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Your Excellency,

Our organisations represent together millions of physicians and other health professionals worldwide, committed to the respect of human rights and medical ethics for all people.

Further to the alarming [report of Amnesty International on the denial of medical care in Iran's prisons](#) released last September, our attention was drawn more explicitly on the inhumane conditions at Raja'i Shahr Prison, particularly regarding political prisoners. The most common complaints from detainees include: the deliberate indifference of prison officials to prisoners' medical needs; their refusal to transfer critically ill prisoners to hospitals outside the prison; long periods of time without hot water for washing and bathing; inadequate space; poor ventilation; unsanitary conditions; insect infestations near kitchen areas; insufficient cleaning supplies; and meagre rations of (poor quality) food. Such conditions are believed to have put inmates at risk of infection and various skin and respiratory diseases. Reports from Karaj's Raja'i Shahr Prison also indicate a pattern of guards beating, verbally assaulting and sexually harassing political prisoners, particularly when transferring them to and from hospital and court.

We are extremely concerned by this situation that precludes access to adequate medical care, a key human right which under international law and standards must not be adversely affected by imprisonment. Denying medical care amounts to ill treatments and can constitute a form of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment that are unambiguously prohibited under international human rights law.

We would like to remind you that the Islamic Republic of Iran has ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and hereby committed to implement its provisions, including article 12 recognizing "the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health".

Moreover, the [United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners \(the Nelson Mandela Rules\)](#) revised and adopted as Nelson Mandela Rules by the UN General Assembly in December 2015 includes a comprehensive guidance on healthcare in prison. The rule 24 provides that "Prisoners should enjoy the same standards of health care that are available in the community,

and should have access to necessary health-care services free of charge without discrimination on the grounds of their legal status”.

We therefore call upon the Iranian authorities to stop using the denial of timely and adequate medical care as a form of additional punishment against political prisoners and to take immediate steps to protect prisoners at Raja’i Shahr Prison from torture and other ill-treatment, ensuring that they are treated humanely in accordance with international law and standards, including the Nelson Mandela Rules, and allow national and international monitors to conduct inspection visits.

We furthermore call on you to ensure that medical decisions concerning the need for on-going care and observation outside prison and the necessity of release on medical grounds are only taken by the responsible health care professionals and are not overruled or ignored by non-medical authorities.

Finally, we take the opportunity of this letter to ask you to consider diligently the situations of Saeed Shirzad and Arash Sadeghi, both human rights defenders, as well as the ones of the cleric Ayatollah Mohammad Reza Nekounam and the filmmaker Keywan Karimi. They are all currently prisoners in dire health and in urgent need to adequate medical care, which they are all being denied. We urge you to release them immediately and unconditionally as their convictions stem solely from their peaceful work as a human rights defender or for exercising their right to freedom of expression and association. Pending their unconditional release, they should be granted access to adequate specialized medical care in a hospital outside prison.

We appeal to your humanity and sense of justice and trust that you will take promptly all the necessary steps related to our demands.

Yours faithfully,



Dr. Ketan Desai, President
World Medical Association (WMA)



Dr Adriaan Van Es, Director
International Federation for Health and Human
Rights Organisations (IFHRO)



Dr. de Haller, President
Standing Committee of European Doctors
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Victor Madrigal, Secretary General
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