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IRAN

KURDISH MEN FORCIBLY DISAPPEARED FOR MONTHS

Iranian authorities have forcibly disappeared Iranian Kurdish dissidents Pejman Fatehi, Vafa Azarbar, Mohammad (Hazhir) Faramarzi and Mohsen Mazloum for seven months. The authorities have concealed their fate and whereabouts from their families and lawyer since their arrests in July 2022.

On multiple occasions, the Ministry of Intelligence agents warned them to no longer enquire about the four men “since it is pointless, and they face execution.” They are at grave risk of torture and other ill-treatment and unfair trials on charges that carry the death penalty.

Write to the Head of Judiciary urging him to:

- Disclose the fate and whereabouts of the four men and release them in light of the arbitrary detention.
- Ensure that if charged with a recognizable criminal offence, they must be tried in proceedings compliant with international fair trial standards and without recourse to the death penalty.
- Guarantee that they are protected from torture and other ill-treatment and are provided access to adequate healthcare if needed.
- Grant them immediate and regular access to their families and lawyers of their choosing.

Write to:

Head of judiciary, Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei
c/o Embassy of Iran to the European Union
Avenue Franklin Roosevelt No. 15, 1050 Bruxelles, Belgium
Email: secretariat@iranembassy.be
Salutation: *Dear Mr Gholamhossein Mohseni Eje*

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Iranian authorities have persistently denied the families of Pejman Fatehi, Vafa Azarbar, Mohammad (Hazhir) Faramarzi and Mohsen Mazloum any information about their fate and whereabouts; on multiple occasions officials denied any knowledge of the four men, even after the videos of their forced “confessions” were broadcast.

Following video-recorded appeals by the mothers of Pejman Fatehi, Mohammad (Hazhir) Faramarzi and Mohsen Mazloum, Ministry of Intelligence agents summoned family members for interrogations and threatened them with imprisonment for making any further enquiries about the fate and whereabouts of the four men. Their lawyer has also attempted to gather information on their case on multiple occasions, but the authorities have ignored his requests.

The first time the men’s families had any information about them since their arrests in July 2022 was on October 12, 2022. This was 80 days after their forcible disappearance. A propaganda video of the

men's forced "confessions" was broadcast on state television. In the video, reviewed by Amnesty International, the authorities claimed that Pejman Fatehi, Vafa Azarbar Mohammad (Hazhir) Faramarzi and Mohsen Mazloum were arrested near Esfahan and had planned to bomb a "strategically important industrial estate" under the instruction of Israel's intelligence agency, Mossad.

In an open letter to the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Iran, Javaid Rehman, dated November 26, 2022, the men's families describe the faces of the four men in their forced "confession" as "weak, tired and tortured." In their letter, the families also deny the authorities' claims that the men had been involved in any "terrorist" and violent acts. On December 5, 2022, the same propaganda video was broadcast again on state television, retraumatizing the four men's families and raising further alarm about their safety and wellbeing.

Under international human rights law and standards, the right to freedom of expression includes the right to peacefully advocate for any political opinion so long as the ideas espoused do not advocate hatred constituting incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence. The right to freedom of expression is protected under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which Iran has ratified. Anyone arrested or detained on a criminal charge, including those related to "terrorism", must be treated in full compliance with Iran's human rights obligations including the right to a fair trial.

Amnesty International has documented a pattern of systematic violations of the rights to a fair trial in Iran from the time of arrest and throughout the investigation, trial and appeal proceedings. Courts routinely ignore allegations of torture and other ill-treatment, without ordering an investigation. They rely on torture-tainted "confessions" to issue convictions and sentences, including in death penalty cases.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases without exception regardless of the nature of the crime, the characteristics of the offender, or the method used by the state to kill the prisoner. The death penalty is a violation of the right to life and the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment. Amnesty International has consistently called on all countries that retain the death penalty including Iran to establish an official moratorium on executions, with a view to completely abolishing the death penalty.

Ethnic minorities in Iran face entrenched discrimination which curtails their access to education, employment and political office. The Iranian authorities are increasingly using the death penalty as a tool of political repression against ethnic minorities, particularly against Kurds and Baluchis. These groups are disproportionately impacted by death sentences and also being executed in secret, with the authorities then refusing to return their bodies for burial to their families.

Please take action at your earliest convenience!

<https://www.amnesty.ca/ua-urgent-action/iran-kurdish-men-forcibly-disappeared-for-months/>