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URGENT ACTION

IRAN MUST RELEASE HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER

Human rights defender and journalist Kaveh Ghasemi Kermanshahi was arrested in the west of Iran on 3 February by plainclothes officials believed to be Revolutionary Guards. He is a prisoner of conscience, held solely for his peaceful human rights activities. His family has not been informed of his whereabouts and he is at risk of torture or other ill-treatment.

Kaveh Ghasemi Kermanshahi, aged 25, was arrested by seven plainclothes officials at his home in the city of Kermanshah, in western Iran. His home was searched and his personal belongings, including his computer and documents related to his work, were confiscated. The arresting officials presented him with a warrant that did not specify which authority had issued it but accused him of "propaganda against the state". His family has not been informed of his whereabouts.

Kaveh Ghasemi Kermanshahi is a leading member of the Human Rights Organization of Kurdistan (HROK, sometimes known as RMMK from its Kurdish name), and a member of the women's rights group, the Campaign for Equality, also known as the One Million Signatures Campaign. He is also a journalist for Iranian news website Rooz Online, and writes for the HROK and Campaign for Equality websites. He is an active campaigner against the death penalty. He reported on the protests against the execution on 11 November 2009 of Ehsan Fattahian, a member of Iran's Kurdish minority (see UA: 271/09 Index: MDE 13/119/2009). He was the only journalist who reported on the authorities' transfer of Ehsan Fattahian's body for burial in a cemetery in Kermanshah, which took place without the knowledge of Ehsan Fattahian's family.

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

- Calling on the Iranian authorities to release Kaveh Ghasemi Kermanshahi immediately and unconditionally, as he is a prisoner of conscience, arrested solely for his human rights activities and the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression and association;
- Urging them to disclose his whereabouts immediately, and to ensure that he is protected from torture and other ill-treatment, and has access to a lawyer of his own choosing, his family and any medical treatment he may require;
- Reminding the authorities that, as a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Iran is obliged to uphold the right to freedom of expression and association.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 19 MARCH 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> (English)
Salutation: Your Excellency_

Head of the Judiciary
Ayatollah Sadeq Larijani
Howzeh Riyasat-e Qoveh Qazaiyeh
(Office of the Head of the Judiciary)
Pasteur St., Vali Asr Ave., south of
Serah-e Jomhuri, Tehran,
1316814737
Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: Via website:
<http://www.dadiran.ir/tabid/75/Default.aspx>
First starred box: your given name;
second starred box: your family name;
third: your email address

Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Director, Human Rights Headquarters
Mohammad Javad Larijani
Howzeh Riassat-e Ghoveh Ghazaiyeh
Pasteur St, Vali Asr Ave., south of
Serah-e Jomhuri
Tehran 1316814737
Islamic Republic of Iran
Fax: +98 21 3390 4986
Email: bia.judi@yahoo.com (In subject line: FAO Mohammad Javad Larijani)
Salutation: Dear Mr Larijani

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The HROK was founded in 2005 and has between 100 and 200 members, though few are now thought to be active. Despite HROK's longstanding request for official registration as a non-governmental body, the Iranian authorities have never granted it registration. Its founder and Chair, Mohammad Sadiq Kaboudvand, was arrested on 1 July 2007, and sentenced to 11 years' imprisonment, comprising 10 years' imprisonment for "acting against state security by establishing the Human Rights Organization of Kurdistan (HROK)" and one year's imprisonment for "propaganda against the system". Amnesty International considers him to be a prisoner of conscience.

The objectives of the HROK include the protection of fundamental rights, notably those set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international conventions; the teaching, dissemination and encouragement of respect towards human rights in Kurdistan; and the development of friendly relations between the peoples of Iran based on the principle of equality before law.

The Campaign for Equality, also known as the One Million Signatures Campaign, is a grassroots women's rights initiative, aimed at ending discrimination against women in Iranian law. It was launched in August 2006 with the aim of collecting a million signatures of Iranians calling for the reform of legislation which discriminates against women. Over 50 members of the Campaign for Equality have been detained for their campaigning activities. For example, Alieh Eghdam-Doust is currently serving a three-year prison sentence for her peaceful participation in a 2006 demonstration demanding equal rights for women. Change for Equality, the website of the campaign, has been filtered by the Iranian authorities at least 21 times.

Since the disputed presidential election in June 2009, 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. Well over 180 journalists, human rights activists and members of political parties linked to unsuccessful presidential election candidate Mir Hossein Mousavi and former President Khatami are reported by opposition Persian news website *Jaras* to have been detained. They include Emadeddin Baghi, recipient of the 2009 Martin Ennals Award, a human rights prize. See UA: 05/10 (Index: MDE 13/003/2010). Scores have faced unfair trial, including some in mass show trials, with over 80 sentenced to prison terms, and at least 12 sentenced to death, although at least one had his sentence commuted to a prison term. Two of these were executed on 28 January. According to Iranian media reports, Deputy Judiciary Head Ebrahim Raisi said on 1 February that, after the execution of two men last week, the nine others will be executed "soon", although on 3 February Tehran Prosecutor Abbas Ja'fari Dowlatabadi clarified that their sentences were still subject to appeal. Those sentenced have not been given a fair trial, they were denied access to a lawyer in the initial stages of their detention, and some or all appear to have been coerced into giving confessions (see <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/news/shocking-execution-iran-protesters-condemned-20100128> and <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/news/nine-risk-execution-over-iran-protests-20100202>)

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