

His Excellency
Mr Ban Ki-moon
Secretary General of the United Nations
United Nations
New York, NY.

October 30th 2009

Your Excellency,

The lives of political prisoners in Iran are in danger

Over the past months you have witnessed the Iranian people's immense and awe-inspiring non-violent demonstrations, rejecting the results of a widely organized fraudulent presidential election. Iranian people expressed their demand for free elections deliberately and peacefully. However, the Islamic Republic responded to their legitimate demand for civil liberty and justice with the bloody attacks committed by its military and paramilitary forces. Scores of demonstrators were killed, thousands were arrested, imprisoned, and were persecuted, tortured, and sexually abused by security and intelligence officials, for the sole reason of their peaceful protest against a deceitful act to maintain Mahmoud Ahmadi Nejad as the president of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Parallel to the repression of protesters on the street, the perpetrators of the electoral coup arrested the leaders and activists of legal political organizations and parties, and launched arbitrary arrests of political opponents who have since gone through solitary confinement along with physical and mental torture, and a sham mass trial based on forced confessions.

Mr. Secretary General,

as we write to you, in addition to other arbitrary and unmitigated acts against those who have been deprived of the most basic right of defense, political prisoners are under the savage threat of death penalty. Recently, the spokesman of the Ministry of Justice of the Islamic Republic, without even naming the five persons condemned to death, and identifying them only by their initials, announced the death penalty imposed on Arash Rahmani-Pour, Hamed Rohani-Nejad, Mohammad Reza Ali-Zamani, Nasser Abdol-Hosseini and Davoud Fardbacheh-Mirardebili. These individuals have been condemned to death on false and baseless charges. They were deprived of the right to defend themselves in a fair trial in accordance with internationally accepted judicial standards set by the United Nations Centre for Human Rights.

In reality, the true motive for these death sentences is to terrorize the Iranian public. According to accounts given by eyewitnesses, many of these men were detained on other charges and were already kept in the Islamic Republic's prisons months before the events which followed the elections. They

were forced to appear as actors in a play staged by the Islamic Republic court in order to disclose « the secret foreign plots » behind the events in Iran, a scene in which Clotilde Reiss, the innocent French student and teacher was obliged to take part.

The government has obstructed legal and family communications of political prisoners, thus imposing solitude and isolation on them, keeping their families and attorneys in the dark. On groundless charges, and often without a warrant, officials have arrested and imprisoned trade union activists and guilds leaders, journalists, bloggers, militants of the women's movement and adherents of religious creeds. With the beginning of the academic year and the reopening of the universities, they have increased the purge and expulsion of dissident students. Eight university professors are in jail while some others are threatened with dismissal or compulsory retirement. Mohammad Maleki, a former head of Teheran University who twice in the past has endured lengthy prison terms for expressing his political views, is once again in solitary confinement despite his old age and chronic illness.

Mr. Secretary General,

We would like to express our profound appreciation for your recent detailed report to the United Nations General Assembly concerning the situation of Human Rights in Iran. Our deepest gratitude goes out to the efforts made by the United Nations' experts, especially Mr. Philip Alston, Special Rapporteur on Arbitrary Executions, and Mr. Manfred Nowak, Special Rapporteur on Torture, and notably to the endeavors of the United Nations' High Commissioner on Human Rights, Ms. Navi Pillay. Given the existing evidence of the flagrant violations of human rights, torture as well as cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment of prisoners in the detention centers of the Islamic Republic, we solicit your support for the following urgent actions:

- to use the moral authority of your high office and the United Nations' administrative and legal possibilities to save the lives of those who have recently been sentenced to death penalty by the Islamic courts;
- To call for the annulment of sentences given in the recent sham trials invoking the binding obligations of the Iranian Government to the basic human rights of citizens to fair and equitable trials, as provided in the International Covenants on Human Rights;
- to obtain Mr. Nowak's request to travel on a fact-finding mission to Iran, which has remained unanswered for many months;
- finally, given the continuing deterioration of human rights situation in the Islamic Republic, we request your constant support for the re-establishment of the office of Special Representative for Iran that was terminated in 2002.

Please accept, Mr. Secretary General our highest consideration.

Hard copy sent by post

Copy to Office of the High Commissionaire for Human Rights

Signatures:

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