



February 14, 2018

Hon. Secretary of State
Rex W. Tillerson
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW.
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Tillerson:

I write on behalf of the American Sociological Association to express concern about the recent death of Iranian-Canadian sociologist Kavous Seyed-Emami while being held in an Iranian prison on charges of espionage. Trained in the United States at the University of Oregon, Dr. Seyed-Emami taught sociology at Imam Sadiq University and was the founder and managing director of the Persian Wildlife Heritage Foundation. He was a well-known and highly respected environmentalist in Iran.

As an association of scholars embedded in the American tradition of democracy and freedom of expression, we want to ensure that scholars are free to dissent with governments around the world. According to the New York-based Center for Human Rights in Iran, Dr. Seyed-Emami is the third leading activist to die in an Iranian prison in the last few weeks under similar circumstances.

We request that the United States government call for an international human rights investigation of Dr. Seyed-Emami's death which would include an independent autopsy.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dr. Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, President