

INTERNATIONAL PEN

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RAPID ACTION NETWORK

4 November 2008

Update #4 to RAN 30/07

IRAN: 11-Year sentence upheld for Kurdish journalist



The Writers in Prison Committee (WiPC) of International PEN strongly protests the decision of the Tehran Appeal Court to uphold the eleven-year prison sentence handed down to Kurdish journalist Mohammad Sadiq Kabudvand, on 23 October 2008. Four months earlier, Kabudvand was handed down the prison sentence by the Tehran Revolutionary Court on charges of “acting against national security”. International PEN considers the continued detention of Mohammad Sadiq Kabudvand to be a breach of international standards guaranteeing freedom of expression and calls for his immediate release according to Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Iran is a signatory.

According to PEN's information, Mohammad Sadiq Kabudvand, editor of the banned weekly *Payam-e mardom-e Kurdistan* and Chair of the Tehran-based Kurdish Human Rights Organization (RMMK), was arrested on 1 July 2007 at his place of work in Tehran by plain-clothed security officers. Following his arrest, Kabudvand was initially taken to his house in Tehran, where security officers confiscated three computers, books, photographs and personal documents, before taking him away to the Intelligence Ministry's Section 209 of Evin Prison. He spent the first five months of his detention in solitary confinement, and was reportedly ill-treated. His family was unable to raise the bail that could have enabled him to be freed pending trial. Kabudvand's trial began on 25 May 2008. Kabudvand was sentenced at a closed trial on 22 June 2008 to eleven years in prison by the Tehran Revolutionary Court for forming a human rights organisation in Iran's Kurdish region, on charges of “acting against national security”.

Mohammad Sadiq Kabudvand suffers from a number of health complaints, including high blood pressure and kidney disease, and his health is said to have deteriorated as a result of ill-treatment in prison. On 19 May 2008 Kabudvand reportedly suffered a stroke in Evin prison and has been denied access to adequate medical care. He has not been allowed to receive medical attention outside the prison.

Kabudvand has reportedly written two books on democracy and a third on the women's movement in Iran, which were not given publishing licences. He is one of the featured cases for the Day of the Imprisoned Writer – 15 November 2008.

For the previous WiPC alert on Mohammad Sadiq Kabudvand see:

<http://www.internationalpen.org.uk/internationalpen/index.cfm?objectid=E481ED7E-E0C4-ED84-086C905B109A0FF2>

PLEASE SEND APPEALS:

- Protesting the 11-year prison sentence against journalist and writer Mohammad Sadiq Kabudvand;
- Expressing serious concerns for Kabudvand's health and the denied access to necessary medical care;
- Calling for his immediate and unconditional release on humanitarian grounds and in accordance with Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Iran is a signatory.

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APPEALS TO:

Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic

His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei,
The Office of the Supreme Leader
Shoahada Street, Qom, Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: info@leader.ir or istiftaa@wilayah.org

Head of the Judiciary

His Excellency
Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi
Ministry of Justice, Park-e Shahr,
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: via Judiciary website: Iranjudiciary.org/feedback_en.html
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: dr-ahmadinejad@president.ir
via website: www.president.ir/email

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

Centres are encouraged to consider Mohammad Sadiq Kabudvand for honorary membership.

Please check with this office if sending appeals after 4 December 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