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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

On World AIDS Day, PHR Urges Iran To Free Doctors Arash and Kamiar Alaei

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On December 1, 2008—the 20th anniversary of World AIDS Day—Physicians for Human Rights and international medical leaders [call on the Iranian government](#) (*pdf*)

to release detained Iranian HIV/AIDS leaders Drs. Arash and Kamiar Alaei.

Sign the petition at
IranFreeTheDocs.org

Some of the world's most accomplished HIV/AIDS and health experts—including 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, have [signed a letter](#) (*pdf*) urging the Alaei brothers' release:

"We are writing out of deep concern for the well-being of two internationally respected Iranian physicians, Drs. Arash Alaei and Kamiar Alaei, who have been detained without charge following their arrest by Iranian authorities in June. The Alaei doctors' work on HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment has saved lives and has earned Iran international recognition as a model of best-practice.

"As international medical leaders and policy makers, we appeal to your government to release these doctors immediately. As the globe celebrates World AIDS Day, it is crucial that these two pioneers from the field of HIV/AIDS prevention be free to practice life saving medicine in Iran."

Drs. Kamiar Alaei and Arash Alaei—two brothers known throughout the world for their work on HIV/AIDS—were detained without charge by

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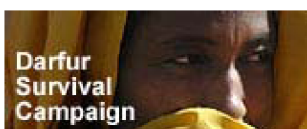
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Iranian security forces in late June 2008. They are being held in Tehran's Evin Prison. To date, no formal charges have been filed. News reports have quoted deputy Tehran prosecutor Hassan Haddad as saying the two used conferences on AIDS to "recruit individuals" to topple Iran's government through a "velvet revolution".

Said PHR CEO A. Frank Donaghue, "Sharing knowledge across borders for better treatment of AIDS is not a crime, it is good medicine. The Iranian government must release the Alaeis so they can continue their life-saving public health work. Releasing the Alaeis on World AIDS Day would send an important message to the world that Iran cares about the fight against AIDS and the health and well-being of its 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 this fall. In 2007, he received Master of Science 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.

Since its founding in 1986, PHR's Colleagues at Risk Program has defended the rights of our colleagues whose rights are threatened due to their medical, humanitarian and human rights work.

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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