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The Problem of Southern Azerbaijan

Say (No.): 535/2011
İlaygün (Date): 22 March 2011

The Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights, Geneva,

Please circulate to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on human rights defenders, and to the Special Rapporteur for the Right to Health. It is relevant to:

- Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers
- The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention
- Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance
- The Independent Expert on Minority Issues

CC Mr. Dyke and Mrs. Harrison, Amnesty International, London
UNESCO and various news media

Mr. Seid Metinpur



A Southern Azerbaijani prisoner
of conscience

Dear sir/madam

UPDATE 2: Mrs Etiyye Metinpur: THE TRUTH IS THAT I FAIL TO UNDERSTAND THE REASON FOR AN AUTHORITY TO BE OBSTINATE TOWARDS THE CASE OF AN INDIVIDUAL

Please find enclosed Update 2 on the severe heart condition that Mr. Seid Metinpur is suffering now. He is a distinguished human rights defender of Southern Azerbaijan, who is now a prisoner of conscience arbitrarily deprived of his right to health and liberty by Iranian authorities. He is in an urgent need of medical attention.

Mr. Metinpur has now turned to the symbol of national consciousness of Southern Azerbaijan. His sufferings are pulsating the suffering of the 30 million Turkic nation in Southern Azerbaijan and his upbeat resolve to resist the arbitrary acts of the Iranian racism is inspiring the activists of the national movement of Southern Azerbaijan.

Since our Update 1 (Ref: 522/2010, Date: 8 February 2010) regarding his first heart attack, Mr. Metinpur has suffered such attacks twice. We were unable to report the second one and therefore this update is concerned with his third heart attack problems. The documents/information provided in this Update are:

Table 1: This provides the translation of an interview given by Mrs. Etiyye Metinpur, wife of Mr. Seid Metinpur to radio *Farda* (the date of interview: 13 March 2011).

Table 2: This provides the translation of two new items reflecting the way Mr. Metinpur has turned to a focal point of Southern Azerbaijan.

Table 3: This reflects the international campaign for the release of Mr. Metinpur.

We would like to stress once again that in compiling this Communication, we have not consulted with Mr. Metinpur's family or anyone else for that matter. It is necessary to mention this to manage the risk of reprisals by the Iranian authorities against him and his family.

Mr. Metinpur is a distinguished human rights defender, a prisoner of conscience, imprisoned arbitrarily and now deprived of his right to health. Evidently, Mrs. Metinpur has exhausted all the means to secure the treatment of her husband. We would like to remind you that you are the authority with an international mandate responsible able to secure Mr. Metinpur's health. The justice for Mr. Metinpur and securing his health now rests in your hands.

We thank you in advance for your care.

Yours sincerely,

Boyuk Resuloglu

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



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Table 1: Mrs. Etiyye Metinpur's campaign for Proper Medical Treatment to her Husband: Translation of the Interview given by her to Radio Farda

Sources: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vVelUUIJOXI>; The transcription of the questions and answers are taken from: http://www.savlansesi.com/2011/03/blog-post_10.html

Mrs. Etiyye Metinpur (her maiden surname is Tahiri or Taheri of transcribed according to Persian pronunciations) is an arduous campaigner for her husband. We understand that typically. The families of Southern Azerbaijani prisoners of conscience are under threat not to campaign for their loved ones. We assume that Mrs. Metinpur's campaigns are just bare minimum that she is able to do, even though the whole family members are fully committed to observing the law of land, irrespective of their opinion of the law.

Mrs. Etiyye Metinpur described the background to Radio Farda that: when Seid's "sentence was carried out by imprisoning him on 12 July 2009, he suffered a heart attack after a month or so and when he explained the situation I was working on the case to get a temporary release to him but my efforts were in vain. I discussed his conditions by a number of doctors. My understanding from these consultations was that this condition should be regarded as serious shout it be repeated. Regrettably, a similar condition was repeated about six months later. Unfortunately, the condition happened again one month ago when Seid suffered a heart attack for the third time. However, all of our efforts have been in vain despite the fact that Seid is legally entitled for a temporary release, as well as we have been persistent to get a temporary release for him and the doctor in prison has issued a letter for the attention of the judge dealing with this case. I regret to say that no steps have been taken to confirm Seid's right to temporary release or even making it possible to have Seid to be able to meet heart specialists outside prison.

Radio Farda Question: Can you explain what is the reason for [the authority] disallowing for the treatment of the heart of your husband in a Clinique outside prison?

Etiyye: The truth is that I fail to understand the reason for an authority to be obstinate towards the case of an individual. Now, I do not know what the judge has decided and I am not able to analyse their mindsets that why do they endanger the life of an individual who is a thinker, he holds his own ideas and he has a worldview of his own. I fail to understand the wisdom of the authorities.

Radio Farda: Considering your husband's conditions, now what have you requested from the authorities?

Etiyye: We have just the single demand like always that the Iranian authorities comply with their own laws and behave accordingly. We want no more. On Day 1 of the arrest of my husband, we objected to their manner of arrest but our objections remained in vain. We then objected to the nine month arbitrary sentence of the authority. When the court was held, it only took the judge two minutes to pontificate the sentence of eight years of imprisonment. When the Iranian authorities spearheaded their arbitrary sentence, they deprived my husband from the right to temporary releases. You see all we want is the behaviour of the authorities to be fit to the Constitution with the people with whom they disagree.



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Table 2: The Massive campaign in Southern Azerbaijan for the Release of Mr Metinpur

Mr. Metinpur has now turned to the symbol of national consciousness of Southern Azerbaijan. His sufferings are pulsating with the suffering of the 30 million Turkic nation in Southern Azerbaijan and his upbeat resolve to resist the arbitrary acts of the Iranian racism is aspiring the activists of the national movement of Southern Azerbaijan.

A massive campaign is underway by defiant Southern Azerbaijani activists and university students toward reinstating the human rights of Mr. Metinpur. Below, two examples are given.

Item 1: On the Occasion of the International Woman's Day: <http://www.oyrenci.com/news.php?id=3713>

On the evening of the 3rd of March 2011, a group of student and activists of the national movement of Southern Azerbaijan made their ways from various cities (Tebriz, Urmu, Sulduz, Miyana, Khoy, Shebuster, Heshteri ...) towards the house of Seid Metinpur in Zengan. This was on the occasion of celebrating the International Woman's Day and these activities aimed to meet Mrs. Etiyye Metinpur, the Southern Azerbaijani heroine and wife of Mr Seid Metinpur. They were arrested by security forces in a makeshift check point in Miyana. The mobiles and personal belongings of these individuals were confiscated upon their arrest and afterwards they were transferred to an inspection centre.

After five hours of detentions, the security agents were compelled to release the activists. The activists ignored the persistent threats by the security agents and carried on to meet Mrs Etiyye Metinpur in her house in Zengan together with the activists joining them in Zengan. The group managed to reach Etiyye and congratulate her on the International Woman's Day.

The *OyrenciNews* adds that apparently the ridiculous act of the security forces of the Iranian Ministry of Information was fruitful by meeting Etiyye thanks to the undeterred resolve of the students and activists.

Item 2: Celebration of the Spring Equinox Day: <http://www.oyrenci.com/news.php?id=3888>

A group of political, social and cultural activists and media reporters of Zengan together with university students and activities from Zengan, Tebriz, Tehran and other cities and towns met Mr. Metinpur's family in relation to the new year and the celebration of the spring equinox day. He is a human rights activist and a Turkic journalist. The group congratulated Seid's family and expressed their wish in the full restoration of human rights of all of the Southern Azerbaijani activists and were updated on Seid' latest conditions.

Seid's father stated in relation to the prisoners of conscience that "Seid like other [Southern] Azerbaijani prisoners of conscience have rights as a human being but are subjected to arbitrary treatments." He pointed to his last visit by Seid and said that: "Seid morale, under whatever conditions, is formidable and just now he is cheerful and upbeat despite his very poor conditions.

The Metinpur family informed of their unceasing efforts to obtain permission for his medical treatments that: "the judge and the relevant officials have refused all our requests for Seid's temporary release for his medical treatment. Our visits are limited to the usual weekly visit through telephone cabins and person—to-person visits are very rare indeed."



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Table 2: International Campaign for the Reinstatement of Human Rights of Mr. Metinpur

Amnesty International was outspoken about the human and national rights of Southern Azerbaijanis (they still refer to this as Iranian Azerbaijan) up to 2009 but since the so called the Green Movement” their campaigns have been polarised. Now they seem to have resumed their campaign starting with Mother Language and campaign for Mr. Metinpur but only reflecting his activities on Mother Language. We urge Amnesty International not to ignore Mr. Metinpur’s campaign on human rights, as their campaign in this way reflects the wrong impression that Southern Azerbaijanis are only concerned with mother language but this is wrong. Southern Azerbaijan carries the banner of antiracism and full reinstatements of national rights of Southern Azerbaijan. Below, we reproduce their text:

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



Your Excellency,

Sa'id Metinpur, a member of the Iranian Azerbaijani minority, is serving an eight-year prison sentence for peacefully campaigning for greater cultural and language rights for his community. He is a prisoner of conscience and should be released immediately and unconditionally.

Sa'id Metinpur was arrested on 25 May 2007 in Zanjan, around the anniversary of mass demonstrations by Iranian Azerbaijanis against a cartoon in a state-run newspaper, which they considered offensive. Hundreds were arrested and almost 20 killed during the 2006 demonstration. Sa'id Metinpur was reportedly tortured during interrogation. He was also detained for 10 days in February 2007 for peacefully demonstrating on International Mother Tongue Day.

I also urge you to ensure that the Iranian public education system makes adequate provision for children of minority communities to learn their own language in school, and that minority communities are permitted to establish private schools to educate their children in their own language.



Leader of the Islamic Republic
Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei
The Office of the Supreme Leader
Islamic Republic Street – end of Shahid Keshvar
Doust Street
Tehran
Islamic Republic of Iran

The campaign for the reinstatement of human rights of Mr. Metinpur among the Azerbaijani Diaspora is very strong and the link for some of the initiatives reflected by OyrenciNews are given below:

1. The campaign at HCHR in Geneva (16 March 2011): <http://www.oyrenci.com/news.php?id=3827>
2. ADAPP Campaign (16 March 2011): http://www.savalansesi.com/2011/03/blog-post_13.html
3. The campaign in Germany (October 2010): <http://www.oyrenci.com/news.php?id=1892>
4. The campaign in Britain (September 2010):<http://www.oyrenci.com/news.php?id=1724>
5. The campaign in Malmö, Sweden (October 2010): <http://www.oyrenci.com/news.php?id=1403>
6. The campaign in Vacouver, Canada (August 2010):http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zSIYYO97jFw&feature=player_embedded
7. The campaign in Istambul (August 2010):<http://www.oyrenci.com/news.php?id=1281>

Some of the articles about him:

1. An article by Elirza Quluncu: <http://www.oyrenci.com/news.php?id=1640>
2. An article by Arif Keskin: <http://www.oyrenci.com/news.php?id=1622>
3. An article by Yashar Hekkakpur: <http://www.oyrenci.com/news.php?id=1622>
4. Mr. Elirza Iskenderiyyun dedicates his on journalism in Zengan to Mr. Metinpur and the the conference for prize-giving is devoted to Mr. Metinpur (10 July 2010): <http://www.oyrenci.com/news.php?id=1282>