



Amnesty International USA October Newsletter on Iran with Information and Action Ideas

The last few months have seen some welcome successes: Pastor Youcef Nadarkhani, who had converted from Islam to Christianity, had been sentenced to death in Iran for “apostasy.” After an international outcry and persistent campaigning on the part of Amnesty International and others, we were delighted to learn that in September Pastor Nadarkhani was released from prison, after he was acquitted of most of the charges against him in a retrial (read more at <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/iran-naderkhani-acquittal-shows-urgent-need-allow-religious-freedom-2012-09-11>). We also learned that Narges Mohammadi, the Executive Chairperson for the Center for Human Rights Defenders, was granted a medical furlough in July and has not been called back to prison. She was sentenced to a six-year term and was in very poor health. She was a prisoner of conscience and we campaigned vigorously on her behalf.

Unfortunately, there has also been some bad news. Mohammad Ali Dadkhah, one of Iran’s most prominent human rights attorneys, and the lawyer for Youcef Nadarkhani as well as for prisoner of conscience Arzhang Davoodi, was required to start serving his nine-year prison sentence at the end of September. He had been sentenced to nine years in prison plus a ten-year ban on his professional activities in July 2011; the sentence was confirmed in April 2012. You will find an action on his behalf in this newsletter. Blogger Hossein Ronaghi Maleki, who is suffering from a severe kidney disorder, was able to enjoy just a few weeks of freedom after he was released in early July for medical treatment, upon payment of a large sum of money. He was rearrested on 22 August while volunteering to help earthquake victims in East Azerbaijan province. There is a petition on his behalf in this newsletter.



Blogger Hossein Ronaghi Maleki



Journalist Shiva Nazar Ahari

On 11 October, The U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in The Islamic Republic of Iran, Ahmed Shaheed, issued his third report in which he states that he “has catalogued a wide range of human rights violations since the submission of his first interim report to the General Assembly....these violations are products of legal incongruities, insufficient adherence to the rule of law, and the existence of widespread impunity. This situation undermines the Government’s ability to adhere to its international commitments, and undercuts its capacity to advance the recommendations accepted during its universal periodic review, as well as those produced by treaty body reviews and the other special procedures mandate holders.” The report notes, among other problems, violations of freedom of expression, due process, and freedom of religion, torture and ill-treatment, persecution of members of ethnic and linguistic minorities, and the high rate of executions. The government of Iran has repeatedly denied the Special Rapporteur’s requests to conduct research inside Iran.

Many people will wonder what is the best way to get more involved in Amnesty International USA's Iran work. One of the best ways is to join a local Amnesty International group. If that group does not already work on an Iran case dossier, you can urge that the group take one on. Groups commit to working on case dossiers until the situation is resolved (prisoner of conscience is released, death sentence is overturned, etc.), no matter how long it takes. Working together with other members of the Amnesty local group and the local community is one of the most effective ways to do activism on Iran cases. For assistance with case dossiers or to get help finding the nearest local Amnesty group, please contact Elise Auerbach, the Iran country specialist for Amnesty International USA, at aiis@uchicago.edu.

Following please find information about events that Amnesty organized or co-sponsored in Los Angeles and Madison, Wisconsin as well as an announcement about Amnesty International's upcoming event in Chicago in November. There are also actions on Mohammad Ali Dadkhah and prisoner of conscience Navid Khanjani, as well as petitions for journalist Shiva Nazar Ahari and Hossein Ronaghi-Maleki that you can use for tabling and other programs this holiday season.



Evin Prison in Tehran

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Your Excellency:

We call for the immediate and unconditional release of journalist Shiva Nazar Ahari, who is a prisoner of conscience, persecuted solely for exercising her right to freedom of expression. She started serving her four-year prison sentence in Evin Prison in Tehran on 8 September 2012. Ms Ahari, a member of the Committee of Human Rights Reporters, was originally sentenced to six years in prison after being convicted of “enmity against God”, “gathering and colluding to commit a crime against national security” and “spreading propaganda against the system.” Her sentenced was reduced to four years on appeal after the conviction for “gathering and colluding” was set aside. She had been previously detained from June through September 2009 and then again from December 2009 through September 2010, much of that time in solitary confinement in a cage-like tiny cell.

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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



Your Excellency:

We urge you to order the release of Hossein Ronaghi Maleki, who was arrested on 22 August 2012 when police and plain-clothed security forces reportedly attacked a relief camp in East Azerbaijan province where Mr. Maleki and others were offering supplies for earthquake victims. He had been sentenced to 15 years in prison after an unfair trial in 2010 on charges including “membership of the [illegal] internet group ‘Iran Proxy,’” “spreading propaganda against the system” and “insulting the Leader and the President,” apparently in connection with articles he posted on his blog, *14 Tir*. He had been released from prison on 2 July 2012 to receive needed medical treatment for his serious kidney condition, upon payment of a large sum of money for bail. He has now been charged with “distributing unclean and non-hygienic goods” and is reported to have been tortured during questioning. He was reportedly beaten so severely in the kidney area that the wound from a recent surgery started bleeding. Despite this, he has been refused medical care and has not been allowed to take his medicine. There is great concern that Hossein Ronaghi Maleki’s physical health is now rapidly deteriorating.

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Chicago Iran Human Rights Event with Kamiar and Arash Alaei on November 11



Amnesty International group 50 and the Chicago-area Baha'i Spiritual Assemblies are hosting an event highlighting the dire human rights situation in Iran on Sunday November 11 at 1 pm. We are honored to host Dr. Kamiar Alaei and Dr. Arash Alaei, former prisoners of conscience in Iran.

The Alaei brothers are compassionate physicians and are internationally renowned experts in the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS. They were instrumental in establishing innovative and humane public health programs in Iran. The brothers have dedicated their lives to helping some of the most marginalized and stigmatized groups in Iranian society—HIV-infected drug users, sex workers, LGBT individuals and prison inmates. The World Health Organization considered their programs as models for the entire Middle East and North Africa. Their hard work brought rare favorable world attention to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Because their professional work involved collaboration with American colleagues and participation in international scientific and medical conferences held in the United States, the brothers were persecuted by the Iranian government who accused them of involvement in an American plot to undermine the Iranian government; they were arrested, tortured, convicted for “cooperating with an enemy government” after an unfair trial in a Revolutionary Court, and served several years in prison.

After a sustained campaign on their behalf led by Physicians for Human Rights, Amnesty International, and other partners, the brothers were released from prison. They are currently unable to carry out their important work in their native country. Undeterred, they continue to work on the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS among marginalized and persecuted populations around the world.

Also speaking will be Bani Dugal, Principal Representative of the Bahá'í International Community to the United Nations. The Baha'i community faces systemic persecution by the Iranian authorities.

Participants will learn about actions they can take to advocate for human rights in Iran. There will be music by Alessandro Giua and Baha'is House of Worship Choir, under the direction of Van Gilmer. This event is also co-sponsored by United4Iran and the Dr. Mohammad Mossadegh Leadership Fund at Northeastern Illinois University. You can learn more about this event at <http://www.amnestyusa.org/events/human-rights-in-iran-dr-kamiar-and-dr-arash-alaei-speak-about-their-persecution-and-perseverance>

Sunday, November 11, 2012, 1:00 PM
The Baha'i House of Worship, Foundation Hall
100 Linden Ave, Wilmette, IL 60091

The venue is easily accessible by taking the Purple Line train to the last stop at Linden

Recent Events Organized or Co-sponsored by Amnesty International

Amnesty International USA was pleased to co-sponsor the event “The Struggle for Human Rights in Iran: Towards a Better Future by Building a Culture of Human Rights” that was held at the Wilshire Ebell Theatre in Los Angeles on October 11, 2012. The keynote speaker was prominent human rights activist Dr. Abdol-Karim Lahidji, the Vice-President of the International Federation for Human Rights. Other speakers included Dr. Payam Akhavan, Professor of International Law at McGill University; Dr. Nayereh Tohidi, Professor of Gender and Women’s Studies at California State University, Northridge; and Homa Sarshar, Author, Lecturer, and Journalist. Musical entertainment was provided by Parviz R. Panah and special guest artist Martik. The event’s opening remarks were presented by Ms Shahrzad Ardalan and the emcee for the evening was actor and playwright Mr. Houshang Touzie. The program was also co-sponsored by: United4Iran, Human Rights Watch, The International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran, the Iran Human Rights Documentation Center, and Reporters Without Borders, among others. PARS TV and Andisheh TV recorded the entire event and broadcast it into Iran on October 19, 2012. More information about the event and how to view a broadcast is at <http://struggleforhumanrights.org/>

THE STRUGGLE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN IRAN
TOWARDS A BETTER FUTURE BY BUILDING A CULTURE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2012 – 7:00 P.M.
WILSHIRE EBELL THEATRE
4401 WEST EIGHTH STREET
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90005

DR. ABDOL-KARIM LAHIDJI
LAWYER, VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

DR. PAYAM AKHAVAN
PROFESSOR OF INTERNATIONAL LAW

DR. NAYEREH TOHIDI
PROFESSOR OF GENDER & WOMEN'S STUDIES

HOMA SARSHAR
AUTHOR, JOURNALIST

SHAHRAZAD ARDALAN
RADIO PERSONALITY

PARVIZ R. PANAH
COMPOSER, MASTER JAZZ PLAYER

HOUSHANG TOUZIE
PLAYWRIGHT, ACTOR

MASTER OF CEREMONIES FOR THE EVENING

SPECIAL GUEST APPEARANCE – WORLD RENOWNED IRANIAN SINGER

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL | BAHÁ'Í FAITH | HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH | INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN IRAN
IRAN HUMAN RIGHTS Documentation Center | OB 411 | REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS FOR PRESS FREEDOM | رادیو ایران
جوانان | ANDISHEH

LIVE STREAMING EVENT
FOR MORE INFORMATION – 818. 835.5129 | WWW.STRUGGLEFORHUMANRIGHTS.ORG
FREE ADMISSION | LIMITED FIRST-COME, FIRST-SERVE SEATING | ON-SITE PARKING

On October 10, 2012, Amnesty International USA Local Group 139 in Madison, together with the University of Wisconsin’s International Studies, Social Sciences, HIV/AIDS Comprehensive Care Program, hosted an event with Dr. Kamiar and Dr. Arash Alaei at the Pyle Center on the campus of the University of Wisconsin. The Alaei brothers talked about their groundbreaking work on AIDS treatment and prevention in Iran and elsewhere, and also about the persecution they suffered.

Human Rights Defender Navid Khanjani Serving Twelve-Year Prison Sentence



Navid Khanjani, a member of the Committee for Human Rights Reporters (CHRR) as well as the Association to Oppose Discrimination in Education (AODE), was arrested on 22 August 2012 while serving as a volunteer to provide relief to earthquake victims in the Iranian province of East Azerbaijan. He is now serving a 12-year prison sentence that had been imposed on him solely for his peaceful advocacy on behalf of human rights and the right to education. He is serving his sentence in the notorious Raja'i Shahr Prison, known for its harsh conditions.

Mr. Khanjani is a member of the Baha'i faith. Baha'i community members are systematically denied the right to a university education in Iran. He was arrested at his home in Esfahan in March 2010. During his detention, Navid Khanjani was held for between 23 and 25 days in solitary confinement, was beaten while interrogated, and was strangled while blindfolded by a prison official for refusing to "confess" on camera. He was subjected to an unfair trial in December 2010 in Branch 26 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court and was sentenced to 12 years in prison on 31 January 2011 on charges including "causing unease in the public mind" and "spreading propaganda against the system." His 12-year sentence was upheld by the Appeal Court on 10 August 2011, which also added a fine of four million rials (US\$327).

On 22 August 2012 police and plain-clothed security forces reportedly attacked a relief camp offering supplies for earthquake victims and arrested Navid Khanjani, along with dozens of other volunteer relief workers who had gone to help victims. Mr. Khanjani was accused of "distributing unclean and non-hygienic goods". He underwent a two-day "dry" hunger strike (refusing water in addition to food) on 25 August to protest his arrest and detention. He was transferred on 5 September to Section 4 of Raja'i Shahr Prison.

The CHRR – founded in 2006 – campaigns against all kinds of human rights violations, including those against women, children, prisoners and workers. It is banned by the Iranian authorities and its members have continued to face intense harassment and prosecution since the disputed presidential election in June 2009. The AODEI is an independent organization created around October 2009 which opposes the denial of access to education on the ground of ethnic or religious identity. Most of its members are said to be Baha'i students who have been deprived of education usually after being expelled or suspended from universities. The organization campaigns for the right to education for those excluded for reason of religious or ethnic identity or on grounds of gender discrimination.

Take Action

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

Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani
[care of] Public Relations Office
Number 4, 2 Azizi Street
Vali Asr Ave, above Pasteur Street intersection
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Your Excellency:

I am writing to you to draw your attention to the case of Navid Khanjani , who was sentenced to twelve years in prison in January 2011 following an unfair trial in a Revolutionary Court that failed to adhere to international standards for fair trials. Navid Khanjani is a prisoner of conscience, persecuted solely for his peaceful advocacy on behalf of human rights and the right to education.

Navid Khanjani is a member of two peaceful civil society organizations, the Committee of Human Rights Reporters and the Association to Oppose Discrimination in Education. His conviction was based on charges related to his work with these organizations, as well as vague charges of causing unease in the public mind” and “spreading propaganda against the system.” He was required to begin serving his 12-year prison sentence after he was arrested in August 2012 along with a number of other volunteers, attempting to assist earthquake victims in East Azerbaijan Province. He is currently held in Raja’i Shahr Prison, which is known for its harsh and unsanitary conditions.

I urge you to make an investigation into reports that Navid Khanjani was beaten and mistreated while in detention following his arrest in March 2010. I also urge you to ensure that Navid Khanjani is treated humanely in prison, and that he be granted access to his family and any necessary medical attention. Finally, I urge that he be immediately and unconditionally released from prison.

Thank you very much for your attention to this matter.

FREE PROMINENT IRANIAN HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER MOHAMMAD ALI DADKHAH



Mohammad Ali Dadkhah

Mohammad Ali Dadkhah, one Iran's most esteemed human rights attorneys, was required to start serving his nine-year prison sentence on 30 September. His conviction was based solely on his peaceful professional activities. Mr. Dadkhah, along with Iranian Nobel Peace Prize laureate Shirin Ebadi and other lawyers, co-founded the Center for Human Rights Defenders (CHRD), which was forcibly shut down by the Iranian authorities in December 2008.

Mohammad Ali Dadkhah was sentenced to prison in July 2011 after his conviction of charges including "membership of an association [the CHRD] seeking the soft overthrow of the government" and "spreading propaganda against the system through interviews with foreign media." While in court planning to represent a client, Mohammad Ali Dadkhah was informed by a judge on 28 April 2012 that an appeals court had upheld both his nine-year sentence and a ten-year ban on legal practice and teaching. He had received no prior notification of the appeal court ruling. He has represented a number of prominent clients such as recently released prisoner of conscience Pastor Yousef Nadarkhani, who faced a death sentence for alleged "apostasy from Islam," as well as Arzhang Davoodi, a prisoner of conscience currently serving a long sentence and facing additional charges of "Moharebeh" (enmity against God).

Mr. Dadkhah's colleague at the CHRD, Abdolfattah Soltani, is serving a 13-year prison term on charges including "spreading propaganda against the system", "forming an illegal opposition group [the CHRD]" and "gathering and colluding with intent to harm national security."

The persecution of Abdollah Soltani and Mohammad Ali Dadkhah is just one more example of the Iranian government's campaign against human rights attorneys who struggle to carry out their work in a deeply flawed legal system. Several prominent human rights lawyers such as Shirin Ebadi, Shadi Sadr and Mohammad Mostafaei have been hounded into exile, while others such as Nasrin Sotoudeh and Mohammad Seifzadeh have been sentenced to prison terms. The Iranian authorities have implemented a series of measures intended to prevent Iranians – particularly those critical of the authorities – from being able to access appropriate, competent legal representation, a basic right and important fair trial guarantee. The UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers provide that lawyers must be allowed to carry out their work "without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference." In addition, it affirms the right of lawyers to freedom of expression, also provided for in Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which includes "the right to take part in public discussion of matters concerning the law, the administration of justice and the promotion and protection of human rights." Principle 16 of the U.N. Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers provides that lawyers must be allowed to carry out their work "without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference." Principle 18 states that lawyers "shall not be identified with their clients or their clients' causes a result of

discharging their functions.” In addition, Principle 25 affirms the right of lawyers to freedom of expression.

Take Action:

Head of the Judiciary
Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani
c/o Public relations Office
Number 4, 2 Azizi Street
Vali Asr Ave., above Pasteur Street intersection
Tehran, ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN
Email: bia.judi@yahoo.com
Salutation: Your Excellency

I am writing to you to express my concern over the harsh prison sentence imposed on prominent human rights lawyer Mohammad Ali Dadkhah. Mr. Dadkhah was called to serve his prison sentence on 30 September 2012. He has been persecuted solely for peacefully carrying out his professional duties.

I am concerned that the sentence against Mohammad Ali Dadkhah is part of a concerted campaign to persecute attorneys who represent clients in human rights cases. The UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers provide that lawyers must be allowed to carry out their work “without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference.” In his October 2012 report, the U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran noted that he was “alarmed by reports of [Iranian] Government actions targeting lawyers..... these have grave implications for the health and efficacy of the judicial system, which requires lawyers to rigorously practise their profession in defence of their clients.”

I urge you to ensure that Mohammad Ali Dadkhah is treated humanely in detention, and that he be granted access to his family and to his lawyers. He is a prisoner of conscience and I also urge that he be immediately and unconditionally released. I finally urge you to release other human rights attorneys detained solely for carrying out their professional responsibilities, including Nasrin Sotoudeh, Abdolfattah Soltani and Mohammad Seifzadeh.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.