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January 13, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Iran: Acquit HIV/AIDS Doctors Prosecuted in Unfair Trial

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(Cambridge, MA) Drs. Kamiar and  
Arash Alaei—Iranian brothers who  
are known worldwide for their work  
as HIV/AIDS physicians - are among  
the four Iranian citizens cited today  
by Iranian authorities as attempting to overthrow the state,  
Physicians for Human Rights (PHR), Human Rights Watch (HRW), and  
International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran (ICHRCI) have  
learned from reliable sources.

Sign the petition at  
[IranFreeTheDocs.org](http://IranFreeTheDocs.org)

According the Islamic Republic News Agency, Iranian Judiciary  
spokesperson Ali-Reza Jamshidi told a news conference today that  
four Iranian citizens had been arrested and brought to the court on  
charges of "communications with an enemy government" and seeking  
to overthrow the Iranian government under article 508 of Iran's  
Islamic Penal Code. Speaking at a press conference, Jamshidi claimed:  
"They were linked to the CIA, backed by the US government and State  
Department... They recruited and trained people to work with  
different espionage networks to launch a velvet overthrow of the  
Iranian government". Jamshidi added that further details of the case  
would be forthcoming in the next two days.

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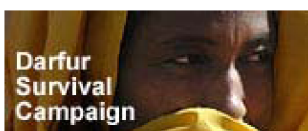
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PHR, HRW, and ICHRI believe the charge of plotting a coup is being brought unfairly, without the brothers being given the chance to adequately defend themselves. Their trial was marked by clear violations of due process. The Alaeis' human rights have been violated and their commitment to public health worldwide has been misrepresented by the Iranian Government as a threat to their regime.

"To all appearances, the arrest and now the trial of these two prominent and widely-traveled AIDS doctors seem to be an effort to shut the door on medical and public health collaboration on global health crises...a policy that is dangerous for the well-being of the Iranian people and for global health," said Frank Donaghue, PHR CEO.

PHR, HRW, and ICHRI have spoken out repeatedly about their concern that these serious charges had been levied without due process. The verdict in the case of the Drs. Alaei is expected this week, following a one-day trial in Tehran's Revolutionary Court on December 31, 2008, on charges of communicating with an "enemy government". At the trial, the Iranian prosecutor also informed the court of additional, secret evidence which the brothers' attorney had no opportunity to refute, because the prosecutor did not disclose them.

"Their prosecution is truly a witch hunt; it is completely unacceptable to bring such charges against the Alaei brothers. Everything they did was transparent with full knowledge and permission of the Iranian government, including participation in an exchange program on public health in November 2006 in the United States," said Hadi Ghaemi, spokesperson for International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran.

Over the last week, more than 2,000 people from around the globe contacted the Iranian Mission to the UN in New York City, demanding the Alaeis' release. In addition, 3,100 doctors, nurses and public health workers from 85 countries have [signed an online petition](#) demanding their release, which can be viewed at [IranFreeTheDocs.org](http://IranFreeTheDocs.org). Leading physicians and public health specialists and numerous medical and scientific organizations have [publicly called for the brothers' release](#), including HIV/AIDS and health experts luminaries: Global Fund Executive Director Professor Michel Kazatchkine; Partners in Health co-founder Dr. Paul Farmer; 2008 MacArthur Foundation Genius Grant recipient Wafaa El-Sadr, MD, MPH; Hossam E. Fadel, MD, of the Islamic Medical Association of North America; 1993 Nobel Laureate in Medicine Sir Richard Roberts PhD, FRS; and Ugandan AIDS pioneer Dr. Peter Mugenyi.

"This case is just one more example of how, under President Ahmadinejad's administration, Iran's human rights record has reached new lows" said Joe Amon, Director of the HIV/AIDS and Human Rights Program at Human Rights Watch. "Ahmadinejad's presidency has created an intense atmosphere of fear and intimidation felt even by those working on the expansion of HIV/AIDS services."

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

in Population and International Health from the Harvard School of Public Health in Boston.

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, the Drs. Alaei have been carrying out HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention programs, particularly focused on harm reduction for injecting drug users.

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. Their efforts expanded the expertise of doctors in the region, advanced the progress of medical science, and earned Iran recognition as a model of best practice by the World Health Organization.

*Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) mobilizes the health professions to advance the health and dignity of all people by protecting human rights. As a founding member of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, PHR shared the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize.*

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