



MARTIN ENNALS AWARD FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

• *Martin Ennals Foundation*

*Head of the Judiciary
Ayatollah Sadeqh Larijani
Howzeh Riyasat-e Qoveh Qazaiyeh
(Office of the Head of the Judiciary)
Pasteur St., Vali Asr Ave. (south of Serah-e Jomhouri)
Tehran 1316814737
Islamic Republic of Iran*

5 January 2010

Re: Arbitrary detention of Emadeddin Baghi

Honourable Ayatollah Sadeqh Larijani,

The undersigning organizations, as members on the Jury of the Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders (MEA), express their deep concern over the arrest, on 28 December 2009, of human rights defender **Emadeddin Baghi** and seek clarification of the reason of his arrest and the charges he faces. Emadeddin Baghi, who received the Martin Ennals Award in 2009, is arbitrarily detained for his human rights-related activities, in violation of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 9, 1998, as he is imprisoned for the peaceful exercise of his rights to freedoms of expression and association. Therefore, our organisations call for his immediate and unconditional release.

Emadeddin Baghi is a well-known human rights defender, journalist and writer who has faced repeated imprisonment. He is the founder of the Association for the Defence of Prisoners' Rights (ADPR), an organisation that faced growing restrictions until it was forced by the Iranian authorities to close in August 2009. The Iranian authorities have not permitted Emadeddin Baghi to leave the country and travel abroad since October 2004. In November 2009, he was prevented from collecting, in Geneva, the Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders. He was the first laureate in the award's 18-year history to be denied the opportunity to receive his prize in person. The Martin Ennals Award is attributed by 10 of the world's leading human rights organisations to a prominent human rights defender every year.

According to the information we have received, Emadeddin Baghi was arrested at his residence at around 06:45 in the morning on 28 December, when at least four armed, plain-clothes officials forcibly entered his home in Tehran and verbally abused members of his family. Other armed personnel were present in the hallways adjacent to his family's apartment at the time of his arrest. Statements made by the unidentified security officials at the time of his arrest suggested that he was being detained for having appeared in a video with the recently deceased Grand Ayatollah Hossein Ali Montazeri.

Furthermore, our concerns are heightened by his health condition. During his previous periods of imprisonment, Emadeddin Baghi was repeatedly hospitalised. Accordingly, we urge you to ensure that Emadeddin Baghi has access to adequate medical treatment while in custody as well as access to a lawyer of his own choosing and that he is allowed to receive family visits.

As of today, 5 January 2010, Emadeddin Baghi appears to be under interrogation and no charges have been brought against him. The Tehran Province Prosecutor's Office confirmed on 30 December to Emadeddin Baghi's wife that he is held in Section 209 of Evin Prison, a section of the prison under the control of the Ministry of Intelligence. He was not told of the reasons of his arrest.

By awarding Emadeddin Baghi the 2009 Martin Ennals Award, our organisations have recognised his great contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights. We deplore that the Iranian authorities have decided to arbitrarily detain Emadeddin Baghi for his work rather than to celebrate him. We are therefore seeking your intervention to ensure that Emadeddin Baghi is immediately and unconditionally released.

I look forward to receiving a response at your earliest possible convenience,

Yours sincerely,

Hans Thoelen,
Chair of the Martin Ennals Foundation,
on behalf of the 10 NGOs on the Jury of the Martin Ennals Award:

**Amnesty International
Human Rights Watch,
Human Rights First
International Federation for Human Rights
World Organization Against Torture
International Commission of Jurists,
German Diakonie
International Service for Human Rights
Front Line
HURIDOCs**

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