

URGENT APPEAL - THE OBSERVATORY

New information
IRN 004 / 0611 / OBS 091.1
Sentencing / Risk of arbitrary detention /
Judicial harassment
Iran
November 10, 2011

The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint programme of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), has received new information and requests your urgent intervention in the following situation in **Iran**.

New information:

The Observatory has been informed by the Iranian League for the Defence of Human Rights (LDDHI) of the sentencing in appeal and summons to serve prison sentences of supporters of the "Mourning Mothers"¹, Ms. **Jila Karamzadeh-Makvandi**, Ms. **Leyla Seyfollahi**, Mr. **Nader Ahsani**, and of the continuing judicial harassment of Ms. **Mansoureh Behkish**, who is also engaged in the fight against the execution of prisoners.

According to the information received, on November 8 and 6, 2011 respectively, Ms. Leyla Seyfollahi and Ms. Jila Karamzadeh-Makvandi were informed of summons to go to Evin prison to serve two-year prison terms. Before the summons, their lawyers had not been notified the result of the appeal, but found out that the Appeal Court had decided to reduce their four-year sentence to two years imprisonment with an additional two years suspended for five years. On November 6, Mr. Nader Ahsani was also informed of a summons to go to Evin prison to serve his two-year prison sentence. The three human rights defenders were given 20 days to report themselves to prison otherwise their bails will be confiscated.

Additionally, on November 5, 2011, Ms. Mansoureh Behkish was notified that she would stand trial before Branch 15 of the Islamic Revolution Court on December 25, 2011. She was initially due to stand trial on October 11, 2011, but the trial was postponed due to the absence of the Prosecutor's Representative.

The Observatory strongly denounces this continuing judicial harassment as well as the failure of the Courts to ensure that the right to defence of mentioned human rights defenders is respected, which seems to merely aim at sanctioning their peaceful and legitimate human rights activities.

Background information:

On February 6, 2010 and in the night of February 8, Ms. **Omolbanin Ebrahimi**, Ms. **Elham Ahsani**, Mr. Nader Ahsani, Ms. Jila Karamzadeh-Makvandi, Ms. Leyla Seyfollahi and Ms. **Fatemeh Rastegari-Nasab** were arrested at their places of residence. Ms. **Farzaneh Zeynali** was arrested on January 9, 2010 in Laleh Park. They were reportedly detained at Evin prison before being subsequently released. In May 2010 and March 2011, summary hearings took place before the Court of First Instance of Tehran. On April 9, 2011, Ms. Jila Karamzadeh-Makvandi and Ms. Leyla Seyfollahi were sentenced to four years' imprisonment for the creation of an "illegal organisation", namely "The Mourning Mothers" and taking action

¹ The "Mourning Mothers" ("Madaran-e Azardar"), also known as the "Mothers of Park Laleh", are women whose children have been killed, executed, detained or disappeared since early 1980s. They call for the acknowledgement of secret political executions in the past three decades and disclosure of burial places of the victims. They also organise silent public protests each Saturday evening in Tehran's Laleh Park, to draw attention to their demands and call for the release of all the detainees who were arrested for protesting election fraud.

against national security". On the same date, Mr. Nader Ahsani was sentenced to two years in prison on charges of alleged "intent to commit crimes against national security" and "propaganda activities against the Islamic Republic". The three defenders remain free pending their appeal.

On June 12, 2011, Ms. Mansoureh Behkish was arrested by a group of security agents in a street of Tehran at 8 p.m., and was subsequently transferred to the Evin prison. She was released on bail on July 9, 2011. Ms. Behkish has been subjected to several interrogations and arbitrary detentions in the past as a result of her human rights activities, in particular with regards to her defence of political prisoners in Iran.

Other supporters of the "Mourning Mothers" have been subjected to judicial harassment and arbitrary detention as well. For instance, Ms. **Akram Neghabi** and Ms. **Jila Mahdavian** spent 2.5 months in solitary detention from October 9, 2010 until the opening of their trial on December 30, 2010. Both remain free pending the verdict, which has not been issued as of this date.

Actions requested :

Please write to the Iranian authorities and ask them to:

i. Guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of Ms. Mansoureh Behkish, Ms. Leyla Seyfollahi, Ms. Jila Karamzadeh-Makvandi, Mr. Nader Ahsani, Ms. Omolbanin Ebrahimi, Ms. Elham Ahsani, Ms. Fatemeh Rastegari-Nasab and Ms. Farzaneh Zeynali, Ms. Akram Neghabi and Ms. Jila Mahdavian;

ii. Put an end to any kind of harassment - including at the judicial level - against human rights defenders in Iran, including supporters of the "Mourning Mothers", notably Ms. Mansoureh Behkish, Ms. Leyla Seyfollahi, Ms. Jila Karamzadeh-Makvandi, Mr. Nader Ahsani, Ms. Omolbanin Ebrahimi, Ms. Elham Ahsani, Ms. Fatemeh Rastegari-Nasab and Ms. Farzaneh Zeynali, Ms. Akram Neghabi and Ms. Jila Mahdavian;

iii. Conform in any circumstances with the provisions of the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted on December 9, 1998 by the United Nations General Assembly, in particular:

- its article 1, which states that "everyone has the right, individually or in association with others, to promote the protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels";
- its article 5.b, which states that "everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, at the national and international levels, (...) to form, join and participate in non-governmental organizations, associations or groups";
- its article 12.2 which provides that "the State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually and in association with others, against any violence, threats, retaliation, *de facto* or *de jure* adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the present Declaration";

iv. Ensure in all circumstances respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with international human rights standards and international instruments ratified by Iran.

Addresses:

- Leader of the Islamic Republic, His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed Ali Khamenei, The Office of the Supreme Leader, Shahid Keshvardoost St., Jomhuri Eslami Ave., Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, E-Mail: info_leader@leader.ir, Faxes: + 98 21 649, + 98 21 649 / 21 774 2228

- President Mr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the Presidency, Palestine Avenue, Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, Fax: + 98 21 649 5880.
- Head of the Judiciary, His Excellency Ayatollah Sadeq Larijani, Ministry of Justice, c/o Public relations Office, Number 4, 2 Azizi Street, Vali Asr Ave., above Pasteur Street intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, Fax: +98 21 879 6671 / +98 21 3 311 6567, Email: bia.judi@yahoo.com / info@dadgostary-tehran.ir
- Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Abdolmajid Keshk-e Mesri Av, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, Fax: +98-21-66743149
- Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Chemin du Petit-Saconnex 28, 1209 Geneva, Switzerland, Fax: +41 22 7330203, Email: mission.iran@ties.itu.int
- Embassy of Iran in Brussels, 15 a avenue Franklin Roosevelt, 1050 Bruxelles, Belgium, Fax: + 32 2 762 39 15, Email: embassy.iran.bxl@skynet.be

Please also write to the diplomatic representations of Iran in your respective countries.

Paris-Geneva, November 10, 2011

Kindly inform us of any action undertaken quoting the code of this appeal in your reply.

The Observatory, a FIDH and OMCT venture, is dedicated to the protection of Human Rights Defenders and aims to offer them concrete support in their time of need.

To contact the Observatory, call the emergency line:

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