

**Leader of the Islamic Republic,
His Excellency
Ayatollah Sayed Ali Khamenei,
The Office of the Supreme Leader,
Shoahada Street, Qom,
Islamic Republic of Iran,
Faxes: + 98 21 649 5880 / 21 774 2228**

Re: Concerns regarding the case of lawyers Ms. Sara Sabaghian, Ms. Maryam Karbasi and Ms. Maryam Kianersi

Your Excellency,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE), which, through the national Bars and Law Societies of the Member States of the European Union and the European Economic Area, represents around one million European lawyers. In addition to membership from EU bars, it has also observer representatives from a further eleven European countries' bars.

The CCBE, through its Human Rights Committee, places great emphasis on respect for human rights and the rule of law. The CCBE is particularly concerned by the situation of human rights defenders in the world.

We are writing to express our serious concerns over the situation facing lawyers Sara Sabaghian, Maryam Karbasi and Maryam Kianersi.

According to the information received, Ms. Sabaghian, Ms. Karbasi and Ms. Kianersi were arrested on November 13 at Tehran airport as they returned back from a trip to Turkey following their attendance at the annual meeting of the UIA, one of the most prestigious international organisation of lawyers in the world. According to the Tehran Revolutionary Prosecutor, they were arrested for "activities against State security". Two further lawyers were also arrested "in relation with the three women". Their names were later revealed as Ms. Rosa Gharatchorlou and Mohamad Hossein Hayeri.

On November 18, Ms Rosa Gharatchorlou and Ms Maryam Karbasi were released and no information could be obtained as to whether charges were pending against them. However, it would appear that the other three lawyers remain in detention.

We are told that these lawyers are all active in the defence of journalists, bloggers and young people and in the defence of women sentenced to death. The aim of the arrest and other acts of harassment against them seem to be only to sanction their human rights activities.

In this context, the CCBE wishes to draw to your attention the following Article of the United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers (1990):

Article 16 states that:

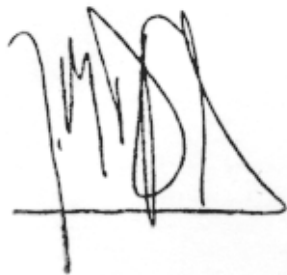
Governments shall ensure that lawyers (a) are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference; (b) are able to travel and to consult with their clients freely both within their own country and abroad; and (c) shall not suffer, or be threatened with, prosecution or administrative, economic or other sanctions for any action taken in accordance with recognized professional duties, standards and ethics.

Furthermore, the provisions of the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted on December 9, 1998 by the United Nations General Assembly, in particular its article 1 states that:

“Everyone has the right, individually or in association with others, to promote the protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels”,

In view of the above, the CCBE respectfully urges you to investigate the above mentioned facts and to take immediate and effective action to guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of these lawyers as well as all human rights defenders, in order to preserve the independence and integrity of the administration of justice in Iran.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. M. Davó-Fernández', written over a horizontal line.

JOSÉ-MARÍA DAVÓ-FERNÁNDEZ
President