

Joint Public Statement

HR organisations:

Iranian authorities must release Mohammad Sadiq Kaboudvand immediately and unconditionally

http://www.fidh.org/Authorities-must-release?var_mode=calcul

17 July 2012

Paris/London - Amnesty International, the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), and its affiliate, the Iranian league for the Defence of Human Rights (LDDHI), called in a joint statement today on the Iranian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release **Mohammad Sadiq Kaboudvand**, and said that the Iranian authorities are responsible for any risks to his life as a result of his ongoing hunger strike.

The three human rights organisations consider Mohammad Sadiq Kaboudvand, a member of Iran's Kurdish minority, to be a prisoner of conscience, solely held for his journalistic and human rights work and the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression.

Mohammad Sadiq Kaboudvand started a "dry" hunger strike, refusing also water, on the evening of Saturday, 14 July 2012, but has accepted the requests from family and friends to begin drinking water during the current week of 16 July, though he has not specified the exact day. Mohammad Sadiq Kaboudvand has said that when he ends his "dry" hunger strike he would continue his "wet" hunger strike, refusing food, which he began on 26 May in protest at the Iranian authorities' refusal to grant him renewed permission to visit his sick son. His son, Pejman, has been ill since January 2012 with an undiagnosed condition.

Since then, Mohammad Sadiq Kaboudvand has been allowed to visit his son on a few occasions, most recently in late April/early May 2012, when prison authorities took him to his son's bedside for a visit lasting approximately 30 minutes. The authorities have since declined Mohammad Sadiq Kaboudvand prison leave for further visits, despite the relevant provisions of the Prison Regulations in Iran that allow such visits on a discretionary basis.

Mohammad Sadiq Kaboudvand's health conditions have drastically deteriorated since he launched his hunger strike to protest the conditions he described in an open letter from 27 May 2012 as follows: *"The Prosecutor and the security apparatuses continue to deny [prison] leave because of their enmity, grudge and malice towards me as a human rights activist; this despite my having served half of my illegal and unjust prison sentence and my son's incurable diseases and acute emergency situation... Therefore, to protest the illegal and inhumane behaviour of these judicial and security officials, I launch an indefinite hunger strike as of 9 PM, Saturday 26 May 2012."*

The prison medical personnel and doctors have recommended his transfer to an outside hospital for necessary medical care. Nevertheless, the prison officials declined to take him to hospital without handcuffs in early July 2012.

Mohammad Sadiq Kaboudvand, former editor of the weekly *Payam-e Mardom-e Kurdistan* and founder of the Human Rights Organisation of Kurdistan, has been serving a 10-and-a-half-year prison sentence since 1 July 2007 after having been convicted of charges relating to his journalism and human rights work.

Since the start of his imprisonment, Mohammad Sadiq Kaboudvand has reportedly suffered three strokes and at least one heart attack, prostate and kidney problems, and has had periods of dizziness and unconsciousness. However, he has not had consistent access to all necessary medical care.

Ann Harrison, Deputy Director of Amnesty International's Middle East and North Africa Programme, said: *"Mohammad Sadiq Kaboudvand is a prisoner of conscience, held solely for his journalistic and human rights work and the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression. He should never have been arrested in the first place, and must be released immediately and unconditionally so that he is free to be with his family at this distressing time."*

Karim Lahidji, Vice President of FIDH and President of LDDHI said: *"In the meantime, the Iranian authorities are responsible for any possible risks to Mohammad Sadiq Kaboudvand's life as a result of his continuing hunger strike and his deteriorating conditions."*

"Under the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, the Iranian authorities are obliged to take immediate action to provide urgent medical care to Mohammad Sadiq Kaboudvand. They must stop further tormenting a father by denying him the right to visit his ailing son."

/Ends

For more information contact:

Amnesty International: press@amnesty.org

International Federation for Human Rights: press@fidh.org

Iranian league for the Defence of Human Rights: iddhi@fidh.net