

Appendix X

Persecution of Human Rights Activists and Human Rights Organizations

Threats Against Nobel Peace Laureate Shirin Ebadi Must Be Condemned

(25 June 2009) Official Iranian news agencies have published a letter claiming to be from lawyers, university professors, and families of veterans and martyrs, which requests the Justice minister, Gholam-Hussein Elham, to prosecute Iranian Nobel Laureate Shirin Ebadi for allegedly violating Islamic and constitutional law through her human rights advocacy, the *International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran* reported today. Elham is also the spokesman for Ahmadinejad's government.

The letter, published by *Fars News*, an outlet close to the Revolutionary Guards, claims that Ms. Ebadi's advocacy with international authorities in the wake of massive police brutality against peaceful demonstrators violates her obligations as a lawyer. The authors of the letter were not revealed. The publication of the letter follows a series of other allegations that Ebadi is using Western funds to conduct a campaign against the Iranian government.

Ebadi is the director of the *Defenders of Human Rights Center*, which was closed by authorities in December 2008, and whose deputy was recently detained. She recently discussed with numerous international leaders including UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay, EU Foreign Policy Chief Javier Solana, and leaders in the European Parliament, how the international community might engage its mechanisms to help stop violence against demonstrators in Iran.

"The most recent efforts by Iranian security and intelligence agencies to threaten and intimidate Shirin Ebadi is a blatant attempt to lay the groundwork for her arrest when she returns to Iran. These efforts must be condemned by Iranian citizens and by the international community," said Hadi Ghaemi, a spokesperson for the *Campaign*.

"Rather than being illegal, Shirin Ebadi's reports and appeals to international authorities are consistent with her duties as a human rights defender, and are also acts of patriotism meant to encourage Iran to abide by its international obligations," he added.

The *Campaign* urgently appeals to the United Nations Secretary General, to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, to the European Union High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, and President of the European Parliament to support Ms. Ebadi in the strongest possible manner. The *Campaign*

also calls on leaders to warn Iran that Ebadi's arrest because of her human rights advocacy is a direct violation of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

The government of Iran has an affirmative obligation to protect rights advocates. The United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, which the UN General Assembly adopted by consensus in 1998, declares that states "shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of [human rights defenders] against any violence, threats, retaliation, de facto or de jure adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary actions" as a consequence of their legitimate effort to promote human rights.

Reverse Closure of Nobel Laureate's Rights Group

Raid May Herald Broader Attack on Human Rights Defenders

(30 December 2008) The unlawful raid by Iranian security forces on the Tehran rights group run by Nobel Laureate Shirin Ebadi on December 21, 2008 raises concerns of a broader attempt to silence Iran's human rights community, the *International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran* and *Human Rights Watch* said today.

The *International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran* and *Human Rights Watch* called on the Iranian government immediately to allow the *Defenders of Human Rights Center* (DHRC) to reopen its office and to investigate and hold accountable those authorities responsible for conducting the raid without warrant or other apparent legal basis. The DHRC, which Ebadi, winner of the 2003 Nobel Peace Prize, and other prominent Iranian human rights defenders founded in 2000, planned to hold a 60th anniversary celebration of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights at their Tehran office on December 21.

"The closure of DHRC is not just an attack on Shirin Ebadi and her Iranian colleagues, but on the entire international human rights community of which Ebadi is an influential and important member," said Kenneth Roth, executive director of *Human Rights Watch*. "The Iranian authorities should allow the center to reopen and investigate why authorities raided it in the first place."

The *International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran* and *Human Rights Watch* expressed serious concerns of further persecution and possible prosecutions of Ebadi and DHRC members. In similar cases, Iranian authorities frequently have followed office raids and other harassment with arbitrary arrests and detention, often leading to prosecutions on dubious charges. Currently, [Mohammad Sadiq Kaboudvand](#), founder of the *Kurdistan Human Rights Organization*, is serving a 10-year prison sentence solely for his activities as a human rights defender.

Narges Mohammadi, DHRC's spokesperson, told the *International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran* that the group had invited nearly 300 human rights defenders and supporters to the private celebration. She said a few hours before the start of the program, at around 3 p.m., she arrived at DHRC's office to find dozens of police, members of state security forces, and plainclothes agents attempting to enter the building.

According to Mohammadi: "I asked them to produce a search warrant, but instead the commander told me, 'My uniform is the legal basis. I don't need to give you any warrant.' As I was discussing the issue with the uniformed officer in charge, a plainclothes agent physically approached and threatened me while shouting insults. Police agents quickly restrained him and moved him away while he was shouting at me, 'If you were not a woman, I would drag your legs and throw you into the street.'"

The government agents entered the office while Mohammadi, Ebadi, and two other DHRC members were present. The agents filmed the premises, made an inventory, and forced the center's members to leave before putting locks on all entrances.

Security forces videotaped guests as they arrived for the event and prevented them from approaching the building. They also confiscated journalists' cameras.

"Plainclothes agents attacked and intimidated guests. In one instance, they beat a member of the DHRC, Hadi Esmailzadeh, on his chest and head and took his mobile telephone away. Their behavior was violent and vulgar," Mohammadi said.

"If Shirin Ebadi and the DHRC cannot hold a simple event to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, then no Iranian citizen has any security to talk about or advocate for human rights," said Hadi Ghaemi, spokesperson for the *International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran*. "This is a litmus test for the Iranian government's tolerance of human rights defenders, and its results show 'zero tolerance.'"

The DHRC's mission statement describes its primary duties as "pro-bono legal defense of prisoners of conscience," "supporting families of prisoners of conscience," and "documentation and reporting of human rights abuses."

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Life of Imprisoned Human Rights Defender in Danger

Kaboudvand Suffers Second Heart Attack

(19 December 2008) The *International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran* called on the Iranian Judiciary to immediately release imprisoned human rights activist Mohammad Sadiq Kaboudvand for urgently needed medical treatment. In the early hours of 17 December 2008, Kaboudvand suffered a heart attack inside his cell in Evin Prison, and is in a life-threatening situation.

“Kaboudvand should have never been imprisoned in the first place for his peaceful human rights activities,” said Hadi Ghaemi, the *Campaign’s* spokesperson. “Now his life is in grave danger and Iranian authorities bear full responsibility for his health and safety.” Kaboudvand is a prominent Iranian human rights defender and founder of the *Human Rights Organization of Kurdistan (HROK)*. He is serving a 10-year prison term. He has been [prosecuted solely for his human rights activism](#).

Kaboudvand’s wife, Parinaz Baghbani Hassani, told the *Campaign* that she last talked to Kaboudvand by phone on 16 December. Kaboudvand said he was seriously ill with a kidney infection and had contracted the flu. On the morning of 17 December, Hassani received word from inside the prison that Kaboudvand had suffered a heart attack in the middle of the night. Kaboudvand also suffered a heart attack on 19 May 2008.

During their last phone conversation on 16 December, Kaboudvand told his wife that medical doctors at Evin Prison are concerned about his high blood pressure, kidney infection, and prostate condition. His wife told the *Campaign* that Kaboudvand’s family has a history of heart conditions. Both of Kaboudvand’s parents died of heart attacks and his siblings have also suffered heart attacks, she said.

According to Baghbani, prison doctors have written to judicial authorities stating that Kaboudvand is in urgent need of specialist medical care outside of the prison, but the authorities have not taken any action.

Baghbani also told the *Campaign* that as winter is beginning in Tehran, Evin Prison’s heating system is malfunctioning and prisoners have complained of exposure to severe cold.

In addition to the founding of the HROK, Kaboudvand is also the managing director and editor of the banned weekly *“Payam Mardom.”* After the establishment of the HROK on 9 April 2004, it quickly became a primary source of reports and advocacy on a wide range of human rights issues.

Kaboudvand also lead a peaceful campaign of advocacy with local and national authorities to bring attention to widespread violations of human rights in Kurdistan.

The HROK grew to include 200 local reporters throughout the Iranian Kurdish region, enabling it to provide detailed and timely reports from throughout the region. Kaboudvand was instrumental in creating a civil society network for Kurdish youth and activists through the establishment of HROK. Kaboudvand thus made a very important contribution to flourishing civil society in Iranian Kurdistan through the establishment of HROK and publication of *"Payam Mardom."*

Intelligence agents arrested Kaboudvand on 1 July 2007. He was then transferred to his house, which was searched. He was subsequently taken to ward 209 of Evin Prison, the ward under the control of the Intelligence Ministry. He was held in solitary confinement for five months.

Prosecutors charged him with "acting against national security by establishing the *Human Rights Organization of Kurdistan,*" with "widespread propaganda against the system by disseminating news," "opposing Islamic penal laws by publicizing punishments such as stoning and executions," and "advocating on behalf of political prisoners." He has been sentenced to 10 years in prison.

"It is completely unacceptable that Kaboudvand is being imprisoned solely for his human rights work. Now with his health in great danger, Iranian authorities have a serious obligation to release him and end his unjust confinement," Ghaemi said.