

INTERNATIONAL PEN
Writers in Prison Committee

IRAN CAMPAIGN

MAY 7-28, 2002

Continued Clampdown on Freedom of Expression in Iran



The Writers in Prison Committee of International PEN is currently working for the release of seven writers and journalists serving lengthy prison sentences in Iran, and is monitoring the cases of 23 more who are sentenced or facing charges. PEN believes these cases are all part of a pattern of repression by the conservative judiciary against reformist and

independent figures that has been gathering momentum in Iran since the parliamentary elections of February 2000. In the wake of the reformist victory in those elections, the hard-line conservative establishment has used its control of the judiciary to launch a serious offensive on President Khatami's Reform movement, targeting in particular writers, journalists, and publishers. Over 50 publications have been closed down, and dozens of editors, journalists, publishers, and intellectuals have been imprisoned. According to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Iran in his January 2002 report, there has been no improvement in the state of free expression in Iran since the spring of 2000. He notes, "Indeed, in the present circumstances, it is perhaps surprising how fearless the public discourse generally is."

In addition to the ongoing imprisonment of writers and journalists in Iran, the campaign centers on existing concerns about fair trial and the ill treatment of writers and journalists in prison. Throughout the four weeks, the campaign will consecutively highlight four cases: **Khalil Rostamkhani**, **Akbar Ganji**, **Hojjatoleslam Hasan Yousefi Eshkevari**, and **Siamak Pourzand**. PEN members and friends are asked to send at least one letter on behalf of each of these men during May to the Iranian authorities and Iran's diplomatic representatives in the United States.

TAKE ACTION NOW

**Khalil
Rostamkhani**

**Akbar
Ganji**

**H. Hasan
Yousefi
Eshkevari**

**Siamak
Pourzand**

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