

Doc_Number: GDE00014

URGENT ACTION

DETAINED RIGHTS DEFENDER FACING TRIAL

Shiva Nazar Ahari, a female journalist, blogger and member of the Iranian organization, the Committee of Human Rights Reporters (CHRR) is due to be tried on 23 May 2010, on charges which could carry the death penalty. A male CHRR member, Kouhyar Goudarzi, is still detained without charge. Both are prisoners of conscience, held solely for the peaceful exercise of their rights to freedom of expression and association

Shiva Nazar Ahari, aged about 26, has been detained since 20 December 2009. Judicial officials and pro-government news agencies have publicly accused the CHRR and Shiva Nazar Ahari of contacting the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI), a banned group, The CHRR and Shiva Nazar Ahari strenuously deny such accusations. According to her mother, in April 2010 Shiva Nazar Ahari was charged with "causing unease in the public mind through writing on the CHRR's website and other sites" and "acting against national security by participating in [anti-government] demonstrations on 4 November 2009 and 7 December 2009". Shiva Nazar Ahari denied attending the demonstrations, saying that she was at work on those days. If convicted of these charges, she faces a lengthy prison term, or even the death penalty.

Kouhyar Goudarzi has been held without charge or trial since his arrest in December 2009. In February 2010, Kouhyar Goudarzi told relatives that intelligence personnel were putting pressure on him to accept their accusations against him. He has been accused of links to the PMOI and *moharebeh* (being at enmity with God), a criminal offence which can carry the death penalty. He is currently in solitary confinement after protesting at the treatment of some prisoners. In early May, the authorities set the amount of money to be paid as bail at US\$70,000, but there has been no progress towards his release since then. Two other detained CHRR members have been freed. Saeed Haeri was released around 13 March 2010, and Navid Khanjani was released on 3 May.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Persian, English, Arabic, French, or your own language:

- v Calling on the Iranian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Shiva Nazar Ahari and Kouhyar Goudarzi, as they are prisoners of conscience, held solely for their peaceful human rights activities;
- v Urging the authorities to ensure that they are protected from torture and other ill-treatment and are granted immediate and regular access to a lawyer, their families and any medical care they might require;
- v Reminding the authorities that confessions extracted under torture are prohibited under Article 38 of the Constitution of Iran and by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Iran is a state party.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 02 JULY 2010 TO:

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](http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/index.php?p=letter) (English)
Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary in Tehran
Mr Ali Reza Avaei
Karimkhan Zand Avenue
Sana'i Avenue, Corner of Alley 17,
No 152
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: avaei@Dadgostary-tehran.ir
Salutation: Dear Mr Avaei

And copies to:
Director, Human Rights
Headquarters of Iran
His Excellency Mohammad Javad
Larijani
Bureau of International Affairs,
Office of the Head of the Judiciary,
Pasteur St., Vali Asr Ave. south of
Serah-e Jomhuri, Tehran
1316814737, Islamic Republic of
Iran
Email: bia.judi@yahoo.com
Fax: + 98 21 5 537 8827 (please
keep trying)

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Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the third update of UA 347/09 (MDE 13/132/2009). For more information see: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/132/2009/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Shiva Nazar Ahari was arrested in central Tehran on 20 December 2009 along with two male CHRR members, Kouhyar Goudarzi and Saeed Haeri. They were taken from a bus while on their way to the funeral the following day of Grand Ayatollah Montazeri, a senior cleric critical of the authorities. From around the time of her most recent arrest, to around 14 February 2010, she was held in solitary confinement. After her transfer to a cell holding three other people, she told her family, by telephone, that she had been held in a “cagelike” solitary confinement cell where she could not move her arms or legs.

In January 2010, Abbas Ja’fari Dowlatabadi, the Tehran Prosecutor, told Shiva Nazar Ahari’s family in a meeting: “Experts of the case have reported that the website for the Committee is linked to ‘hypocrites’ (the Iranian authorities’ name for the PMOI), and any collaboration with the Committee is considered a crime.”

An 8 May 2010 report in Raja News, an online news agency said to be close to President Ahmadinejad, set out nine accusations against her. Not recognizably criminal offences, these included contacts with the PMOI including sending it information about prisoners; ‘being a member and former secretary and current spokesperson for the CHRR’ and [of] ‘defending political prisoners’. Others included ‘taking part in ‘illegal gatherings’, including in previous years and preparing a list of those killed in the period of the revolution.

In an interview on 19 May with the Belgium-based news website *Rooz Online*, Shiva Nazar Ahari’s mother, Shahrzad Kariman, rejected the allegations made against her daughter in the Iranian press. She stated that “We will not remain silent over this and reserve the right to file legal complaints and shall sue Raja News [and] other media that have been printing slanderous reports.” She added that: “Nobody has seen her file, not even her attorneys and the court sessions till now have been held in camera with no reporters present. No trial has been held till today either for anyone to claim that her charges have been proven. So I do not know where these newspapers have raised these accusations from.”

Shiva Nazar Ahari had previously been arrested on 14 June 2009 and held for three months before being released on bail on 23 September. She had also been detained in connection with her student and human rights activities in 2002 and 2004, receiving a one-year prison sentence in 2005, suspended for five years.

The CHRR was founded in 2006 and campaigns against all kinds of human rights violations, including against women, children, prisoners, workers and others.

In the months that followed the June 2009 presidential election in Iran, the outcome of which was disputed, dozens of people have been killed by security forces using excessive force. Thousands have been arrested, mostly arbitrarily, and many have been tortured or otherwise ill-treated. Scores have faced unfair trials, including some in mass “show trials”, with well over 200 sentenced to prison terms, and at least 16 sentenced to death. Two of these were executed in January, and some have had their death sentences commuted, although at least five are known to remain on death row at risk of execution.

Further information on UA 347/09 Index: MDE 13/057/2010 Issue Date: 21 May 2010

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