



INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORK

OF ACADEMIES AND SCHOLARLY SOCIETIES

July 12, 2016

We, members of the Executive Committee of the International Human Rights Network of Academies and Scholarly Societies, are deeply concerned about the situation of Narges Mohammadi, an imprisoned and seriously ill Iranian physicist and engineer who began a hunger strike on June 27, 2016, because she is denied the right to communicate with her young children.

Ms. Mohammadi became a professional engineer after receiving a degree in physics from the International Imam Khomeini University. In addition to her scientific work, she is a distinguished human rights defender. Ms. Mohammadi is vice president of the Defenders of Human Rights Centre, an organization founded by Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Shirin Ebadi and several other prominent human rights lawyers to defend the rights of women, political prisoners, and minorities in Iran. She also actively supports Step by Step to Stop the Death Penalty (LEGAM), a campaign by civil rights activists to abolish the death penalty.

Ms. Mohammadi was arrested in May 2015 and sent to Evin Prison, ostensibly to serve the remainder of a previously imposed six-year sentence for her peaceful human rights activities. She had been released early for health reasons, but in May 2016 she was convicted of three new vaguely worded national security related charges, in retaliation for her peaceful human rights activities. A Revolutionary Court in Tehran gave Ms. Mohammadi prison sentences of 10 years, 5 years, and 1 year, to be served concurrently.

We are gravely concerned about Ms. Mohammadi's health and well-being. She suffers from serious lung problems and a neurological condition that causes seizures and temporary paralysis. Her health has markedly declined since she was imprisoned in 2015, and she has not received necessary specialized medical care. During a rare period of hospitalization in October 2015 after having suffered seizures, Ms. Mohammadi was handcuffed to a hospital bed and held under constant guard. Ultimately, she was returned to Evin Prison against the advice of her doctor. Ms. Mohammadi's already fragile health will no doubt be seriously jeopardized by her current hunger strike. Her husband, who was forced to flee Iran, lives in France. Since her twin nine-year-old children left Iran to be with their father a year ago, Ms. Mohammadi has been allowed to speak with them by telephone only once, in April 2016.

Academies in the Network support and promote the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, assist unjustly incarcerated nonviolent professional colleagues, address grave science-related human rights issues, and advocate for member institutions whose independence is threatened.

(The U.S. National Academies, non-profit, non-governmental honorary societies, host the Network secretariat.)

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Given that Ms. Mohammadi is imprisoned solely for the peaceful exercise of her rights to freedom of expression, association, and assembly—rights protected under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Iran is a state party—and is seriously ill, we strongly urge the Iranian government to ensure her prompt release from prison. Finally, pending Ms. Mohammadi’s release, we request that her conditions of confinement be brought into conformity with the Revised U.N. Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules) and, in particular, that she receive all needed medical care and be permitted to communicate regularly with her children and other family members.

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