



Monthly Report of Association for the Defense of Azerbaijani Political Prisoners in Iran – July 2010

The systematic violation of the rights of Azerbaijanis in Iran continued throughout July. Azerbaijani cultural and political activists were subjected to long-term arbitrary detentions. The detainees are denied access to a lawyer. The judiciary authorities refuse to give information about the cause of their arrests. The Iranian government deprives Azerbaijanis of the rights of peaceful protest and freedom of speech.

**Azerbaijani activists detained**

A gathering of Tractor Football Club (Tractor FC) fans was violently attacked by police. They then proceeded to arrest more than 50 people including Muhammad Tajdehi, Ja'far Yavari, Dariush Ibadpur, Mohammad Taghi Asadiyan, Haman Mehdiপুর, Ali Aghazade, Gholamreza Razmi, Ali Zamani, Nima Khanlu, Murtaza Salmani, and Ali Haghightajou.

The gathering of nearly two thousand fans was organized by supporters of Tractor FC to protest the racist chants against Azerbaijani-Turks during soccer matches in Tehran. The protesters chanted slogans demanding the ethnic and national rights for Azerbaijanis in Iran, such as

“Schooling in Azerbaijani Turkish”, and “Long Live Azerbaijan”. All of the detainees were released on bail after one week to be tried later. They will likely be charged with violating the public order.

The Tractor FC matches have been a place for Azerbaijanis to demand the language and cultural rights of Azerbaijanis against which Iran government shows its dissatisfaction by attacking the supports, arresting them during or after football matches.

Haniye Farshi Shotorban was arrested on July 18, 2010 at her home by security forces in Tabriz. She has since been sent to Evin Prison in Tehran. Security forces searched her home and confiscated her computer and other belongings. According to local sources, she was arrested due to her advocacy work on the internet, primarily for her Facebook posts about the death of a young Azerbaijani girl, Elnaz Babazade.

Elnaz Babazade was stopped in her car in Tabriz by Basij militias, who requested that she dress according to Islamic law. When she resisted, the militiamen raped and murdered her. The incident was vastly



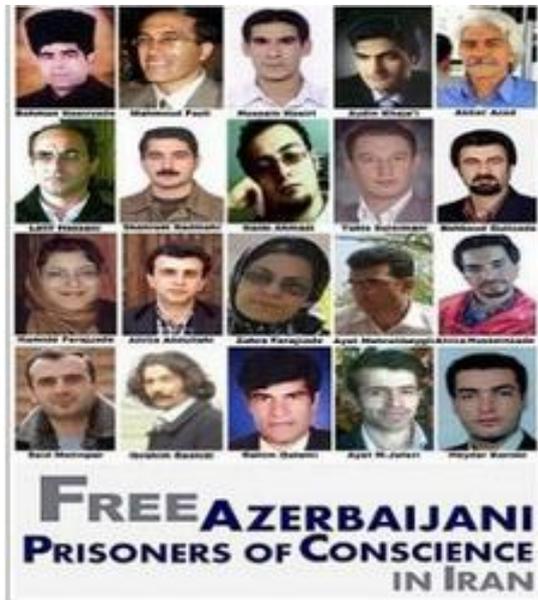
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protested and condemned by women's rights activist on the internet.

#### **Azerbaijani activists are subjected to long term temporary detentions**

Azerbaijani activists are often arrested arbitrarily by Iran security forces. They are detained for extensive periods without any official cause by judiciary or security authorities. The activists are interrogated despite objections from their lawyers. The detainees are usually tortured or subjected to other ill-treatments.



Akbar Azad, Alirza Abdullahi, Latif Hasani, Hamide Farajzade, Zahra Farajzade, Hasan Rahimi, Shahram Radmehr, Mahmud Fazli, Bahman

Nasirzade, Behbud Qulizade, Aydin Khajeyi, Yunis Suleymani, Ayat Mehralibayglu, Naim Ahamadi Kheyavi, Shukrullah Ghahramanifard, and Heydar Karimi are Azerbaijani cultural or political activists who have been detained since May 2010. The judiciary authorities refuse to give information about their arrests. According to the family members of some of the detainees, they have been detained for membership in illegal organizations and allegedly violating national security.

Among the detainees, Hamide Farajzade, Mehralibayglu, and his wife Zahra Farajzade were denied visits from their families. Reportedly, Mehralibayglu and Suleymani have been tortured by electric shock in prison and are suffering chest pains.



The detainees are not allowed to access their lawyer even after four months of



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detentions. The files of the detainees are also not available to lawyers.

Ebrahim Rashidi, an Azerbaijani poet and journalist who was arrested on Jun 14, 2010 by security forces in Ardebil is still in prison.

According to his family, Rashidi has called his family once on July 15 telling them of being tried in Ardebil Court. He is not allowed to access his lawyer or visit his family.



### **Azerbaijani activists sent to prison**

Hosseinn Nasiri an Azerbaijani cultural activist was sent to prison to serve his six months jail term. He was arrested on April 2, 2010 during a gathering to protest the policies of government toward the Lake Urmia, which is drying as a result of government neglect of ecologic and environmental treatments.



Hosein Nasiri

He was arrested on April 26, 2007 and sentenced to six months of imprisonment. He was charged with propaganda against the regime and calling on people to participate in annual demonstrations of an offensive cartoon against Azerbaijanis in a state-run newspaper.

### **Azerbaijani activists released on bail**

Firuz Yusifi, an officer in the Iranian Army and an Azerbaijani cultural activist was released on July 14, 2010 after 24 days of temporary detention on bail of 500 million Rials (\$50,000). He was arrested on June 21 and was treated harshly during his arrest by security officers of Army.



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He was charged with movement against national security, membership in separatist groups and propaganda against the regime. He was denied access to a lawyer or visits his family during the detention. He was dismissed from the Iranian Army on March 15, 2010 after serving 10 years of military services.

Cultural activists Alirza Husseinzade, and Riza Abdi were released on July 15, 2010 after suffering 66 days of temporary detention on bail of 300 million Rials (\$30,000) to be tried later. They could possibly be charged with violating the public order and propaganda against the regime. They were denied access to their lawyers and visits from their family members.

### **Azerbaijani activists tried**

Qadir Novruzi, the former director of the shut-down Arman Student Organization was called to court on July 24, 2010. He was charged with propaganda against the regime for publishing a student journal. The journal was banned in February 2010 after it featured a report entitled “Azerbaijani Woman”. This special issue was going to be distributed on March 8, International Women’s Day.

Reportedly, others were tried for the same case including Fatime Nasirpur a former member of the Arman Student Organization as well as Siyavash Babekpanahi, the publisher. They are also charged with propaganda against the regime.