

Press Release

Turkish Authorities Arrest and Torture an Ahwazi Arab Refugee in Ankara

To: Amnesty International; UNHCR; Human Rights Watch; All organizations concerned with human rights.

On 3 March 2002, Turkish authorities arrested an Ahwazi Arab nationalist, Syed Gholam Abbas Audeh-Murhed. He is currently being kept in solitary detention in a police station in Ankara, Turkey. Mr. Audeh is being subjected to both physical and psychological torture and has been informed of his imminent extradition to the Iranian authorities. This is a gross violation of the laws set forth by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which emphasizes that: "Everyone has the rights to life, liberty and security of person...everyone has the right to seek and enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution."

Mr. Audeh has committed no crime. He is well known for his political activities and his support and defense of the legitimate rights of the Ahwazi (Arabistan) Arab minority in southwestern Iran, which struggles against repression, terror, persecution, and forceful confiscation of their land by the Iranian regime.

Mr. Audeh and four of his co-defendants were sentenced to death for their political activities by an Iranian military tribunal two years ago. The regime executed his four Ahwazi Arab co-defendants on January 28, 2002. Their identities are as follows:

1. **Abbas Al-Tawini**, 37, married with six children, worker in the Sugar Cane Factory - arrested and imprisoned in July 2000.
2. **Hani Abadi**, 32, married with two children, security guard in the Sugar Cane Factory - arrested and imprisoned in April 2000.
3. **Hassan (Maki) Al-Zorghani**, 34, married with four children, worker in Ramin Power Plant in Wais - arrested and imprisoned in February 2001.
4. **Bernas Sajirat**, 34, married with two children, worker in Ramin Power Plant in Wais - arrested and imprisoned in February 2001.

The regime's pretext for these crimes is the usual, "rebellion against the State". These are bogus charges used to execute political prisoners and freedom fighters in Iran. Contrary to the regime's claim, these people have been struggling to get their agricultural land back, which was forcefully expropriated by the regime for the expansion of the government's Sugar Cane Project. The expropriated land plays a very significant role in their subsistence and covers 100,000 hectares of arable lands in the areas of Shushtar, Ahwaz, Mohammarah (Khuramshahr) and Abadan. The Arab native inhabitants of Al-Ahwaz (Khuzistan) province own all of this land.

Syed Audeh managed to break out of prison and escape Iran eight months ago, three months prior to the date set for his execution. He escaped through the Turkish border and requested political asylum from the UNHCR in that country (asylum # U0034). He was allowed to stay in Turkey while he awaited resettlement to a safe haven in a third country by the UNHCR.

On behalf of all Ahwazi Arabs, we respectfully request that all human rights organizations exert due pressure on the Turkish authorities and request the immediate release of Mr. Audeh from prison. We also ask that he be repatriated to a safe haven in a third country. If Turkey extradites Mr. Audeh to Iran, he will be executed immediately upon his arrival.

We in the A.H.R.O. appeal to all freedom loving people of the world, including human rights organizations, to help us bring attention to the plight of Mr. Audeh, to save his life, and to bring attention to our just cause – the discontinuation of the practices of the Persian-dominated Iranian regime in pursuing and implementing chauvinistic repressive policies towards Ahwazi Arabs and other national (Kurds, Turks, Turkmen, Baluchis) and religious minorities in Iran.

Ahwazi Human Rights Organization (A.H.R.O) 10 May 2002

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