

Ambassador Mohammad Hassan Habibollahzadeh  
The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran  
Drammensveien 88E  
0271 Oslo

Your Excellency,

I am writing to express my deep concern for the recent sentencing of members of the Church of Iran. Pastor Abdolreza (Matthias) Haghnejad was arrested on 10 February 2019, and Khalil Dehkanpour, Hossein (Elisha) Kadivar, Kamal Naamanian, Mohammed Vafada, Shahrooz Eslamdous, Babak Hosseinzadeh, Mehdi Khatibi and Behnam Akhlaghi, who are all members of the same church, were also arrested between 31 January and 23 February 2019.

Your Excellency, these men have only been practicing their faith peacefully. I wish to draw the attention of the High Authorities of Iran towards their plight. I humbly petition your intervention to ensure that

- the Iranian authorities have mercy and show respect towards the members of “Church of Iran”;
- Iran secures the release of all prisoners of conscience, including Pastor Abdolreza (Matthias) Haghnejad and the other eight members of “Church of Iran” in Rasht;
- Iranian authorities immediately halt the arrests of religious minorities who have the right to practice their faith

I understand that Iran is a country with a rich multireligious history. Therefore, I am disappointed to hear reports that religious groups in Iran are facing increasing challenges and pressures which hinder them in practicing their faith peacefully. I hope that Iranian authorities will be more compassionate and gracious in their treatment of such vulnerable religious groups.

I thank you in advance for using your influence as ambassador and conveying this message to the relevant authorities in your home country.

Yours sincerely,