

# SCHOLARS AT RISK

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N E T W O R K

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei  
Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran  
c/o H.E. Mr. Mohammad Khazaei, Ambassador of Iran to the United Nations  
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September 27, 2010

## **Re: Emadeddin Baghi**

Your Excellency:

I write on behalf of the Scholars at Risk Network with regard to Emadeddin Baghi, a scholar, writer, investigative journalist and recent recipient of the prestigious Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders. We are concerned about the new six-year prison sentence against Mr. Baghi. We respectfully urge you to ensure that Mr. Baghi receives a fair appeal hearing and that convictions related to his human rights and journalism activities are reconsidered.

Scholars at Risk (SAR) is an international network of over 220 universities and colleges in 29 countries dedicated to promoting academic freedom and its constituent freedoms of thought, opinion, expression, association and travel. In cases like Mr. Baghi's involving alleged infringement of these freedoms, Scholars at Risk investigates hoping to clarify and resolve matters favorably.

According to international reports, Mr. Baghi was first arrested at his home on December 28, 2009. He was detained without charge, taken to an undisclosed location and held in solitary confinement in Evin Prison, without regular access to his family, lawyers or medical care. He was finally released on bail in June of 2010. In July 2010, while free on bail, Mr. Baghi was sentenced to one year in prison and banned from media and political activities for five years for his work related to defending prisoners' rights—a sentence which has been upheld by the appeals court.

Most recently, in September 2010, Mr. Baghi was sentenced to six years in prison for allegedly colluding to commit acts “against national security” related to a BBC interview he conducted with a former leading Iranian reformist cleric, Ayatollah Montazeri, which aired in December of 2009. Mr. Baghi remains free from imprisonment, pending an appeal. The past imprisonment of Mr. Baghi and the continued issuances of convictions and a journalism ban against him seemingly contravene international standards of due process, fair trial and detention procedures,

as guaranteed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Iran is signatory.

The suddenness of Mr. Baghi's arrest in December 2009 without a clear basis for his detention and the continued issuance of convictions against him by the Iranian government raise grave concerns about the ability of internationally recognized scholars and intellectuals to safely work in and visit Iran. Taking into account arrests of academics throughout Iran following the June 2009 election, Mr. Baghi's previous detention and continued convictions suggest a wider attempt to intimidate intellectuals and to limit academic freedom in Iran—a suggestion Scholars at Risk finds particularly distressing and unfortunate, given Iran's rich intellectual history and traditional support for the values of scholarship and free inquiry. SAR finds this even more distressing given the current tensions in the region and the world, which appear to warrant more rather than fewer exchanges and discussions among scholars inside and outside of Iran.

We therefore join with the many national and international academic associations, human rights organizations and individual scholars in respectfully urging you to ensure that Iran's obligations under international law are upheld with regard to Mr. Baghi. Moreover, we ask that you intervene to ensure that Mr. Baghi receives a fair appeal hearing and that convictions related to his human rights and journalism activities are reconsidered.

We appreciate your immediate attention to this important matter and look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,



Robert J. Quinn  
Executive Director, Scholars at Risk

Cc:

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