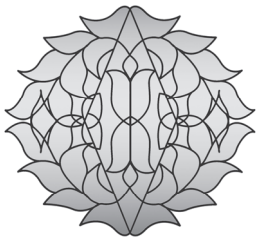


**Middle  
East  
Studies  
Association**  
of North America, Inc.

1219 N Santa Rita Ave  
The University of Arizona  
Tucson AZ 85721 USA

520 621-5850  
520 626-9095 fax  
mesana@u.arizona.edu  
www.mesana.org



**MESA '09**

June 30, 2009

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei  
Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran  
c/o H.E. Mohammad Khazaei  
Ambassador of Iran to the United Nations  
Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations  
622 Third Ave. New York, NY 10017

Fax: (212) 867-7086

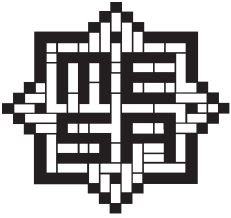
Your Excellency,

On 29 April, 2009, I wrote to you on behalf of the Committee on Academic Freedom (CAF) of the Middle East Studies Association of North America (MESA) to express our grave concern regarding the large-scale wave of intimidation, arrests, and campus expulsions carried out by Iranian security forces against peaceful student activists and protesters on various university campuses throughout Iran since December 2008, in violation of international laws to which Iran is a signatory as well as the Islamic Republic of Iran's own constitutional guarantees of free speech and peaceful assembly.

I now write to you again, this time to voice CAF's serious concern over the murders, mass arrests, brutal beatings, and widespread harassment of Iranian university students in the aftermath of the June 12, 2009, disputed Iranian presidential elections and the ransacking of university dormitories by security forces in a number of cities. In particular, we are extremely alarmed by the confirmed killing of at least 5 unarmed students at the Tehran University dormitory complex (on June 14), which were carried out by university security forces and members of the paramilitary Basij volunteer militia (tied to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and formally under the direct command of Your Excellency, also with ties to the Interior Ministry of the Islamic Republic of Iran and avowed loyalty to the current president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad). We are also seriously concerned about the safety of the reportedly hundreds of detained and "disappeared" peaceful student activists who have been rounded up during security raids on and off university campuses across the country since the June 12 elections and these students' lack of access to constitutional due process of law. Needless to say, we remain vigilant about the treatment of the former student detainees and reiterate our previous request that Iranian authorities investigate and terminate all abuse of power by the various security forces directed against peaceful student activists and academics.

MESA was founded in 1966 to promote scholarship and teaching on the Middle East and North Africa. The preeminent organization in the field, MESA publishes the International Journal of Middle East Studies and has more than 3000 members worldwide. MESA is committed to ensuring academic freedom and freedom of expression, both within the region and in connection with the study of the region in North America and elsewhere.

MESA again calls on Iranian authorities to respect and guarantee the full rights of academic and intellectual freedom, freedom of expression, and the right to peaceful assembly on all university campuses. We welcome the recent call by members of the Iranian parliament



**Middle  
East  
Studies  
Association**  
of North America, Inc.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei  
30 June 2009  
Re: Concern for peaceful student activists  
Page 2

(including the parliamentary speaker Ali Larijani) on interior minister Sadeq Mahsouli to account for “why students were injured or even killed,” as reported on the official Iranian English language Press TV website (<http://www.presstv.ir/detail.aspx?id=98834&sectionid=351020101>). We hope the Iranian parliament will conduct a full investigation into the recent grievous targeted, as well as random, assaults against students by the security forces and the use of excessive force in quelling peaceful student protests throughout the country in general, calling for the prosecution of all those responsible for such abuses.

MESA most strongly and unequivocally condemns the reprehensible premeditated use of lethal force and unwarranted and gratuitous violent tactics of intimidation against students by the official government and university security forces and the Basij militia and other officially-sponsored vigilante groups. MESA urges you, the Iranian state apparatus, the Iranian president, the heads of the various governmental and state-sponsored security forces, as well as the university officials responsible for campus security, to guarantee the rights of students and academics to free speech and peaceful assembly. We urge that Iranian authorities immediately overturn all punitive measures against the students in question and release all arrested students engaged in peaceful acts of protest and free speech--many of whom are feared to be subject to harsh treatment and physical torture in violation of Iranian law. We additionally urge the authorities to refrain from intimidation, reprimand, and punishment in any form of the faculty on various university campuses who have bravely condemned the “security” terror tactics directed against peaceful student activists on university campuses and the wanton damage caused to student dormitories, with a number of such faculty resigning their posts in protest.

We again feel compelled to remind you, Your Excellency, that the rights of individuals to freedom of thought, opinion, and speech are explicitly protected under the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Article 23), as well as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Articles 18, 19, 21), to which the Islamic Republic of Iran is a signatory. The arbitrary persecution and maltreatment of students on university campuses can only be conceived as a direct attack on the principles of academic freedom and critical intellectual inquiry.

We trust that you appreciate the gravity of these developments and we urge you to use all channels and take all appropriate measures in securing and protecting freedom of expression and the right of peaceful assembly on Iranian university campuses and by students and academics in general.

Sincerely,

Virginia H. Aksan, PhD  
MESA President  
Department of History, McMaster University