

Bahá'í International Community

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PRESS RELEASE

Bahá'í International Community

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The Bahá'í International Community joins others calling for the release of Narges Mohammadi

GENEVA – On the occasion of International Human Rights Day, the Baha'i International Community joins many in calling for the immediate release of Narges Mohammadi, a human rights defender imprisoned in Iran.

“On this day which is meant to celebrate human rights, we join myriads of individuals and organizations to call on the Iranian government to abide by its international obligations, and also its own constitution, and therefore to immediately release Ms. Mohammadi,” said Ms. Ala'í. “We urge the government to use the contributions, skills, and talents of citizens instead of putting them behind bars.”

Ms. Mohammadi, a lifelong champion of human rights and gender equality, is currently serving a 16-year sentence for alleged crimes related to her human rights activities. She is currently in poor health and needs medical treatment.

Ms. Mohammadi was originally arrested in 2009 on charges of “gathering and colluding to commit crimes against national security,” “spreading propaganda against the system,” and “founding an illegal group” for her efforts to end the death penalty for juveniles.

She was imprisoned in April 2012 but was released three months later to receive treatment for a severe neurological condition. She was re-arrested in May 2015 – and an appeals court upheld her conviction and the harsh sentence in September.

Her situation has drawn international condemnation.

In September, Philip Luther, Amnesty International's Research and Advocacy Director, said “Narges Mohammadi is a prominent advocate of human rights and a prisoner of conscience. She should be lauded for her courage not locked in a prison cell for 16 years.”

Sarah Leah Whitson of Human Rights Watch said in October that “Mohammadi's unjust sentence is the latest example of the judiciary crushing dissent, sentencing people who speak out against government abuses to years behind bars.”

The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights said earlier in the year: “We are appalled by the sentencing of a prominent Iranian anti-death penalty campaigner, Narges

Mohammadi, to 16 years' imprisonment in charges that stem from her courageous human rights work."

And the Nobel Women's Initiative has stated that "Mohammadi's re-arrest and harsh sentence sends a signal that Iran is using the criminal justice system as a tool of repression. Mohammadi's peaceful activities are protected by international human rights law and treaties to which Iran is a signatory. Her detention is unjust and unlawful."

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