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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PHR Calls "Confessions" in Trial of Iranian AIDS Doctors Tainted and Unreliable

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(Cambridge, Mass.) – Physicians for Human Rights is deeply concerned that purported 'confessions' that have been used by Iranian authorities to convict and sentence Dr. Kamiar Alaei and Dr. Arash Alaei may have been forcibly extracted.

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Sources close to the trial have told PHR that one of the brothers had agreed under duress to make a videotaped statement prepared by Iranian authorities, who had promised that if he read the statement, both brothers would be set free.

Said Jonathan Hutson, J.D., Chief Communications Officer for PHR, "Given the isolation, months without charge and perfunctory trial, and the interrogation techniques and duress known to exist in other cases like this one in Iran, any purported 'confession' in the trial of the Alaei brothers must be viewed as tainted and unreliable." The brothers have been held in Evin prison since late June 2008.

According to a [press release issued today](#) from the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran, the mother of Arash and Kamiar Alaei recently broke her silence in an interview with Iranian news media. The press release stated that the mother told Rooz Online that her sons had been held for 63 days in solitary confinement and that she feared that they might be tortured to coerce false confessions on camera.

The brothers have 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

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yet been made public. Kamiar and Arash have been sentenced to terms of three and six years respectively. They will serve their sentences in Evin prison. Their attorney plans to file an appeal; he has 20 days from January 20 to do so. According to their attorney, the brothers categorically deny the charges against them.

"If due process means anything, it means the right to know the charges, hear the evidence, and face the accuser," said Hutson. "The Alaei brothers' secret summary trial was marked by violations of due process rules outlined in the Iranian constitution and penal code, as well as those in international human rights law."

Leading physicians, 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 Sarah Kalloch, PHR's Director of Outreach. "You cannot combat infectious disease without working in a global network. Iranian scientists need to be free to share ideas and best practices with colleagues around the world without fear of persecution, or the health of the Iranian people will suffer."

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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