanks to the one month long hunger strike of Mr. Abbas Leysanli, a protagonist of the national movement.

This outline report is issued to introduce the richness of initiatives by the nation of Southern Azerbaijan and infamous acts of repression inflicted by the authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran, violating international conventions and their own laws. The report presents the following:

- The history of celebrating of the International Mother Tongue Day in Southern Azerbaijan. This is based on an article by Mr. Elirza Serrafi, a veteran of the national movement.
- A reflection of some of the nationwide plans in the form of a plethora of statements by various vanguard groups and associations
- An outline of the repressive acts of the authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran

2. Embracing the Mother Tongue Day by the Nations of Southern Azerbaijan

We are providing you the translation of an article on this issue by Mr. Elirza Serrafi in Table 1, which is concise and authoritative.

Table 1	English Translation of the Article by Elirza Serrafi Source: http://www.baybak.com/Baybak/?p=4821 or http://www.azadtabriz.com/news/?p=2093 Mr. Serrafi is a successful engineer by profession and one of the intellectual vanguards of the national movement of Southern Azerbaijan	
February 21 st was declared the international day of mother tongues eight years ago by the UNESCO. Many countries have been celebrating this day since then. As far as we are concerned, our nation too		



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strives to express their love to our mother tongue but is faced with constraints imposed by the officials. They have mobilised all their resources for a number of years to ensure that such a momentous day could not be aired through the media and would be totally hidden. This is disgrace to them.

Thanks to teamwork of a great many compatriots, the city of Tebriz hosted the very first mother tongue conference on 21st of February 2004. The participants were drawn from the every corner of Southern Azerbaijan, including Urmu, Khoy, Maragha, Zenjan, Erdebil, as well from Tehran and Kerej. One of the accomplishments of the Conference was its rich communiqué. It articulated the reinstatement of our rights to our language based on the United Nations conventions; was unanimously approved by the conference; and within as little as one week, the Communiqué was undersigned by three thousand three hundred and thirty three (3333) individuals. It was published in four languages and was delivered to all responsible authorities within the country, as well as to the UNESCO and the United Nations. In this way, the first Conference and its Communiqué were transformed into the golden pages of our national movement.

In spite of obstacles created against the second and third Conferences in 2005 and 2006, the day was celebrated throughout our cities stressing that our people are defiant and shall preserve our national rights. Nonetheless, our rulers carried on with their indulgence to ignore the peaceful strives of our honourable nation.

If the shackling against our nation was induced eighty years ago by aliens, there is no abatement of the onslaught since then—instead of opening the channels for dialogue, the authorities keep distorting the situation and are getting pig-headed with their incompetent policies. We keep asking questions out of our sincerity, but they respond behind closed doors.

It is hardly surprising that, our nation did not fit the space of conference halls or the reception of their houses to preserve our mother tongue and therefore poured to the streets challenging rotten policies in an arena as vast as Southern Azerbaijan. In this way, another golden page was written in the history of our national movement. I argue that this episode shall be regarded as a classical normative movement in the history of our national movement, and I dare to say that it will mark a paradigm shift too at the international level.

.....
It may be that tomorrow will be too late. The masters reigning from the upper echelons and engaged in demeaning our nation, should open their ears, and should dare to listen to the just voice of the Turkic citizens. History has proven that a civil nation insisting on her national rights through self-restraint and peaceful means is also capable of securing them using other means when the time is right to confront the enemy.

Our nation is distinguished internationally for a stiff resistance in safeguarding our mother tongue whatever casualties it may suffer. If we consider the extent of our losses in the following terms: only sixty years ago our struggle for our mother tongue some twenty five thousands (25,000) [Translator's Note: This is due to the invasion of Southern Azerbaijan by Iranian Army] of our sons and daughters suffered death; thus we can talk of one casualty per day.



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The substance of our claim for our mother tongue has therefore been gained at the expense of one casualty per day, as a result of which I hold that even if the Day of Mother Tongue is truly an International day, we embrace it as our national day of celebration.

3. Preparations for Demonstrations

Although the activists of the national movement of Southern Azerbaijan have keenly applied for licences to peaceful demonstrations throughout Southern Azerbaijan, there are indications that the authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran have ordered their subservient local agents not to ratify these applications or act as obstructionist. Various groups and cultural associations have issued statements calling for street demonstrations. Many are planning to take to the streets with their families to minimise the risk of arbitrary onslaughts by the authorities. Some of the initiatives include:

- Distributing CDs and leaflets, three examples are given in Table 2
- Organising conferences and parties, for instance due to collaboration between the Sehend Literary Society, the Islamic Society and the Centre for Publicising (Southern) Azerbaijan successfully presented a conference on 19 February 2007 in Tebriz University. The details are yet to emerge. (Source: <http://www.baybak.com/Baybak/?p=4831>).
- Mr Hidayet Zakir (Arazli) and his wife Mrs. Ulduz Arazli have pledged to undergo hunger strike towards publicising the unacceptable status of the mother tongue of the 30 million Southern Azerbaijanis. They have issued a communiqué detailing the sufferings of the nation of Southern Azerbaijan inflicted by the Iranian racist policies. They insist that the Azerbaijani Turkic language must be the language of education throughout Azerbaijani educational institutions all the way through and including higher educations in the universities. Mr. Hidayet Zakir himself is a teacher by profession. Source: GunAzTV and <http://www.35000000.com/habergoruntule.asp?bolum=243&katid=48>



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from the USA). These are also published in the Southern Azerbaijani websites, e.g. <http://oyrenci.mihanblog.com/Rss.ASPX>. The cities with well publicised demonstrations include: Urmu, Khoy, Qoshachay, Sulduz, Zenjan, Erdebil, Kheyov, and Tebriz. These are examples and by no means exhaustive. An example of the call for demonstrations is given in Table 3.

Table 3	An example of the call for demonstrations: Source: http://www.azerbaycansesi.com/news/bugun2R.htm
	<p>به مناسبت روز جهانی زبان مادري و در اعتراض به آپارتايد فرهنگي رژیم ايران نسبت به ملتهای غیر فارس زبان و در جهت مبارزه برای آزادي در تمامی آذربایجان، تظاهرات گسترده در داخل شهرها و میداین اصلی شهرها برگزار خواهد گردید .</p> <p>اسفند برابر با ۲۱ فوریه روز جهانی زبان مادري گرامی باد 2</p> <p>در اکثر شهرهای آذربایجان بیانیه‌های حضور در خیابانهای اصلی شهرها پخش گردیده است و آذربایجان آمادگی کامل برای برگزاری روز جهانی زبان مادري را به صورت گسترده دارد</p> <p>زمان و مکان برپایی تجمعات در برخی از شهرها به شرح زیر می‌باشد</p> <p>تبریز: چهارشنبه ۲ اسفند ۸۵، ساعت ۴ بعد از ظهر، راستا کوچه</p> <p>ارومیه: چهارشنبه ۲ اسفند ۸۵، ساعت ۴:۳۰ بعد از ظهر، میدان مرکز</p> <p>اردبیل: چهارشنبه ۲ اسفند ۸۵، ساعت ۴:۳۰ بعد از ظهر، مابین میدان شریعتی و چهارراه امام</p> <p>زنجان: چهارشنبه ۲ اسفند ۸۵/۱۱/۲ - ساعت ۱۶ - سبزه میدان</p> <p>خوی: چهارشنبه ۲ اسفند ۸۵، ساعت ۵:۳۰ بعد از ظهر، خیابان امام (محلله خیابانی)، سر خیابان سینا</p> <p>خیبوو: چهارشنبه ۲ اسفند، ۸۵، ساعت ۴:۳۰، میدان اصلی شهر</p> <p>قوشاچای(میاندواب): چهارشنبه ۲ اسفند ۸۵، ساعت ۴:۳۰ بعد از ظهر، چهارراه اصلی شهر</p> <p>لازم به ذکر است در شهرهای تهران، شبستر، اهر، مراغه، ماکو، خلخال، مرند... نیز اعلامیه‌های حضور در خیابان و تظاهرات بر علیه آپارتايد فرهنگي پخش شده است و شنیده‌ها حکایت از تدارک گسترده مردم برای حضور در ۲ اسفند دارد</p>

4. A Glimpse of Repressive Acts by Iranian Authorities

Whilst the nation of Southern Azerbaijan goes from strength to strength in demanding their national and human rights, often symbolised in terms of the demand for the reinstatement of the Azerbaijani Turkic throughout Southern Azerbaijan as the official language, the Iranian authorities keep resorting to their singular approach of repression. Table 4 outlines the basic details of the individuals who were arrested. Some have been released on bail, others are arbitrarily detained. More details are yet to emerge:



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No.	Name	City	Source
1	Hesen Esedi	Erdebil	http://haqqimiz.blogfa.com/post-346.aspx
2	Huseyn Mehemmedi	Erdebil/Tebriz	http://haqqimiz.blogfa.com/post-339.aspx
3	Peyman Bəhrami	Erdebil/Tebriz	http://haqqimiz.blogfa.com/post-339.aspx
4	Davud Mehemmedi	Erdebil/Tebriz	http://haqqimiz.blogfa.com/post-339.aspx
5	Ibrahim Jeferzade	Khoy	http://haqqimiz.blogfa.com/post-340.aspx
6	Eli Ebdullahi (already tortured)	Qum (Qom)	http://haqqimiz.blogfa.com/post-352.aspx
7	Jefer Abidini	Qum	http://haqqimiz.blogfa.com/post-352.aspx
8	Ibrahim Kazimi	Qum	http://haqqimiz.blogfa.com/post-352.aspx
9	Mehdi Movlai	Qum	http://haqqimiz.blogfa.com/post-352.aspx
10	Mesud Pejman	Qum	http://haqqimiz.blogfa.com/post-352.aspx
11	A name yet to be established	Qum	http://haqqimiz.blogfa.com/post-352.aspx
12	Rza Derjezini	Qum	http://haqqimiz.blogfa.com/post-351.aspx
13	Yusuf Suleymani	Qum	http://haqqimiz.blogfa.com/post-353.aspx
14	Behzad Xorshidzade	Shebuster	http://haqqimiz.blogfa.com/post-342.aspx
15	Perviz Sultani	Shebuster	http://haqqimiz.blogfa.com/post-342.aspx
16	Qehreman Sultani	Shebuster	http://haqqimiz.blogfa.com/post-342.aspx
17	Hesen Erk	Tebriz	http://asmek-yeni.blogspot.com/2007/02/blog-post.html#links
18	A client of Mr. Erk was also arrested in his work place		
19	Ibrahim Jeferzade	Tebriz	
20	Yunus Zarei		
21	Behnam Nur Mehemmedi	Urmu	http://asmek-yeni.blogspot.com/2007/02/blog-post.html#links
22	Ebulfezl Alilu	Urmu	http://asmek-yeni.blogspot.com/2007/02/blog-post.html#links
23	Ehmed Qureyshi	Urmu	http://asmek-yeni.blogspot.com/2007/02/blog-post.html#links
24	Ismayil Javadi	Urmu	http://asmek-yeni.blogspot.com/2007/02/blog-post.html#links
25	Jefer Huseyni kiya	Urmu	http://asmek-yeni.blogspot.com/2007/02/blog-post.html#links
26	Meherrem Huseyni kiya	Urmu	http://asmek-yeni.blogspot.com/2007/02/blog-post.html#links
100s more	100s were summoned in Eher	Ehere	See below

Also two of the above individuals (**1. Mehdi Movlai** and **2. Jefer Abidini**) are known to be forced to drink poisonous liquid, after which they have suffered from stomach upsets and vomiting (<http://haqqimiz.blogfa.com/post-351.aspx>). These were known to happen in the past but the names of the victims were not known. Now this evidence is in hand.



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Table 5, Another Example of Suppression

Source of information: <http://www.baybak.com/Baybak/?p=4800>

Mrs. Zohre Vefai is a veteran of the Southern Azerbaijani national movement. She is a publisher by profession and the manager of the Bookshop, called Zeyneb Pasha. It is reported that she was threatened recently by Colonel Mohammad zade warning her in Farsi that “if you do not stop selling Turkic books in your shop that are illegal, I will shut it down and put an official seal to it.” This is despite the fact that she only sells officially published books.



It has been reported in Azerbaijani websites that some 100 activists were summoned by Iranian authorities in the Southern Azerbaijani city of Eher. One example of these reports is <http://haqqimiz.blogfa.com/>. The authorities have forced these activists to sign a statement that they will not take part in the planned meetings in Tebriz and the provincial capitals of Southern Azerbaijani province of Urmu, Zenjan and Erdebil.

It has also been reported that Mr. Saleh Molla-Abbasi and others have vehemently refused to comply with these coercions.

Some of others suppressive acts are as follows:

- The students publication *Tekhte-siyah* was banned by Iranian authorities.
- Mr. Yunus Zarei, the leader of the Arman Student Organisations, was cautioned
- The weekly *Veravi* was banned in Khiyov

5. Concluding Remark

The integrity of human rights can only be maintained by solidarity with the defenders of human rights. Today, the nation of Southern Azerbaijan is defending even their most basic human rights, the right for the reinstatement of the official status of Azerbaijani Turkic. We reflected a glimpse of the events as they roll out in Southern Azerbaijan. We hope you are monitoring the situation and will be defending the just cause of our nation before it is too late.