

July 6, 2009

Mr. Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General
United Nations
E 46th St
New York, NY 10017
USA

Dear Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon,

We, Nobel Peace Laureates, are writing out of deep concern about the tense and volatile situation in Iran since the elections in that country on June 12. We deplore the violence and crackdown on peaceful protesters, the increasing restrictions on civil liberties and the imprisonment of a growing number of its civic leaders. We are asking that you do everything in your power to urge the government of Iran to halt these grave human rights violations and to immediately release all political prisoners. In addition, we urge you to appoint a special envoy to travel at once to Iran to investigate this situation in Iran on your behalf.

In the days since the elections, millions of people have marched peacefully in the streets of Tehran and other major cities, protesting the election outcome. The government has responded with a wave of arrests, excessive force resulting in the deaths and injuries of countless demonstrators, clampdowns on the media and violations of civil liberties. Government-sanctioned militias went so far as attacking student activists in their dormitories, killing at least five in Tehran—and arresting more than 300 students.

More than one thousand protestors are believed to be in detention throughout the country. More than two hundred and fifty prominent personalities, including human rights defenders, activists, journalists and several former high ranking officials under President Khatami, have been arbitrarily detained at their homes or places of work. International human rights organizations have expressed serious concerns about the possibility that torture and even summary executions might be carried out in the coming days. The Iranian leadership is violating the country's own commitments to international human rights treaties as well contravening Iran's own laws.

We particularly urge you to use the power of your good offices to call for the release of all political prisoners, the cessation of violence against protesters and respect for human rights and civil liberties so that the courageous women and men human rights defenders in Iran can continue their work free of intimidation, threats and fear of arrest.

Finally, we are very deeply concerned about the safety of our sister Nobel Peace Laureate, Dr. Shirin Ebadi. Fars News Agency and government controlled media in Iran have published an anonymous letter claiming to be written by lawyers, veterans, and other prominent Iranians which contains false allegations against her and calls for her prosecution for violating Islamic and constitutional law.

These allegations are unfounded and are widely seen as the regime's attempt to lay the groundwork for her illegal arrest and detention. We call upon you to warn Iranian authorities that Dr. Ebadi's arrest because of her human rights advocacy is a direct violation of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. We urge you to use every means in your

power to demand that Iran ensure the safety of Dr. Ebadi and her colleagues, who have worked tirelessly for justice and human rights in their country.

We thank you in advance for your consideration and timely response.

Sincerely,

Betty Williams

Mairead Maguire

Wangari Maathai

Rigoberta Menchu Tum

Jody Williams

President Kim Dae-jung

Lord David Trimble

Adolfo Perez Esquivel

Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Professor Elie Wiesel