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OPPOSITION LEADERS DETAINED IN IRAN

19 June 2009

Seven prominent political leaders are thought to be at risk of torture or other ill treatment, after they were arrested this week in connection with their perceived views on Iran's disputed presidential election. They should be released immediately and unconditionally.

All of the seven men represent political groups that were widely seen as favouring candidates opposed to the incumbent, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. It is not known where they are being held.

Amnesty International said that it considers all seven to be prisoners of conscience and fears for their safety. The organization is calling for their immediate and unconditional release. It is also calling for the release of all other people arrested solely on account of their peaceful views, including about the outcome of the elections.

The seven are amongst at least 200 politicians, journalists, academics, students and human rights defenders whose names Amnesty International has recorded as having been detained, some only briefly, across Iran since the election on 12 June. Seven were arrested on Tuesday. An eighth man, Ebrahim Yazdi, was arrested from intensive care in hospital on Wednesday, but was released back to hospital on Thursday. Hundreds of others have been arrested during largely peaceful demonstrations against the outcome of the elections, although many may have been released.

In the days following the election, hundreds of thousands took part in marches and demonstrations across Iran, protesting at both the process and outcome of the election.

Most of the demonstrations have been non-violent but in some cases violence erupted, including stone throwing and acts of arson. The police and security forces including the volunteer Basij militia have used excessive force, including beating and clubbing with truncheons and in some cases live ammunition, to control some of the demonstrations.

Amnesty International has recorded up to 10 killings, of which eight have been confirmed by state media. At least four students are unaccounted for following an attack on their dormitory: their fate should be immediately clarified by the authorities and all reports of killings should be investigated.

The eight politicians are:

Mohammad Ali Abtahi

Mohammad Ali Abtahi's family told Amnesty International that three plain-clothed policemen arrested him at his home on Tuesday. Following a short conversation, he gathered a few personal possessions, told his family that he was being detained and was taken away. Mohammad Ali Abtahi, a cleric, was an advisor to former Iranian President, Mohammad Khatami, holding a Vice Presidential post in the President's second term.

Mohsen Aminzadeh

Deputy Foreign Minister during the presidency of Mohammad Khatami, Mohsen Aminzadeh is a leading member of the Islamic Iran Participation Front (Jebhe-ye Mosharekat-e Iran-e Eslami).

Said Hajjarian

A former Tehran city counsellor and advisor to former president Mohammad Khatami, Said Hajjarian was also an investigative journalist. He was confined to a wheelchair following an attempted assassination in 2000 in which the perpetrators argued that he was a legitimate target, or *mahdour al-dam*, a provision of Iranian law referring to those "whose blood may be legitimately spilled", for having revealed the state's role in a series of murders, mainly in the 1990s. His neurologist has stated that he is in need of constant nursing care and physical therapy; detention could put his life in danger.

Behzad Nabavi

A founding member of the Mojahedin of the Islamic Revolution Organization (Sazman-e Mojahedin-e Enghlab-e Eslami), a political body aligned with former President Mohammad Khatami, Behzad Nabavi was a member of parliament between 2000-2004. In the 1980s he was a minister in governments headed by then Prime Minister Mir Hossein Mousavi.

Dr Abdollah Ramazanzadeh

A government spokesperson in former President Mohammad Khatami's administration, 2001 to 2004, Dr Abdollah Ramazanzadeh is now the deputy leader of the Islamic Iran Participation Front.

Mostafa Tajzadeh

Mostafa Tajzadeh was Deputy Minister of Interior in former President Mohammad Khatami's administration, 2001 to 2004.

Mohammad Tavassoli

Mohammad Tavassoli is a senior member of the Iran Freedom Movement (Nehzat-e Azadi).

Ebrahim Yazdi

Secretary General of the Iran Freedom Movement, Ebrahim Yazdi, was a member of the 1979 government and Member of Parliament following the revolution. He was arrested at the Pars Hospital,

central Tehran on Wednesday, where he was under observation.

The previous day his house had been searched and personal belongings such as notebooks and his computer were confiscated. Ebrahim Yazdi is said to have criticized the conduct of the 12 June election. He was returned to Pars Hospital on Thursday, possibly as a result of the deterioration in his health, but he appears to remain in custody.

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