

# PEN CANADA

for FREEDOM of EXPRESSION

**Amir Abbas Fakhavar** is a writer, journalist for the now-banned pro-reform dailies *Mosharekat* and *Khordad*, and medical student. He was arrested on November 10, 2002. Fakhavar was sentenced by Bench 26 of the Revolutionary Court on or around that day to eight years in prison for criticizing the supreme leadership of Iran in his book *Inja Chah Nist* ('This Place is Not a Ditch'), shortlisted for the 2001/2 Paulo Coelho Literary Prize.

Following a period of leave from Evin prison, Fakhavar was ordered to appear in court on March 18, 2003, for an appeal hearing. When he appeared, the two lawyers who had represented him on previous occasions were denied an opportunity to representation the writer again. After an argument with the judge, Fakhavar was beaten in front of Bench 26 before being transferred to prison. It is thought that he may have been targeted for writing an open letter to the authorities on February 4, 2003, criticizing the Iranian government and demanding a referendum on the future government of Iran.



Fakhavar was said to be held in Qasr Prison. He is reportedly held among common law prisoners and is being denied medical treatment for the reportedly severe injuries sustained in court and an existing foot injury. He is said to have been repeatedly attacked in staged assaults by fellow inmates. In January 2004, Fakhavar was taken from Qasr prison to a military detention centre - called "125" and which is run by the Revolutionary Guards - for interrogation about alleged links with an opposition political organization called Jonbesh-e Azadi-ye Iraniyan. He was held in solitary confinement and subjected to a technique of sensory deprivation is called "white torture" (shekanjeh-e sefid). On or around February 8, 2004, Fakhavar was reportedly allowed to leave the detention centre. However, two days later he was taken into custody again. While he was free he was able to tell others about what was being done to him. He is held in Evin Prison.

**PEN Canada expresses serious concerns over the persistent ill-treatment reportedly suffered by Amir Abbas Fakhavar and remind Iranian authorities of their obligations to abide by the prohibition against torture, cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment as defined by Article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Iran is a signatory. We seek information about his well-being and whereabouts. PEN Canada further calls for Fakhavar's immediate and unconditional release in accordance with Article 19 of the ICCPR.**

Please send appeals to:

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