

**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 lawyer Masoud Shafii

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 more than 1 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.

The CCBE writes to express its serious concerns over lawyer Masoud Shafii who represented the now free US hikers held for two years in Iran for espionage and illegal entry charges. Mr Shafii represented Shane Bauer, Josh Fattal and Sarah Shourd in a case which lasted for more than two years. During all the trial, he always maintained that his clients were innocent, and was criticised by conservative hardliners in the Islamic republic.

Mr Masoud Shafii also denounced the restrictions imposed by Iranian justice on his work, not allowing him proper access to his clients, as required by law. In fact, Mr Shafii met with them briefly only three times in two years, once before the start of their trial, and once before each of two hearings in February and August.

The CCBE notes that on 27 October 2011 Mr Shafii was arrested at his home and questioned for several hours by judiciary officials before being released, during which agents confiscated documents, his computer and his passport, but returned them later.

On 2 October 2011, Mr Shafii was barred from leaving the country at Tehran airport, specifically after getting his passport stamped at the police control and, as he was boarding the plane, his passport was confiscated by order of the judiciary authorities. Therefore, Mr Shafii could not proceed to his final destination which was the United States.

In this context, the CCBE wishes to draw to your attention the following Articles 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, economics or other sanctions for any action taken in accordance with recognized professional duties, standards and ethics.

Furthermore, Article 23 states that:

Lawyers like other citizens are entitled to freedom of expression, belief, association and assembly. In particular, they shall have the rights to take part in public discussion of matters concerning the law, the administration of justice and the promotion and protection of human rights and to join or form local, national or international organisations and attend their meetings, without suffering professional restrictions by reason of their lawful action or their membership in a lawful organisation. In exercising these rights, lawyers shall always conduct themselves in accordance with the law and the recognised standards and ethics of the legal profession.

In view of the above, the CCBE respectfully urges you to take immediate and effective steps to insure the physical and psychological safety and professional integrity of Mr Masoud Shafii in order to preserve the independence of the administration of justice, and guarantee in all circumstances that lawyers and particularly human rights defenders in Iran are able to conduct their professional duties without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Dal', with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

Georges-Albert Dal

President