

# URGENT ACTION



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*Note: Please write on behalf of these persons even though you may not have received the original UA when issued on October 10, 2008. Thanks!*

13 January 2009

Further Information on UA 279/08 (10 October 2008) Forcible return/Prisoners of conscience/Fear of torture or other ill-treatment

IRAN                    Ma'soumeh Ka'bi, aged 31  
                              Shima' Nabgan (f), aged 14]  
                              Asia Nabgan (f), aged 13 ]  
                              Asma' Nabgan (f), aged 11] Her children  
                              Iyad Nabgan (m), aged 8 ]  
                              Imad Nabgan (m), aged 4 ]

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Ma'soumeh Ka'bi was sentenced to four-and-a-half years' imprisonment on 1 January: She was given 15 days to lodge an appeal, and released on bail of 1.5 billion Iranian Riyals (about US \$151,000). Her five children are now known to have been released in late October.

Her sentencing took place behind closed doors at a Revolutionary Court in Ahwaz, Khuzestan province. Her sentence consisted of six months for fleeing Iran using falsified travel documents, and four years possibly linked to her husband's political activities.

Ma'soumeh Ka'bi and her children, who are members of Iran's Arab minority, had been forcibly returned from Syria on 27 September, despite the fact that they had applied for asylum. She had been due to travel to Denmark with her children to join her husband, the children's father, Habib Nabgan. Ma'soumeh Ka'bi and the children were arrested on arrival in Tehran.

Habib Nabgan is a prominent member of the political party *Lejnat al-Wefaq* (Reconciliation Committee), which promotes the rights of Iran's Arab minority. He was resettled as a refugee in Denmark in 2006.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Much of Iran's Arab minority lives in the province of Khuzestan, which borders Iraq. They have complained of discrimination, in areas including access to resources as well as forced evictions. There were mass demonstrations in April 2005, after rumors that the government planned to disperse the country's Arab population or to force them to relinquish their Arab identity. Following bomb explosions in Ahvaz City in June and October 2005, which killed at least 14 people, and explosions at oil installations in September and October 2005, hundreds of people were arrested. Further bombings on 24 January 2006, in which at least six people were killed, were followed by further mass arrests. At least 17 men have now been executed for their alleged involvement in the bombings. It is not clear if another man was executed or died in custody.

Article 15 of the Iranian Constitution states: "The official language and script of Iran... is Persian... However, the use of regional and tribal languages in the press and mass media, as well as for teaching of their literature in schools, is allowed in addition to Persian." *Lejnat Al-Wefaq* was established in 1999 to promote Iranian Arab minority rights,

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including linguistic and cultural rights, but the party was declared illegal on 4 November 2006, and a statement from the Ahvaz Prosecutor's office said that "membership and connection with that party will be severely confronted."

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible:**

- welcoming the release on bail of Ma'soumeh Ka'bi and the release of her five children;
- calling on the authorities to drop the charges against Ma'soumeh Ka'bi, and pointing out that if her sentence is upheld she would be a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for the peaceful exercise of her right to freedom of expression and association, and that the authorities are targeting her in order to force her husband, Habib Nabgan, to give himself up.

**APPEALS TO:**

**Minister of Intelligence**

His Excellency Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejeie  
Ministry of Information  
Second Negarestan Street  
Pasdaran Avenue  
Tehran  
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

**Head of the Judiciary**

His Excellency Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi  
Shahroudi  
Howzeh Riyasat-e Qoveh Qazaiyeh  
Office of the Head of the Judiciary  
Pasteur Street  
Vali Asr Avenue, south of Serah-e Jomhuri  
Tehran 1316814737  
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN  
**Email: shahroudi@dadgostary-tehran.ir**  
**(In the subject line write: FAO Ayatollah Shahroudi)**  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

**COPIES TO:**

**Leader of the Islamic Republic**

His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei  
The Office of the Supreme Leader  
Islamic Republic Street - 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)**  
**http://www.leader.ir/langs/fa/index.php?p=letter(Persian)**  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

**Director, Human Rights Headquarters of Iran**

His Excellency Mohammad Javad Larijani  
Howzeh Riassat-e Ghoveh Ghazaiyeh  
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Pasteur Street  
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**Fax: 011 98 21 3390 4986 (please keep trying)**  
**Email: fsharafi@bia-judiciary.ir (In the subject line: FAO Mohammad Javad Larijani)**  
**int\_aff@judiciary.ir (In the subject line: FAO Mohammad Javad Larijani)**

*Iran does not presently have an embassy in the United States. Instead, please send copies to:*

**Iranian Interests Section**

Embassy of Pakistan  
2209 Wisconsin Avenue N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20007  
**Phone: 202 965 4990**  
**Fax: 202 965 1073**  
**Email: requests@daftar.org**

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.**

**Check with the AIUSA Urgent Action office if sending appeals after 24 February 2009.**