



October 21, 2009

Ayatollah Sayyid 'Ali Khamenei
Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran
c/o H.E. Mohammad Khazaei
Ambassador and Permanent Representative
Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations
622 Third Avenue, 34th Floor
New York, NY 10017, USA
Fax: 212-867-7086
Fax: 98-251-7774-2228
info@leader.ir, iran@un.int

Your Excellency:

We are writing on behalf of the nearly 15,000 members of the American Sociological Association (ASA), a scientific society of academic and professional sociologists, to request that the Iranian Judiciary rescind its 15-year prison sentence issued against Dr. Kian Tajbakhsh, an internationally respected sociologist colleague with dual national Iranian-American citizenship. We urge further that there be an immediate review of his case in accordance with international human rights provisions.

While he is in your custody, we urge you to use your good offices to guarantee his safety and freedom from mistreatment, and allow him to confer with legal counsel of his choosing. We urge you to determine the circumstances of his detention and to secure his immediate release. Given the current ongoing diplomatic exchanges with the United States, this would be an especially good time for the Iranian leadership to exhibit gestures of good will, as Dr. Tajbakhsh is the only U.S. citizen charged in the aftermath of the Iranian election protests.

The inexplicable charges lodged by the Revolutionary Court — linking Dr. Tajbakhsh with high-level Iranian reformists, purportedly plotting to overthrow the Iranian leadership with American support — are baseless. Dr. Tajbakhsh is neither a member of the Iranian reformist movement nor in contact with any foreign headquarters inside or outside Iran. He has had no involvement in pre- or post-election protests. Rather, Dr. Tajbakhsh is a respected independent scholar. He is valued as one who has advanced knowledge and understanding

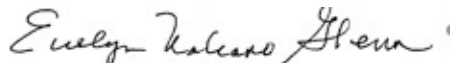
of contemporary Iranian society. We strongly hope he will be released and allowed to return to his family as soon as possible.

As a party to the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, Iran is required to provide, among other rights to its citizens, the: (1) Right to hold opinions without interference (Article 19.1); (2) The right to freedom of expression; this right includes freedom to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas of all kinds (Article 19.2); and (3) Citizens are entitled to a fair and public hearing by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal established by law (Article 14). Under the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Article 23), individuals also have the right to freedom of thought, opinion, and speech.

As a scientific organization with an international membership, ASA is committed to ensuring academic freedom, free exchange of ideas, and free expression to all scholars including those conducting research on sociological and related comparative studies of culture and social institutions. We are working closely with the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the world's largest and most influential international body of scientists, to ensure access to and pursuit of science as human rights. Without governmental assurance of such intellectual freedoms, a nation quickly becomes universally recognized as failing to ensure superior scholarship and unwilling to protect its intellectual status in international cultural and scientific arenas.

We are profoundly dismayed by Iran's sentencing of Dr. Tajbakhsh. We hope that under your leadership Iran will respond to avoid the diplomatic damage to your country by your incarceration of an intellectual and scientific asset such as Dr. Tajbakhsh. We appreciate your consideration of our concern about of this apparent breach of Iran's commitments under International Conventions, and we urge you to ensure that false or politically based charges against Dr. Tajbakhsh be dropped. The leaders and members of the American Sociological Association consider this to be a matter of great urgency.

Sincerely,



Evelyn Nakano Glenn, PhD
President, American Sociological Association
Professor of Ethnic Studies, University of California-Berkeley

American Sociological Association
Re: Dr. Kian Tajbakhsh

October 21, 2009



Sally T. Hillsman, PhD
Executive Officer, American Sociological Association

cc: Head of the Judiciary
Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani
Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Justice Bldg., Panzdah-Khordad
Square
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Fax: +98-21-3390-4986, info@dadgostary-tehran.ir

President
His Excellency Mahmoud Ahmadinejad
The Presidency, Palestine Ave., Azerbaijan Intersection
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
dr-ahmadinejad@president.ir

Mr. Mohammad Hassan Zia'i-Far
Secretary of the Islamic Republic Human Rights Commission
Fax: +44-20-8904-5183, info@ihrc.org