

# Justice For Iran

عدالت برای ایران

2 February 2011

**Dear Mr. Rosenthal, the Dutch Foreign Minister**

I am sure that the unexpected execution of Zahra Bahrami, the Iranian-Dutch citizen has saddened you as it has saddened us. Zahra Bahrami was arrested on the day of Ashura, December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2009, while demonstrating alongside other protestors. After months of detention, she was charged with *muharibih* (acting as enemy of God) and possession of and trafficking narcotics. Although the Revolutionary Court of Tehran convicted her of possession and trafficking of narcotics her political charges were never processed. This Dutch citizen of Iranian origin, who stated in the court preceding that her confessions of trafficking drugs and being in possession of narcotics was obtained under duress during interrogations and solitary confinement, was executed on January 29<sup>th</sup> in Evin prison. Aside from disregarding its international obligations, the Islamic Republic of Iran pays no mind to its internal laws based on which if a convict is concurrently charged with two different crimes, even if he is sentenced to execution for one of them, carrying out the sentence will be postponed until the other charge goes through the proper proceeding orders and a sentence is issued for it. In other words, executing Zahra Bahrami before any processing begun on her security based charges stemming from her protest against the government carry many messages for us all, the most important of them was that, when it comes to violating human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, anything is possible.

In such conditions, it appears that the current diplomacy of the European countries has born no fruit in trying to compel Iran to respect its human rights obligations. We know full well that the member states of the European Union particularly the Netherlands, individually or as a whole, have repeatedly expressed their concerns regarding the situation of Human rights in Iran, particularly after the 2009 presidential election. Furthermore, we know that the ambassadors of European countries have repeatedly tried to improve the human rights situation in Iran through closed negotiations. Meanwhile, it has been months since discussion began across the European Union regarding taking action in sanctioning the human rights violators by preventing the entry and freezing the assets of Iranian Human rights violators, such as the recent actions that took place by the President of the United States against 8 Iranian statesmen. Nonetheless, such thoughtful sanctions have so far been prevented from taking place due to the European states

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hopeless optimism in the success of their policy of silence as well as their discussions and concerns regarding taking up more decisive policies out of fear that the Iranian government will close all possibilities of human rights discussion.

All together, the events of the last year and in particular the ever increasing trend of executing political prisoners in Iran, the last of whom was Zahra Bahrami, clearly demonstrates that the Iranian government pays no mind to the negotiations behind the curtains or even the harsh press releases which exposes the necessity of taking more serious and effective actions in preventing human rights violations in Iran. Although the Dutch government announced that it will suspend all of its relations with Iran, without serious follow up of the case of Zahra Bahrami through all political and legal mechanisms available in the European Union and the United Nations, this action alone does not suffice. At minimum, all the actors influential in the execution of Zahra Bahrami, all of whom have hands in other such cases of human rights violation must witness the fruits of their actions today.

**Mr. Rosenthal,**

Two months ago, in December 2010, during the Human Rights Defender's tulip, you told me "Ms. Sadr, we are now urging the European Union to follow the example of the United States, and ban travel to Europe by those guilty of serious human rights violations in Iran. More and more of our European colleagues are supporting our call." It appears that the time has come for the Dutch government to take fast and extensive action on behalf of the family member of their citizen, Zahra Bahrami, as well as in defense of the rights of all victims of human rights violations in Iran by taking a leading position for enforcing effective sanctions by the EU against statesmen who have had any hands in the extensive and serious violation of human rights in Iran. Rest assured that along the way, Justice for Iran organization and all other civil society and human rights defenders will support you in identifying these individuals, collecting documents and testimonies against them, as well as aiding in the progress of this endeavor.

Respectfully,

Shadi Sadr

Executive director of Justice for Iran

C.C. Officials of the Netherlands, EU States, human rights organizations and media