



INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS

Commission internationale de juristes - Comisión Internacional de Juristas

" dedicated since 1952 to the primacy, coherence and implementation of international law and principles that advance human rights "

COMMUNIQUE DE PRESSE - COMUNICADO DE PRENSA

P
R
E
S
S
R
E
L
E
A
S
E

IRAN: ICJ CALLS FOR THE STOP OF THE PERSECUTION AND THE HARASSMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS AND LAWYERS

For immediate release

19 February, 2007

The international Commission of Jurists (ICJ) calls on the Iranian authorities to put an immediate end to the persecution and harassment of Mrs Abdolfattah Soltani and Nasser Zarafchan, two human rights lawyers.

The ICJ expresses its deepest concern about the campaign of judicial harassment against Mr. Abdolfattah Soltani, member of the Defenders of Human Rights Centre. Mr. Soltani has been imprisoned twice and is now released on bail. On 16 July 2006, the Court sentenced him to five years imprisonment for the alleged transfer of confidential information and for opposition to the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The ICJ considers that the trial of Mr. Soltani was unfair and did not meet the international standards of fair trial as guaranteed by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, as ratified by the Islamic Republic of Iran. "This campaign of judicial harassment against Mr. Soltani is a flagrant violation of international human rights obligations," said the ICJ.

The ICJ also expresses its deepest concern about the continued detention of Mr. Nasser Zarafchan, a human rights defender and lawyer, who was sentenced to 5 years on 15 of July 2002 by the Military Court of Tehran for "possession of firearms and alcohol" and for opinions that he had expressed during interviews with the press on the trial dealing with the assassinations of Iranian intellectuals, which came to a conclusion in January 2001. The ICJ considers that the condemnation was arbitrary and the procedure violated the basic principles of a fair trial. "The trial of civilians by military tribunals is a flagrant violation of the right to be tried by an independent and impartial tribunal. The Iranian authorities must immediately release Mr. Nasser Zarafchan without conditions," said the ICJ.

The ICJ calls the Iranian authorities to conform to its international human rights obligations and to ensure that human rights lawyers can freely carry out their legitimate work without intimidation, hindrance or harassment in accordance with the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders and the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers. "The Iranian authorities must immediately stop all kind of persecution and harassment against lawyers and human rights defenders," said the ICJ.

For more information, please contact Saïd Benarbia, Middle East & North Africa Legal Officer, at 00 41 22 979 38 17

The ICJ is an international non-governmental organisation comprising sixty of the world's most eminent jurists and has a worldwide network of national sections and affiliated organisations

33, rue des Bains, P.O. Box 91, 1211 Geneva 8, Switzerland
Tel: +41(0) 22 979 3800 – Fax: +41(0) 22 979 3801 – Website: <http://www.icj.org> - E-mail: info@icj.org