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January 20, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Iran Uses AIDS Doctors' Imprisonment as First Test of Obama Administration

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(Cambridge, Mass.) - In the wake of President Barack Obama's inauguration, Iran has signaled that the espionage trial of two world-renowned AIDS doctors is a bellwether for the future of US-Iranian relations.

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The Washington Post reported on Jan. 19 that an unnamed Iranian senior counter-intelligence official [warned the new Obama administration](#) that the case of Dr. Kamiar Alaei and Dr. Arash Alaei exemplifies a "full fledged intelligence war" between Iran and the US.

"If Kamiar and Arash are engaged in any war, it's the battle against HIV/AIDS," said Sarah Kalloch, Director of Outreach for Physicians for Human Rights (PHR). "They traveled the world to share the Iranian model of HIV prevention, and to learn from other countries about innovations in infectious disease treatment. Treating AIDS is not a crime—it is good medicine."

PHR has learned that despite leaks from Iranian officials over the weekend to the media, the doctors only learned on Jan. 20 that they had been convicted. Kamiar and Arash are sentenced to terms of three and six years respectively. They will serve their sentences in Tehran's notorious Evin Prison.

"The doctors' trial did not meet standards of due process under international human rights law or even under the Iranian penal code," said Jonathan Hutson, JD, Chief Communications Officer at PHR. "The brothers still have not been fully informed of all charges against them. Their attorney did not have the opportunity to examine the accuracy or relevance of certain undisclosed evidence and thus had no

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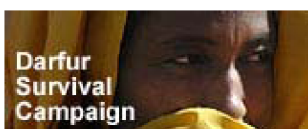
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opportunity to rebut the case. PHR is concerned that the doctors may have been subjected to coercion during their intensive, six-month interrogation.”

Their attorney plans to file an appeal; he has 20 days to do so. The brothers had been charged with communicating with an enemy government - charges which PHR has labeled illegitimate and politically motivated - as well as with secret charges which have not yet been made public.

Over the past two weeks, more than 2,000 people around the world contacted the Iranian Mission to the United Nations demanding the Alaeis' release. In addition, more than 3,100 health professionals 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. These include HIV/AIDS and health experts luminaries such as 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.

“PHR and the thousands of medical and public health practitioners from across the globe who support Kamiar and Arash are devastated, dismayed and disgusted by these sentences,” said Kalloch. “Persecuting these doctors for their exemplary public health outreach will put a chilling effect on medical research, science, and public health in Iran, which will ultimately harm the Iranian people.”

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 last fall. In 2007, he received a Master's 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.*

Date posted: January 20, 2009

Last updated: June 22, 2009

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