

Ambassador Mohammad Hassan Habibollahzadeh  
The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran  
Drammensveien 88E  
0271 Oslo

Your Excellency,

Greetings and best wishes for the Persian New Year - Nowruz Mubarak!

I am writing to express my deep concern for the recent arrests and detention of members of the Church of Iran in Rasht. Khalil Dehkanpour and Hossein Kadivar were arrested on 29 January, Abdolreza Ali Haghnejad was arrested on 10 February, Kamal Naamanian, Mohammed Vafada and Shahrooz Eslamdous were arrested on 15 February, Babak Hosseinzadeh, Mehdi Khatibi and Behnam Akhlaghi were arrested and detained on 23 February.

Your Excellency, these men have only been practicing their faith peacefully. I wish to draw the attention of the High Authorities of Iran towards their plight. Although I am glad to hear that most of those arrested have been released on bail, I humbly petition your intervention to ensure that

- the Iranian authorities have mercy and respect towards the members of the Church of Iran,
- any of the remaining detainees are released,
- none of the arrested individuals will face charges related to the peaceful practice of their faith.

I understand that Iran is a country with a rich multireligious history. Therefore, I am disappointed to hear reports that unofficial religious groups in Iran are facing increasing challenges and pressures which hinder them in practicing their faith peacefully. I hope that Iranian authorities will be more compassionate and gracious in their treatment of such vulnerable religious groups.

I thank you in advance for using your influence as ambassador and conveying this message to the relevant authorities in your home country.

Yours sincerely,