

Independent Investigation Needed into Mysterious Death of Iranian Doctor

End Date: 12/15/2009

The body of Dr. Ramin Pourandarjani was discovered in a room at Tehran police headquarters on 10 November 2009. While the Chief of Police General Esmaeil Ahmadi-Moqaddam has said that Dr. Pourandarjani, who was 26 years old, had committed suicide and that a letter found near his body suggested that he had been depressed, officials had initially said he had suffered a heart attack in his sleep and later that he had died of poisoning. Dr. Pourandarjani's father Reza-Qoli Pourandarjani said he had spoken to his son the night before his death and that he did not appear to be depressed. He told the Associated Press that he had initially been informed that his son broke his leg in an accident and that his consent was needed for surgery, but then discovered that his son was dead after going to Tehran.

Dr. Pourandarjani had been performing his required military service at the Kahrizak Detention Center, used to hold those arrested during the post- 12 June presidential election unrest. Iranian officials have confirmed persistent reports of widespread torture and abuse at Kahrizak. At least three people died as a result of torture there, including Mohsen Rouhalmehri, the son of a top aide to presidential candidate Mohsen Rezaei, who reportedly died of cardiac arrest and bleeding in his lungs two weeks after he was detained on 9 July; his body bore the marks of severe torture. On 29 July, the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei ordered the closing of the Kahrizak detention center.

As part of his duties Dr. Pourandarjani treated detainees who had been tortured at Kahrizak. Dr. Pourandarjani had been interviewed by a special parliamentary committee charged with investigating allegations of abuses during the post-election unrest. Before his death he reportedly received threats to prevent him from revealing the abuses he had witnessed at Kahrizak. He had also reportedly been forced to say that one detainee had died of meningitis.

The office of Abbas Jafari Dowlatabadi, the Tehran Prosecutor, announced that an investigation into the death of Dr. Pourandarjani would take place. Because of the unusual circumstances of his death, Amnesty International believes it is essential that the investigation be fully transparent and that reputable independent experts be called in to insure the integrity of the investigation.

Targets

Speaker of the Parliament
His Excellency Ali Larijani
Majles-e Shoura-ye Eslami
Baharestan Square
Tehran, ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

Supreme 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
Email: info_leader@leader.ir
via website: <http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/index.php?p=letter> (English)

Head of the Parliamentary Committee investigating abuses

Parviz Sorouri

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Salutation: Your Excellency

Subject lines for sample letter:

1. Insure that the investigation into the death of Dr. Pourandarjani is thorough, independent and transparent
2. Allow the participation of international experts into the investigation of Dr. Pourandarjani's death
3. Iran must comply with its obligations under international law to investigate possible extra-judicial executions

Sample Letter;

Your Excellency:

I am writing to you to express my concern about the case of Dr. Ramin Pourandarjani, whose body was discovered in a room at Tehran Police Headquarters on 10 November 2009. The Iranian authorities have provided multiple versions of the cause of death, first saying that he died of a heart attack, then that he was poisoned, and finally that he had committed suicide.

Dr. Pourandarjani had performing his required military service at the Kahrizak Detention Center, used to hold those arrested during the post- 12 June presidential election unrest. Iranian officials have confirmed persistent reports of widespread torture and abuse at Kahrizak. At least three people died as a result of torture there, including Mohsen Rouhalamini, the son of a top aide to presidential candidate Mohsen Rezaei, who reportedly died of cardiac arrest and bleeding in his lungs two weeks after he was detained on 9 July; his body bore the marks of severe torture. On 29 July, the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei ordered the closing of the Kahrizak detention center.

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I welcome the announcement by the office of Tehran Prosecutor Abbas Jafari Dowlatabadi that an investigation into the death would be taking place. I urge that the investigation be fully impartial, thorough and independent. I also urge that international forensic experts, such as representatives from Physicians for Human Rights, be permitted to take part, in order to insure the integrity and transparency of the investigation.

Thank you very much for your attention.