

Appeal to the United Nations
from Mariam Claren, daughter of political prisoner
Nahid Taghavi
September 21, 2021

“We are all born free. We all have our own thoughts and ideas, and we should all be treated the same way.”

“No one has the right to inflict torture, or to subject anyone else to cruel or inhuman treatment.”

“We should all have the same level of legal protection whoever we are, and wherever in the world we are.”

“Nobody should be arrested, put in prison, or sent away from our country unless there is good reason to do so.”

“Everyone accused of a crime has the right to a fair and public trial, and those that try us should be independent and not influenced by others.”

“Everyone has the freedom to think or believe what they want, including the right to religious belief. We have the right to change our beliefs or religion at any time, and the right to publicly or privately practise our chosen religion, alone or with others.”

“No government, group or individual should act in a way that would destroy the rights and freedoms of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.”

These are Article 1, 5, 6, 9, 10, 18 and 30 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948.

These articles are systematically violated in the Islamic Republic of Iran. My name is Mariam Claren and my mother Nahid Taghavi is an example.

She’s a 67-year- old German-Iranian political prisoner in the Islamic Republic of Iran. She was arrested in Tehran on October 16, 2020 by the Intelligence branch of the Islamic Revolutionary Corps and taken to the notorious Isolation Section 2-A in Evin prison – a dark place known for mass executions and torture.

She spent 194 days in solitary confinement and was interrogated 80 times for a total of 1,000 hours, all without legal counsel. Cameras monitored her 24/7, even when she used the bathroom. She was blindfolded every time she left her tiny cell and was forced to sleep on the hard floor without pillows.

She didn’t see the inside of a courtroom until her hearing on April 28, 2021, over five months later. Here she met her lawyer for the first time, who had only been allowed to glance through the court papers four days earlier.

In August 2021 she was sentenced to 10 years and 8 months in prison for “running an illegal group to disrupt national security”, and 8 months for “propaganda against the state.” My mother denies both charges. The Islamic Republic is criminalizing her freedom of belief, freedom of thought, and freedom of speech. That’s why they tried her on trumped-up charges. That’s why her trial was a sham, conducted behind closed doors with no real opportunity to present a defense.

Iran’s judicial “process” is no more about justice than medieval inquisitions were. Systematic human rights violations are commonplace. Lawyers, journalists, religious minorities, and any dissenters are arbitrarily arrested. “Propaganda against the state” - that’s one of the most frequent charges in politically motivated imprisonments in the Islamic Republic. Translated, it means: “Thinking is forbidden and talking about your thoughts is a crime.”

The prisoner is presumed guilty before the trial. In custody, prosecutors seek to extort evidence and confessions through hours of interrogation, torture and solitary confinement. These tortures include electric shocks, floggings, mock executions, waterboarding, sexual violence and denying medical care.

I call on the United Nations to stand by the side of the political prisoners in Iran and to speak out against this injustice. Show the people of Iran that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are not just empty words.

**THE LIVES OF IRAN’ POLITICAL PRISONERS HANG IN THE BALANCE
IT’S TIME TO ACT**

Mariam Claren

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