

## URGENT APPEAL - THE OBSERVATORY

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**New information**  
**IRN 004 / 0611 / OBS 091.2**  
Imminent arbitrary detention /  
Judicial harassment  
**Iran**  
January 18, 2013

The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint programme of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), has received new information and requests your urgent intervention in the following situation in the **Iran**.

### **New information:**

The Observatory has been informed by the Iranian League for the Defence of Human Rights (LDDHI) about the summoning of Ms. **Mansoureh Behkish**, a supporter of the “Mothers of Park Laleh” (the “Mourning Mothers” of Iran)<sup>1</sup>, also known for fighting against the death penalty, to serve a prison sentence.

According to the information received, Ms. Mansoureh Behkish has been summoned by the Shahid Moqaddas Sentences Implementation Bureau to report herself to Evin prison in Tehran by January 29, 2013 at the latest where she will serve her sentence to six months in prison for “spreading propaganda against the system” (see background information).

The Observatory is deeply concerned about the summoning of Ms. Behkish, as it is arbitrary and clearly aims at sanctioning her legitimate human rights activities. The Observatory therefore calls upon the Iranian authorities to refrain from detaining Ms. Behkish as well as to immediately and unconditionally release all human rights defenders presently detained in Iran, and more generally to put an end to all forms of harassment against them.

### **Background information:**

On June 12, 2011, Ms. Mansoureh Behkish was arrested by a group of security agents in a street of Tehran. She was released on bail on July 9, 2011.

Ms. Behkish had also been subjected to interrogations and arbitrary detentions in the past as a result of her human rights activities. She had previously been arrested on August 29, 2008, December 5, 2009 and then on January 9, 2010 together with more than 30 women supporters of the “Mothers of Park Laleh”. On March 17, 2010, she was prevented from travelling to Italy to visit her children and her passport was confiscated. She was then banned from travelling abroad. The authorities further harassed her by preventing her son from studying to become a pilot and her expulsion from work in 2009. Ms. Behkish lost five brothers and sister as well as her brother-in-law during the executions and prison massacres that took place in the 1980s and has consistently come under great pressure not to visit their graves or otherwise commemorate them.

On December 25, 2011, Ms. Behkish was sentenced to four years and six months of imprisonment by Branch 15 of the Islamic Revolution Court: four years on charges of “assembly and collusion against national security through the establishment of the Mourning

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<sup>1</sup> The “Mourning Mothers” (“Madaran-e Azardar”) are women whose family members were killed, executed, detained or disappeared in the context of political violence since 1981. They call for the acknowledgement of secret political executions in the past three decades and disclosure of burial places of the victims. In the aftermath of the post-election violence in June 2009, they organised silent public protests each Saturday evening in Tehran’s Laleh Park, calling for the release of all political prisoners and abolition of the death penalty.

Mothers” and six months on charges of “spreading propaganda against the system”.

On July 5, 2012, the Appeals Court decided to combine the two parts of her sentence and sentenced her to four years of imprisonment, including three years and six months suspended for a period of five years. This means she will have to serve those 3.5 years in addition to any new sentence, if convicted on similar charges over the next five years.

The Observatory recalls that Ms. Behkish takes care of her 90-year old mother, one of the original Mourning Mothers.

#### **Actions requested:**

Please write to the Iranian authorities and ask them to:

- i. Guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of Ms. Mansoureh Behkish, as well as of all human rights defenders in Iran;
- ii. Refrain from detaining Ms. Mansoureh Behkish as her sentence is arbitrary since it only aims at sanctioning her human rights activities;
- iii. Put an end to any kind of harassment - including at the judicial level - against all human rights defenders in Iran and release them all;
- iv. Conform in any circumstances with the provisions of the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted on December 9, 1998 by the United Nations General Assembly, in particular its article 1, which states that “everyone has the right, individually or in association with others, to promote the protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels”, and its article 12.2 which provides that “the State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually and in association with others, against any violence, threats, retaliation, de facto or de jure adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the present Declaration”;
- v. Ensure in all circumstances respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with international human rights standards and international instruments ratified by Iran.

#### **Addresses:**

- Leader of the Islamic Republic, His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed Ali Khamenei, The Office of the Supreme Leader, Shahid Keshvardoost St., Jomhuri Eslami Ave., Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, Faxes: + 98 21 649 5880 / 21 774 2228, Email: [info\\_leader@leader.ir](mailto:info_leader@leader.ir)
- President Mr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the Presidency, Palestine Avenue, Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, Fax: + 98 21 649 5880. Email: [dr-ahmadinejad@president.ir](mailto:dr-ahmadinejad@president.ir)
- Head of the Judiciary, His Excellency Ayatollah Sadeq Larijani, Office of the Head of the Judiciary, Pasteur Street, Vali Asr Avenue, south of Serah-e Jomhuri, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, Fax: +98 21 879 6671 / +98 21 3 311 6567, Email: [info@dadiran.ir](mailto:info@dadiran.ir); / [info@dadgostary-tehran.ir](mailto:info@dadgostary-tehran.ir) / [info@bia-judiciary.ir](mailto:info@bia-judiciary.ir)
- Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ali Akbar Salehi, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Abdolmajid Kushk-e Mesri Av, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, Fax: +98-21-66743149; [matbuat@mfa.gov.ir](mailto:matbuat@mfa.gov.ir)
- Secretary General, High Council for Human Rights, Mr. Mohammed Javad Larijani, [Care of] Office of the Head of the Judiciary, Pasteur St, Vali Asr Ave, South of Serah-e Jomhuri, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran. Email: [info@humanrights-iran.ir](mailto:info@humanrights-iran.ir)

- H.E. Mr. Seyed Mohammad Reza Sajjadi, Ambassador, Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Chemin du Petit-Saconnex 28, 1209 Geneva, Switzerland, Fax: +41 22 7330203, Email: [mission.iran@ties.itu.int](mailto:mission.iran@ties.itu.int)
- Embassy of Iran in Brussels, 15 a avenue Franklin Roosevelt, 1050 Bruxelles, Belgium, Fax: + 32 2 762 39 15. Email: [secreteriat@iranembassy.be](mailto:secreteriat@iranembassy.be)

Please also write to diplomatic representations of Iran in your respective countries.

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Paris-Geneva, January 18, 2013

Kindly inform us of any action undertaken quoting the code of this appeal in your reply.

To contact the Observatory, call the emergency line:

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