



Tuesday 29 July, 2008

His Excellency Dr. Kamran Lankarani  
Minister of Health and Medical Education  
Simaye Iran Street, Phase 5, Shahrake Qods  
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Your Excellency:

We are writing out of deep concern for the well-being of two internationally respected Iranian physicians, Drs. Arash Alaei and Kamiar Alaei, who reportedly were arrested at the end of June by Iranian authorities and who appear to be held in *incommunicado* detention. The doctors are experts on HIV/AIDS and have worked for many years on HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment activities in Iran and internationally.

As international HIV/AIDS experts and medical leaders, we appeal to your government to disclose their whereabouts, to provide them access to lawyers and to their family, and either to charge them with a crime or release them immediately.

Dr. Kamiar Alaei is a doctoral candidate at the SUNY Albany School of Public Health in Albany, New York and is expected to resume his studies there this fall. In 2007, he received Master of Science in Population and International Health from the Harvard School of Public Health in Boston, Massachusetts.

His brother, Dr. Arash Alaei, is the former Director of the International Education and Research Cooperation of the Iranian National Research Institute of Tuberculosis and Lung Disease. Since 1998, Dr. Arash Alaei and Dr. Kamiar Alaei have been carrying out programs dealing with HIV/AIDS, particularly focused on harm reduction for injecting drug users in the war-torn province of Kermanshah, on the West Coast of Iran.

In addition to their work in Iran, the Alaei brothers have held training courses for Afghan and Tajik medical workers and have worked to encourage regional cooperation among 12 Middle Eastern and Central Asian countries. They were key organizers of a tri-national meeting in 2004 in Tehran to discuss harm reduction and substitution treatment in Iran, Tajikistan and Afghanistan. At that meeting, Iran's programs proved to be inspiring role models for the region, according to medical experts who participated in the meeting. The Drs. Alaei's work has addressed the most disadvantaged populations and patients in the country.

We urge the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran either to charge these physicians and provide them with access to counsel and family, or release them immediately so that they can continue their important medical and public health work for the betterment of the people of Iran and the world.

Sincerely,

**Robert S. Lawrence, MD**

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cc: Interests Section of the Islamic Republic of Iran  
Washington, DC