

**Campaign on Iran 2002
May 7 - May 28**



Iranian journalist and human rights critic,
Siamak Pourzand

This month PEN Canada focuses on a few of the many cases of persecution of writers in Iran.

These cases are all part of a pattern of repression against reformist and independent figures by the conservative judiciary that has been gathering momentum in Iran since the parliamentary elections of February 2000.

- [Continued Clampdown on Freedom of Expression in Iran](#)
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SP00090

writers *in prison* *committee***Urgent Appeal: Siamak Pourzand**

May 10, 2002

His Excellency Hojjatoleslam Sayed Mohammad Khatami
President of the Islamic Republic of Iran
c/o The Presidency
Palestine Avenue
Azerbaijan Intersection,
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Excellency,

I wish to add my name to this appeal from PEN Canada, the Canadian centre of the world writers' organization, International PEN. PEN Canada protests the eight-year prison sentence handed down to 72 year-old journalist, film critic and PEN Canada honorary member **Siamak Pourzand** on May 3, 2002. We are also extremely concerned about reports from a reliable source that Siamak Pourzand suffered a heart attack last week.

Pourzand was seized by security police on November 29, 2001. The authorities said nothing about his disappearance and during his first four months of detention, he had no access to a lawyer or medical care. Pourzand suffers from diabetes and a heart condition.

The Tehran Press Court reportedly sentenced Pourzand to eight years' imprisonment on charges of "undermining state security through his links with monarchists and counter-revolutionaries". It is widely believed that the charges against him are based on 'confessions' which are thought to have been exacted under duress.

It is believed that Pourzand's disappearance and the charges brought against him may be connected to his position as manager of the Majmue-ye Farrhangi-ye Honari-ye Tehran, a cultural centre for writers, artists, and intellectuals or to his articles critical of the Islamic regime.

PEN Canada considers the charges against Siamak Pourzand to be in violation of his right to freedom of expression, as guaranteed by Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which Iran has ratified.

We demand that the authorities release him from prison immediately and unconditionally, and that he immediately be provided with the urgent medical treatment he requires, including transfer to a hospital if needed.

We are also extremely concerned about reports that Pourzand was ill-treated whilst in pre-trial detention, and that his trial has not been conducted

according to fair standards as articulated in the Iranian Constitution and international treaties.

We urge the authorities to respond to these concerns.

Your Name
PEN Canada member