United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 19, 2011

The Honorable Ahmed Shaheed
UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Iran
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
Palais des Nations
CH- 1211 Geneva 10 Switzerland

Dear Dr. Shaheed,

We are writing to you on behalf of Bahareh Hedayat, Navid Khanjani, Hossein Ronaghi-Maleki, and Nasrin Sotoudeh. These Iranians have been imprisoned and sentenced by the Islamic Republic of Iran for their work to bring human rights and democracy to their country. Their cases characterize the brutality exercised by President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, and other government officials, since the 2009 fraudulent Iranian elections.

Bahareh Hedayat is a student, an advocate for women's rights, and a member of Iran's pro-democracy student movement. Since her arrest in December 2009, Bahareh has endured solitary confinement, interrogation while denied contact with her family, and a hunger strike. Her activism led to 16 charges against her, and a nine and a half year sentence, which she is currently serving in Evin Prison.

Navid Khanjani is a student activist and a Baha'i. He was arrested for his work to help all Iranians access higher education and for his involvement in multiple human rights groups. Navid is waiting to be summoned to serve his 12-year prison sentence - the longest that Iran has given to a human rights activist. Recently, the Appeals Court confirmed his sentence and a $400 fine.

Hossein Ronaghi-Maleki was one of the earliest and youngest bloggers to challenge the regime's efforts at Internet censorship. Hossein championed the freedom of expression and the free flow of information, especially with his anti-filtering efforts during the protests in 2009. Currently, Hossein is serving a 15- year prison sentence in Evin Prison. He has been diagnosed with kidney failure and needs immediate medical attention.

Nasrin Sotoudeh is a lawyer, a women's rights activist and a mother of two. In May, she celebrated her 48th birthday in Evin Prison for bravely defending peaceful protestors and Nobel Peace Prize winner Dr. Shirin Ebadi. Recently, Nasrin's sentence was reduced from 11 years to six years, and a ban from practicing law or leaving the country was imposed for 10 years. Nasrin's family, including her two young children, were arrested and detained while visiting Nasrin. Nasrin has refused to accept visits until the Iranian authorities take responsibility for their actions against her family.

We respectfully urge you to investigate and report back on each of these cases as mandated by the Human Rights Council's resolution (A/HRC/RES/16/9) that was adopted on March 24, 2011. As the voice for human rights in Iran for the international community, your attention to these cases is urgently needed.

We are working with our colleagues in the United States Congress to send a message to Tehran that we will not sit by and watch as the regime brutalizes its own citizens in violation of its international obligations. It is important that the United Nations sends the same message.

Together, we must support the people of Iran as they work to bring freedom, democracy and respect for human dignity to their country. Taking a stand for Bahareh, Navid, Hossein, and Nasrin is a critical first step. Thank you for your attention to the matter, and we look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Mark Kirk
United States Senator

Jon Kyl
United States Senator