



Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani
Office of the Head of the Judiciary
Pasteur Street
Vali Asr Avenue
Serah-e Jomhuri
Tehran
Iran

5 October 2010

Your Excellency

We are writing to express our dismay at the sentence of 19 and a half years handed down to blogger Hossein Derakhshan, and our concerns about serious violations of Iran's obligations under international and domestic law to protect and promote human rights, including the right to freedom of expression.

The Islamic Republic of Iran's domestic laws recognise the right to freedom of expression. Iran was in fact one of the first countries in the world to ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in 1975, which guarantees all individuals the 'freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media'.

We believe that Hossein Derakhshan was exercising that very right to freedom of expression. We therefore ask you to do everything in your authority to allow for his release and thereby honour Iran's commitment to protect basic human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Hossein Derakhshan has already spent two years in prison awaiting trial and we have received worrying reports that he may have been tortured. We therefore ask you to ensure that he is accorded the rights due to all prisoners under international law for the duration of his time in detention.

As leading free speech groups that defend the rights of individuals around the world to freedom of expression, we are deeply concerned at the deteriorating conditions facing writers, journalists, academics and bloggers in the Islamic Republic. We ask you to undertake within your responsibility all measures to enable them to work without fear of imprisonment or reprisal. Prison is no place for Hossein Derakhshan or for the dozens of other individuals who have been jailed for exercising their right to free speech.

Yours



Agnès Callamard,
Article 19, Executive
Director

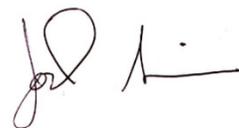


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John Kampfner,
Index on Censorship,
Chief Executive

Eileen Scigman



Joel Simon, CPJ,
Executive Director