THE OBSERVATORY
for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders

L'OBSERVATOIRE	EL OBSERVATORIO
pour la Protection des Défenseurs	para la Protección
des Droits de l'Homme	de los Defensores de Derechos Humanos

URGENT APPEAL - THE OBSERVATORY

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IRN 004 / 0707 / OBS 073
Sentencing / Torture
Iran
July 5, 2007

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The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint programme of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), requests your urgent intervention in the following situation in **Iran**.

Description of the situation:

The Observatory has been informed by the Iranian League for the Defence of Human Rights (LDDHI) of the sentencing on July 2, 2007 of Ms. **Delaram Ali**, a women's rights activist, by an Iranian court to 10 lashes and two years and 10 months imprisonment for « participation in an illegal gathering », « propaganda against the system », and « disturbing public order ».

Ms. Ali was involved in the « One Million Signatures » petition campaign, which seeks to put pressure on the Iranian legislators in order to withdraw provisions that have adverse effects on women's human rights. She had been arrested in June 2006, together with 70 people, during a protest organised in Tehran to denounce these discriminatory provisions. Since June 2006, several other women have also been arrested and sentenced for taking part in the campaign (see background information).

The Observatory expresses its deep concern about the increasing repression of the Iranian authorities against human rights defenders, in particular pro-reform students, intellectuals and women's rights activists. The Observatory strongly condemns the increasing use of violence by the Iranian authorities over the past months in order to repress peaceful gatherings and to arrest defenders.

The Observatory condemns more generally the recurrent use of torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and punishment against human rights defenders, in violation of Article 7 of the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights ratified by Iran and of UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/61/153 which provides that freedom from such treatments "is a non-derogable right that must be protected under all circumstances".

The Observatory further wishes to insist on the fact that Iran had committed to "uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights"[1] by presenting its candidacy to the Human Rights Council 2006 election and had insisted in this regard on the fact that the country had "continuously put great efforts into safeguarding the status and inherent dignity of the human person as well as the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms"[2]. In order to ensure the continuation of these efforts, the Observatory urges the Islamic Republic of Iran to conform with international human rights standards.

Background information:

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[1] In accordance with GA resolution A/RES/60/251 establishing the Human Rights Council.
[2] http://www.un.org/ga/60/elect/hrc/iran.pdf

On June 12, 2006, a gathering was organised by representatives of women's and students' rights NGOs to protest against the discriminatory status of Iranian women. Those present at the gathering, mainly women and students, were attacked violently by police forces. Several dozen activists were arrested and taken to Evin prison. They were subsequently released.

On March 4, 2007, 33 women's rights activists were arrested while peacefully gathering in front of the Tehran Revolutionary Court to mark International Women's Day, which was to be celebrated on March 8, 2007. They were also protesting against the trials of six women human rights defenders who were prosecuted in connection with their participation in the peaceful assembly of June 2006, and with their involvement in the "One million signatures" campaign (see urgent appeal IRN 002 / 0307 / OBS 023).

121 women's rights activists have been arrested, interrogated, or sentenced in the past two years and the government has raised over one million euros by imprisoning the activists and releasing them on high bail. Such was the case of Ms. Zeynab Peyqambarzadeh (see press release of the Observatory, *Ms. Zeynab Peyqambarzadeh released on bail, but arbitrary prosecution of women's rights activists persists*, May 21, 2007).

Actions requested:

Please write to the authorities in Iran urging them to:

i. Guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of Ms. Delaram Ali as well as all activists engaged in the "One million signatures" campaign;

ii. Ensure that Ms. Delaram Ali be granted a fair and impartial trial when appealing her sentencing, so that the charges against her be dropped as they seem to merely sanction her human rights activities and as such are arbitrary;

iii. Drop all arbitrary charges against all women's rights defenders involved in the "One million signatures" campaign;

iv. Put an end to all acts of harassment against all Iranian human rights defenders;

v. Conform with the provisions of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 9, 1998, especially its Article 5(a), which states that "for the purpose of promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, at the national and international levels, to meet peacefully" and Article 8(2), which provides that "everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to submit to governmental bodies and agencies and organisations concerned with public affairs criticism and proposals for improving their functioning and to draw attention to any aspect of their work that may hinder or impede the promotion, protection and realisation of human rights and fundamental freedoms";

vi. More generally, ensure in all circumstances the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and with international and regional human rights instruments ratified by Iran.

Addresses:

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, Email: info@leader.ir / istiftaa@wilayah.org / webmaster@wilayah.org;

President, His Excellency Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the Presidency, Palestine Avenue, Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, Fax: + 98.21.649.5880, E-mail: dr-ahmadinejad@president.ir;

Head of the Judiciary, His Excellency Mr. Mahmoud Hashemi Shahrudi, Ministry of Justice, Park-e Shahr, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, Fax: +98.21.879.6671 / +98 21 3 311 6567, Email: Irjpr@iranjudiciary.com;

Minister of Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Mr. Manuchehr Motaki, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Abdolmajid Keshk-e Mesri Av, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, Fax: + 98.21.390.1999, Email: matbuat@mfa.gov;

Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Chemin du Petit-Saconnex 28, 1209 Geneva, Switzerland, Fax: +41 22 7330203, Email: mission.iran@ties.itu.int;

Ambassador Mr. Ahani, Embassy of Iran in Brussels, avenue Franklin Roosevelt, 15 A. 1050 Bruxelles, Belgium, Fax: + 32 2 762 39 15. Email: iran-embassy@yahoo.com.

Please also write to the diplomatic mission or embassy of Iran in your respective country.

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Paris - Geneva, July 5, 2007

Kindly inform us of any action undertaken quoting the code of this appeal in your reply.

The Observatory, a FIDH and OMCT venture, is dedicated to the protection of Human Rights Defenders and aims to offer them concrete support in their time of need. The Observatory was the winner of the 1998 Human Rights Prize of the French Republic.

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