



September 18, 2015

His Excellency Ali Larijani
Speaker of the Iranian Parliament (Majles)
Tehran
Islamic Republic of Iran

Your Excellency:

As the International Panel of Parliamentarians for Freedom of Religion or Belief, we write as a network of parliamentarians from diverse political, religious and geographical backgrounds to express grave concerns about limitations on freedom of religion or belief in your country. We are alarmed by ongoing reports of violations of this fundamental freedom for religious minorities, including Christians and the Bahá'ís. We respectfully ask you to ensure that all individuals in Iran, be they Muslim, Christian, Bahá'í, Atheist, Zoroastrian, Jew or from another faith, can fully enjoy freedom of religion or belief without fear of violence or discrimination.

We are particularly concerned about Pastor Saeed Abedini, who has been jailed for nearly three years. We understand he has been held in intolerable conditions for merely peacefully exercising his faith in private homes. We specifically request the release of Mr. Abedini, as well as other Christians, including Behnam Irani, Maryam (Naseem) Naghash-Zargarani, Ebrahim Firouzi, and Ata Babaei, who are detained apparently for no other reason than the peaceful exercise of their Christian faith. We are also gravely concerned about the reports of recent closures of churches in Iran, an act that restricts the ability of Christians to assemble peacefully for religious study.

We have received reports about the continued harassment and arrest of members of the Sufi Muslim community, including prominent leaders from the Nematollahi Gonabadi Order. We are especially worried about the case of seven Bahá'í leaders, also called the Yaran, who were arrested in 2008 and sentenced to 20 years imprisonment in 2010: Mrs. Fariba Kamalabadi; Mr. Jamaloddin Khanjani; Mr. Afif Naeimi; Mr. Saeid Rezaie; Mrs. Mahvash Sabet; Mr. Behrouz Tavakkoli; and Mr. Vahid Tizfahm. It has come to our attention that they have been harshly treated while in prison and denied the right to temporary leave from prison, which they are legally entitled to.

Mr. Speaker, as parliamentarians we understand your position in the Iranian system and the separation of powers from the judiciary and executive branches. At the same time, Iran is a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and is therefore obliged to adhere to Article 18, which guarantees freedom of religion or belief for everyone. We respectfully petition your prompt intervention in the cases of the seven Bahá'í leaders and the imprisoned Christians, as well as all other prisoners of faith, to ensure they are immediately released, that their human rights are respected, and that Iran lives up to its international obligations.

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Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Sincerely,

Baroness Elizabeth Berridge
United Kingdom
IPP Steering Committee

David Anderson, MP
Canada
IPP Steering Committee

Abid Raja, MP
Norway
IPP Steering Committee

Leonardo Quintao, MP
Brazil
IPP Steering Committee

Senad Sepic, MP
Bosnia and Herzegovina

Senator Ehab El Kharrat
Egypt

Son Chhay, MP
Cambodia

Bonner Francisco Jimenez Beloso, MP
El Salvador

Leon Benoit, MP
Canada

Peter van Dalen, MEP
European Parliament

Russ Hiebert, MP
Canada

Chiora Taktakishvili, MP
Georgia

James Lunney, MP
Canada

Zurab Japaridze, MP
Georgia

Senator Thanh Hai Ngo
Canada

Steffen Bilger, MP
Germany

Lucien Yaliki, MP
Central African Republic

Frank Heinrich, MP
Germany

Ammo Aziza Baroud, MP
Chad

Heribert Hirte, MP
Germany

Mamadi Moussa Mamadi, MP
Chad

Volker Kauder, MP
Germany

Jorge Rathgeb, MP
Chile

Volkmar Klein, MP
Germany

Mario Redondo Poveda, MP
Costa Rica

Claudia Lückling-Michel, MP
Germany

Gonzalo Ramirez Zamora, MP
Costa Rica

Karl Schieverling, MP
Germany

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Johannes Singhammer
Germany

Kasthuri Patto, MP
Malaysia

Walter Banegas, MP
Honduras

Charles Santiago, MP
Malaysia

Satya Pal Singh, MP
India

Rodrigo Ivan Cortes Jimenez, MP
Mexico

Mohammedali Yaseen Taha, MP
Iraq

Ruard Ganzevoort, MP
Netherlands

Yoav Kisch, MP
Israel

Sokonte Davies, MP
Nigeria

Marina Berlinghieri, MP
Italy

Sylvi Graham, MP
Norway

Ernesto Preziosi, MP
Italy

Marit Nybakk, MP
Norway

Mohammed Al-Alwan, MP
Jordan

Assiya Nasir, MP
Pakistan

Abdallah Khawaldeh, MP
Jordan

José María Ibañez, MP
Paraguay

Jude Njomo, MP
Kenya

Julio Pablo Rosas Huaranga, MP
Peru

Ghassan Moukheiber, MP
Lebanon

Elene Marie Ndionetine, MP
Senegal

Mantas Adomenas, MP
Lithuania

Cherylyn Dudley, MP
South Africa

Jessie Kabwila, MP
Malawi

Nqabayomzi Kwankwa, MP
South Africa

Doi Bu, MP
Myanmar

Mohamed Ali Mohamed Adam Nimer, MP
Sudan

Shwe Maung, MP
Myanmar

Yu Mei-Nu, MP
Taiwan

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Bochra Bel Haj Hmida, MP
Tunisia

Mehrezia Labidi-Maiza, MP
Tunisia

Lord David Alton
United Kingdom

Bishop Nick Baines
United Kingdom

Diane Dodds, MP
United Kingdom

Jim Shannon, MP
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Stephen Timms, MP
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Gerardo Amarillo, MP
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