

SCHOLARS AT RISK

N E T W O R K

Via email to: iran@un.int

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Ayatollah Ali Khamenei
Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran
c/o H.E. Mr. Mohammad Khazaee
Ambassador of Iran to the United Nations
Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations
622 Third Avenue, 34th Floor
New York, NY 10017, USA

July 21, 2011

Re: Mr. Omid Kokabee

Your Excellency:

I write on behalf of the Scholars at Risk Network to express grave concern over reports that Mr. Omid Kokabee, a doctoral student and physicist, has been wrongfully detained. We respectfully urge you to examine the circumstances of his detention and, pending his release, ensure access to medical care, family and legal counsel.

Scholars at Risk (SAR) is an international network of over 250 universities and colleges in 30 countries dedicated to protecting the human rights of scholars around the world and to raising awareness, understanding of, and respect for the principles of academic freedom and its constituent freedoms of expression, opinion, thought, association and travel. In cases like Omid Kokabee's involving alleged infringement of these freedoms, Scholars at Risk investigates hoping to clarify and resolve matters favorably.

Mr. Omid Kokabee holds two advanced degrees in photonics and is an accomplished experimental laser physicist and doctoral student at the University of Texas. We understand that Mr. Kokabee was arrested in February at Tehran airport after visiting his parents over the winter break. No formal charges against Mr. Kokabee have been announced, but he is reportedly accused of communicating with a foreign government and accepting illegal earnings. It has been reported that he was kept in solitary confinement and has been denied access to legal counsel.

The suddenness of Mr. Kokabee's arrest in February without clear public explanation, and his prolonged detention without access to counsel demonstrate a disregard of international standards of due process, fair trial and detention, as guaranteed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Iran is signatory. Scholars at Risk therefore joins 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. Kokabee. We implore you to examine the circumstances of Mr. Kokabee's arrest and detention and, pending his earliest

release, to guarantee his well-being and ensure that he is granted access to medical care, family and legal counsel.

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

Sincerely,



Robert Quinn
Executive Director

cc:

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