

IRAN: Amin Ghazaei, writer and student leader detained; fears of ill-treatment and health concerns.

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The Writers in Prison Committee (WiPC) of International PEN is seriously concerned about the detention of writer and activist Amin Ghazaei, who has been held incommunicado without charge since 14 January 2008. He is among scores of student activists to have been detained in December 2007 and January 2008. International PEN WiPC fears that he may be detained solely for the peaceful exercise of his right to free expression, and calls on the Iranian authorities to release him immediately and unconditionally if held in violation of Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Iran is a signatory. PEN is alarmed at reports that he may be ill-treated in prison, and seeks assurances of his well-being and guarantees that he has access to all necessary medical care as a matter of urgency.

According to PEN's information, writer Amin Ghazaei, who is also leader of the group Students for Freedom and Equality (*Daneshjouyan-e Azadi Khah va Beraber Talab*), was arrested in Tehran on 14 January 2008 by Intelligence Ministry officers along with 14 other students at a meeting, in what appears to be a worrying pattern of recent arrests of student activists. He is reported to be held without charge in solitary confinement in Section 209 of Evin Prison, and to have been tortured. There is concern for his health as he reportedly suffers from a peptic ulcer, heart problems, and asthma.

Amin Ghazaei's home was reportedly searched on 15 January 2008 by the police who confiscated his computer and all of his papers. He has been allowed one short telephone conversation with his family in the presence of guards, but otherwise has not been allowed access to his family or a lawyer.

Amin Ghazaei was born in 1979 and is known for his many articles published on-line on topics such as gender identity. The websites he has written for include www.mindmotor.com and www.poetrymag.info. He is the chief editor of the electronic journal *ArtCult* and has his own web-log (bafandeh.blogfa.com). He has also translated some banned books into Farsi, including *Gender Trouble* (Judith Butler), *Seduction* (Jean Baudrillard), and *Cyborg Manifesto* (Donna Haraway) which have been published either on the web or by an Iranian publisher in Europe. He has also published two collections of writings, *Hich Ettefagh (Nothing Happening)* and *Haghighat (Truth)*, and has co-authored the anthology *Honar-e Mossalah (Armed Art)*. None of his works have been submitted for publication inside Iran.

Amnesty International gives the following background information:

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Please send appeals:

- Expressing serious concerns about the detention and well-being of writer and activist Amin Ghazaei, and seeking guarantees of his well-being and demanding that he is given full access to his family, lawyers and all necessary medical treatment immediately.

- calling for his immediate and unconditional release in accordance with Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Iran is a signatory.

APPEALS TO:

His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed ~Ali Khamenei

The Office of the Supreme Leader, Islamic Republic Street - Shahid Keshvar Doust Street

Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: info@leader.ir

Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi

Howzeh Riyasat-e Qoveh Qazaiyeh / Office of the Head of the Judiciary

Pasteur St., Vali Asr Ave., south of Serah-e Jomhuri,

Leader of the Islamic Republic

Tehran 1316814737,

Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: info@dadgostary-tehran.ir (In the subject line write: FAO Ayatollah Shahroudi)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Intelligence

Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejeie

Ministry of Intelligence, Second Negarestan Street, Pasdaran Avenue, Tehran,

Islamic Republic of Iran

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO

President:

His Excellency Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

The Presidency,

Palestine Avenue,

Azerbaijan Intersection,

Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: Via Foreign Ministry: +98 21 6 674 790

(mark: "Please forward to H.E. President Ahmadinejad")

Email:

via website:

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If possible please send a copy of your appeal to the diplomatic representative for Iran in your country.

*****Please check with this office if sending appeals after 5 March 2008*****

For further information please contact Cathy McCann at International PEN Writers in Prison Committee, Brownlow House, 50/51 High Holborn, London WC1V 6ER, Tel.+ 44 (0) 20 7405 0338, Fax: +44 (0) 20 7405 0339, email: cathy.mccann@internationalpen.org.uk

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'Student groups have been at the forefront of demands for greater human rights in Iran in recent years. Since the election of President Ahmadinejad in 2005, there have been increasing restrictions on civil society in Iran. In April 2007, Minister of Intelligence Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejeie publicly accused student activists and campaigners for the rights of women in Iran of being part of an "enemy conspiracy," though neither he nor other Iranian authorities have produced evidence to substantiate this charge, which such activists roundly repudiate. dr-ahmadinejad@president.ir www.president.ir/email