

His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed Ali Khamenei,

His Excellency Mahmoud Ahmadinejad,

His Excellency Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi,

We, the undersigned, have heard with great alarm of the arrest in Tehran, on Wednesday October 15, 2008, of Esha Momeni, a graduate student in film and communication at California State University, Northridge. This arrest was made by Tehran traffic police on the pretext that she had made an illegal turn, but we have since been informed that she has been transferred to Section 209 of Evin Prison and kept in solitary confinement.

We wish to make clear that at no time has Ms. Momeni been involved in any activities contravening the laws of the Islamic Republic of Iran. She had returned to Iran for an extended visit mainly for the purpose of seeing family and friends, and also in order to carry out research related to her MA degree at California State University, Northridge. Ms. Momeni, a women's rights defender and a volunteer of the California branch of a grassroots campaign called the "One Million Signatures Demanding Changes to Discriminatory Laws", decided to make her Master's thesis project a personal exploration of the shared experiences of everyday Iranians. This included interviews with some members of the Campaign. The activities of the Campaign are peaceful and merely aimed at reforming the Iranian laws in areas that discriminate against women; the Campaign has no political objectives.

Those who are privileged to know Ms. Momeni are fully aware of the sincerity and passion for justice which she brings to the promotion of a truer image of Iran outside the country, and we are therefore dismayed that she should have been arrested and detained despite not having engaged in any unlawful activities.

We, the undersigned, therefore demand Ms. Momeni be released immediately and without conditions so that she can return to complete her education. In addition we urge you to:

1. Guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of Ms. Esha Momeni;
2. Assure that while in detention she is granted immediate and regular access to her family, a lawyer of her choice, and any medical treatment necessary in light of her medical condition (kidney stones);
3. Ensure in all circumstances respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and with international and regional human rights instruments ratified by Iran.

Yours sincerely