

Endangered Scholars Worldwide

IRAN

The brutal crackdown on protestors by the authorities in Iran following the recent illegitimate election of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad led to the arrest and injury of hundreds if not thousands of students and academics, many of whom were beaten and are at risk of torture. This further blackens Iran's already dismal record with respect to scholars, students, and researchers, as well as adding to the government's already egregious record of human rights abuse.

Among those arrested, we have learned as we go to press, is **KIAN TAJBAKSH**, who, on the evening of July 9, 2009, was arrested for the second time in at his home in Tehran by Iranian security forces and is currently being held at an undisclosed location. Although Kian had no involvement in the recent protests surrounding the contested reelection of Ahmadinejad, he, like the many hundreds of people who have been arrested in Iran in recent weeks, is at serious risk of being tortured in order to extract a forced confession.

Please sign our petition calling for Dr. Tajbakhsh's immediate release at www.socres.org/endedangeredscholars.

While we are unable to individually list the names of all the students and academics who have been arrested and whose lives are in danger, we would like to follow up on the report in our previous issue on the arrest of students from Amir Kabir University, Iran, following a rally in February that was violently broken up by police. The students were subsequently accused of affiliation with Mojahedin-e Khalgh (MEK), an organization proscribed as terrorist, although other student activists have vigorously denied this claim. Six students who have since

Information current, to the best of our knowledge, as of July 13, 2009.

been released on bail have reported being tortured in an effort to force them to confess to illegal activities. Meanwhile, four students—**ABBAS HAKIMZADEH, MEHDI MASHAYEKHI, MASOUD DEGHAN** and **MAJID TAVAKOLI**—remain in prison. According to the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran, the mother of Abbas Hakimzadeh, who has been able to visit her son, has reported that he has been tortured and beaten and was in poor physical and psychological health. The three other students are also feared to be at continuing risk of torture.

In an unrelated case, **BEHROOZ JAVID-TEHRANI**, a student activist turned prisoners' rights campaigner, has developed serious health problem as a result of torture and hunger strike. Human Rights Watch has reported fresh bruises and wounds to his body and the loss of 50 percent of his eyesight due to head injuries inflicted by his interrogators in prison. Behrooz was arrested in 2005 following an interview he conducted with another political prisoner, **AKBAR MOHAMMADI**, shortly after the latter died in suspicious circumstances during a hunger strike. After his arrest Behrooz was accused of membership in the Mojahedin-e Khalgh by the same judge who made this accusation against the Amir Kabir students listed above. Although his sentence was subsequently commuted and he is now eligible for release on parole, he remains in the infamous Gohar Dasht prison, where several prisoners have recently died in suspicious circumstances. According to Sarah Leah Whitson, Middle East director at Human Rights Watch, "Behrooz Javid-Tehrani, who is critically ill, is in prison for his peaceful political dissent and his human rights advocacy; he should never have been imprisoned in the first place and he should be released at once or he will likely die in prison."

Also still in jail in Iran are **FARZAD KAMANGER**, a Kurdish Iranian teacher sentenced to death in February 2008, and **DR. MOSTAFA ALAVI**, an Iranian doctor and researcher sentenced to 15 years imprisonment in August 2008 for "plotting against the regime." **ESHA MOMENI**, an Iranian-American Ph.D. student detained in October 2008 while making a documentary on Iranian feminism, remains unable to leave the country due to the authorities' refusal to issue her a passport.

Appeals to:

Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi
Shahrودي
Head of the Judiciary
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: shahrودي@dadgostary-
tehran.ir
Salutation: Your Excellency

Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei
Leader of the Islamic Republic
The Office of the Supreme Leader
Islamic Republic Street, Tehran,
Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: info_leader@leader.ir
Salutation: Your Excellency

Mohammad Javad Larijani
Director, Human Rights
Headquarters of Iran
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
Fax: +98 21 3390 4986
Email: int_aff@judiciary.ir

TURKEY

Five Turkish academics were arrested on April 13, 2009, as part of a country-wide series of arrests relating to the case of “Ergenekon,” an alleged right-wing conspiracy to lead a coup against Turkey’s moderate Islamic ruling party, the Justice and Development Party. The arrests came as the third in a series of such roundups that have implicated several retired senior military officers, lawyers, journalists, and businessmen. The arrested academics include three former university rectors as well as the current rector of Bilkent University in Ankara, **PROFESSOR MEHMET HABERAL**. Many opponents of the ruling party see the arrests as part of an attempt to suppress Turkey’s secular opposition.

Appeals to

Mr Mehmet Ali Sahin
Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
Adalet, Bakanligi
06659 Ankara
Turkey
Fax: +90 312 419 3370

ZIMBABWE

Ten students from the National University of Science and Technology (NUST), Zimbabwe, were arrested following a demonstration on Thursday, April 16, 2009, against the deferment of students who have failed to pay tuition fees. Fees have recently been raised as a result of their being pegged in foreign currency, yet in spite of government assurances that no student will be turned away over nonpayment of fees, the NUST administration had announced that those who have not paid their fees would not be eligible to take exams. According to Doreen Phulu from Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR), the students were initially charged with malicious injury to property, but this was changed to public violence and participating in an illegal demonstration. Five of the students were to be sentenced on May 27, 2009, but the sentencing was postponed due to the failure of the magistrate to appear in court.

Appeals to:

His Excellency Simbi Veke Mubako
Ambassador Extraordinary and
Plenipotentiary
Embassy of the Republic of Zimbabwe
1608 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20009
Phone: 202-332-7100
Fax: 202-483-9326
Email:
Zimbabwe@africandiamondcouncil.org

UPDATES

The following scholars remain in prison. We urge our readers to write letters on their behalf to the responsible authorities, as listed below.

CHINA

LU XIAOBO, a chinese writer and human rights activist arrested in December 2008 for “inciting subversion of state power.” Please sign our petition for his release at www.socres.org/endangeredscholars.

DR. LÜ GENGSONG, a Chinese writer, activist, and former university teacher, arrested the summer of 2007 on charges of “incitement to subvert state power” and “illegally possessing state secrets.”

DR. ZHENG YICHUN, a professor of English at Liaoning University, China, arrested in the winter of 2004 and charged with “suspicion of inciting subversion of state power.”

XU ZERONG, a professor affiliated with the Provincial Academy of Science and Zhongshan University, China, arrested in 2002 and charged with revealing state secrets for his use of historical materials in researching the Korean War.

Appeals to:

His Excellency Hu Jintao
President of the People’s Republic of
China
Zhong Naihui
Beijing 100032
People’s Republic of China
Salutation: Your Excellency

Mr. Xiao Yang
President of the Supreme People’s
Court No.27
Dongjiaominxiang Dongcheng District
Beijing 100745
People’s Republic of China

IRAQ

DR. USSAMA AL-MULLA, a professor of dentistry at Baghdad University, arrested without charge February 2008.

Appeals to:

His Excellency Nouri Kamal al-Maliki
Prime Minister
c/o Embassy of the Republic of Iraq
1801 P Street, N.W.
Washington DC, 20036

RUSSIA

DR. IGOR SUTYAGIN, a researcher at the United States and Canada Institute in Moscow, arrested in Russia in the Spring of 2004 and sentenced to 15 years hard labor for treason and espionage.

Appeals to:

Dmitry Medvedev
President of Russia
Ilinka Str, No 23
103132, Moscow, Russia

BURMA (MYANMAR)

KO AUNG HTUN, a writer and former student activist arrested in Burma in Winter 1998 and sentenced to 17 years’ imprisonment under charges

of violating state censorship and unlawful association.

Appeals to:

Senior General Than Shwe
Chairman, State Peace and Development
Council
Ministry of Defense
Naypyitaw
Union of Myanmar (for US Postal
Service, “Burma” should appear in
parentheses after “Myanmar” on enve-
lope only, not in the letter itself)
Salutation: Dear Senior General

Minister Counselor U Myint Lwin
Chargé d’Affaires Ad Interim
Embassy of Myanmar
2300 S Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20008
Salutation: Dear Sir