



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

3542 N Geronimo Ave
Tucson AZ 85705 USA

tel 520-333-2577
fax 520-207-3166
caf@mesana.org
www.mesana.org



September 1, 2016

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei
Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran
c/o H.E. Mr. Gholamali Khoshroo
Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations
622 Third Avenue, 34th Floor
New York, NY 10017, USA
email: iran@un.int
fax: +1 (212) 867-7086

Your Excellency,

We write to you on behalf of the Middle East Studies Association of North America (MESA) and its Committee on Academic Freedom to express our grave concern regarding the continued incarceration of Professor Homa Hoodfar and her deteriorating health. We wrote to you on June 9th to share our dismay at both her arrest on unsubstantiated charges and the harsh treatment to which she was being subjected. It has recently come to our attention that Prof. Hoodfar's health has declined so rapidly and severely, while held in solitary confinement in Evin Prison, that she has been hospitalized. We understand that she was having difficulty walking and talking. Furthermore, in violation of Prof. Hoodfar's rights under Iranian law, her lawyer has been unable to review her file and prepare a defence, and she continues to be kept in isolation instead of being released on bail after indictment. This recent news is truly alarming. We call upon you, Your Excellency, to see to it that Prof. Hoodfar is released without further delay, that all charges against her are dropped, and that she is allowed to seek whatever medical attention she requires and leave Iran when she wishes.

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 nearly 3,000 members worldwide. MESA is committed to ensuring academic freedom of expression, both within the region and in connection with the study of the region in North America and elsewhere.

Prof. Hoodfar is emeritus professor at Concordia University in Montreal (Canada), where she taught in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology since 1991. She had travelled to Iran earlier this year to visit family and to conduct historical and archival research. On March 9th, the night before her scheduled departure, Iranian authorities went to Prof. Hoodfar's home without a warrant and confiscated her personal computer, phone, passports and other items. For the next three months, Prof. Hoodfar was subjected to repeated interrogations and prevented from leaving the



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country. On June 6th, she was arrested and placed in solitary confinement in Evin Prison. We understand that the harsh conditions of her detention have exacerbated her medical condition, contributing to her declining health. Moreover, she has met with her lawyer only once, and briefly, since her incarceration. Not only have regular consultations with her lawyer been denied, but also her lawyer's requests to post bail, as initially set by the court, have been ignored. Indeed, the court has been trying to dismiss the lawyer Professor Hoodfar has chosen to represent her.

Because of the deeply disturbing developments in this case, including the alarming news about Professor Hoodfar's deteriorating health and hospitalization, combined with the absence of compelling evidence against her, we appeal to you to drop all charges against her and release her immediately and unconditionally.

We await your response to our urgent appeal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'B. Baron' followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Beth Baron
MESA President
Professor, City University of New York

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Amy W. Newhall' in a cursive style.

Amy W. Newhall
MESA Executive Director
Associate Professor, University of Arizona

cc:

The Honorable Dr. Hassan Rouhani, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran
Ayatollah Sadeq Larijani, Head of the Judiciary
Mr. Mohammad Javad Zarif, Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ms. Shahindokht Molaverdi, Vice President for Women and Family Affairs
The Honorable Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights