
Le Président
The President

**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 human rights lawyer Mr. Mohammad Ali Dadkhah

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 Iranian lawyer and co-founder of the Defenders of Human Rights Center (DHRC), Mr. Mohammad Ali Dadkhah.

The CCBE is informed that on 4 July 2011, Mr. Mohammad Ali Dadkhah received an eight-year prison sentence charged with attempting to overthrow the ruling system, a ten-year ban from teaching in universities and from practising as a lawyer, a 300 dollar fine and five lashes.

The CCBE is informed that other co-founders of the DHRC, all of whom are lawyers, are being prosecuted or have already been convicted, and so the conviction may also relate to Mr. Mohammad Ali Dadkhah's involvement in the human rights organisation, which has been dissolved by the authorities. His colleague Mr. *Mohammed Seifzadeh* was convicted to a nine-year prison sentence for his part in the foundation of the DHRC in October 2010. Another co-founder, Mr. *Adbolfattah Soltani*, is awaiting trial in relation to his connection with the DHRC as well. Their colleague and initiator of the DHRC, Nobel laureate Ms *Shirin Ebadi*, was forced to flee Iran. It is reported that Mr. Mohammad Ali Dadkhah has 20 days to lodge an appeal.

The CCBE also understands that on 8 July 2009, Mr. Mohammad Ali Dadkhah was arrested at his office following increased pressure on lawyers. He was in prison for more than 60 days.

The CCBE understands that the sentence and disbarment of Mr. Mohammad Ali Dadkhah is directly related to his peaceful and legitimate work in defence of human rights.

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: repeal Mr. Mohammad Ali Dadkhah's eight-year prison sentence, 300 dollar fine and five lashes and reinstate his right to teach in universities and practise as a lawyer; furthermore to guarantee in all circumstances that human rights defenders in Iran are able to conduct their professional duties without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions, in order to preserve the independence and integrity of the administration of justice.

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