

SCHOLARS AT RISK

N E T W O R K

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei
Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran
c/o H.E. Mr. Mohammad Khazaei, Ambassador of Iran to the United Nations
Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations
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April 19, 2010

Re: Emadeddin Baghi

Your Excellency:

I write on behalf of the Scholars at Risk Network to express our grave concern for Emadeddin Baghi, a scholar, journalist and recent recipient of the prestigious Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders currently held in Evin Prison. We respectfully urge you to intervene to ensure his well-being pending his earliest release, including ensuring immediate and regular access to legal counsel of his choosing, to family and to any necessary medical treatment.

Scholars at Risk is an international network of over 220 universities and colleges in 29 countries dedicated to promoting academic freedom and its constituent freedoms of thought, opinion, expression, association and travel. In cases like Mr. Baghi's involving alleged infringement of these freedoms, Scholars at Risk investigates hoping to clarify and resolve matters favorably.

According to reports, Mr. Baghi was arrested at his home on December 28th 2009. He was detained without charge and taken to an undisclosed location. Since then, he has reportedly been held in solitary confinement in Evin Prison, without access to his lawyers or medical care. Reports also indicate that Mr. Baghi has not been permitted regular visits with his family; indeed we understand that Mr. Baghi's wife was able to see him for the first time only recently. All of this suggests apparent disregard of international standards of due process, fair trial and detention, as guaranteed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Iran is signatory. Most alarmingly, we are concerned about recent reports that Mr. Baghi was hospitalized on March 20th after losing consciousness as a result of a respiratory condition worsened by his detention. We understand that Mr. Baghi has suffered from respiratory and heart conditions in the past, including three seizures and a heart attack prior to this imprisonment. In light of this, his prolonged detention without access to counsel, family or adequate medical support would appear to constitute a reckless disregard of his health and well-being.

This disregard, coupled with the suddenness and lack of any clear basis for his arrest, raises grave concerns not only about his situation but about the about intimidation of intellectuals generally in Iran and about the ability to conduct world-class research, teaching and scholarship in such an environment. These are suggestions we find particularly distressing given both Iran's rich intellectual history and the important role that Iran and Iranian scholars in particular could play in the development of knowledge, research and scholarship in the 21st century.

We therefore urge you to ensure that Iran's obligations under international law are upheld with regard to Mr. Baghi. We respectfully urge you to intervene to ensure his well-being including ensuring immediate and regular access to legal counsel of his choosing, to family and to any necessary medical treatment. Given the public reports surrounding his detention, we further urge you to explain publicly the reasons for his detention or absent this, to arrange for his earliest release.

We appreciate your immediate attention to this important matter and look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,



Robert J. Quinn
Executive Director, Scholars at Risk

Cc:

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