

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN' DAY PLEA TO IRAN TO RELEASE KURDISH WOMEN'S RIGHTS ACTIVIST ON THE NINTH ANNIVERSARY OF HER ARREST

7 March 2017 – Human rights organisations Justice for Iran and REDRESS are concerned about the health and well-being of Zeinab Jalalian, a female Kurdish activist who is currently serving a life sentence in Iran after she was arrested on International Women's Day nine years ago. Zeinab is believed to be the only female political prisoner currently sentenced to life imprisonment in Iran.

The organisations brought Zeinab's case to the attention of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD), a body of independent experts tasked specifically with analysing the situation of persons deprived of their liberty and making recommendations to States.

On 18 April 2016, the WGAD issued a strong opinion on the case. It determined that her detention was arbitrary and urged Iran to release her immediately and offer her compensation.

The WGAD also expressed "grave concern" that her mental and physical integrity may be at risk of "irreparable harm", requesting the Government of Iran to "take the necessary steps to remedy the situation of Ms. Jalalian without delay."¹

Almost 11 months after the WGAD issued its opinion, the Islamic Republic of Iran has failed to respond and Zeinab's health and general well-being continues to deteriorate as she languishes in detention and virtual isolation.

Today, Justice for Iran and REDRESS provided the WGAD with an update on Zeinab's situation, and renewed their calls for this continuing gross violation of her rights to end.

The organizations told the WGAD that Zeinab continues to be denied access to vital medical treatment she needs and has been subjected to further pressure to provide a recorded interview.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran must put an end to defy the implementation of the opinion of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and respect her rights affirmed by the international experts," said Shadi Sadr, Executive Director of Justice in Iran.

"The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention found that Zeinab's continued detention is arbitrary, that it violates her basic rights. We are calling on the Islamic Republic of Iran to guarantee her safety, health and well-being and to release her from this interminable injustice," said Carla Ferstman, REDRESS' Director.

Read more about Zeinab's case here: <http://www.redress.org/case-docket/submission-on-zeinab-jalalian-case->

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¹ <http://www.redress.org/downloads/wgadopinionalalianiran2016.pdf>

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Notes to editors:

REDRESS is a human rights organisation based in London and The Hague which works internationally to combat torture by seeking justice and reparation for torture survivors. More information on www.redress.org

Justice for Iran (JFI) is a non-governmental, not-for-profit human rights organization whose mission is to address and eradicate the practice of impunity that empowers officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran to perpetrate widespread human right violations against their citizens, and to hold them accountable for their actions. Read more on www.justiceforiran.org

The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD) is a UN-mandated body of independent human rights experts which investigates cases of arbitrary arrest and detention that may be in violation of international human rights law and is currently under the purview of the UN Human Rights Council. After verifying information from a variety of sources, including NGOs, intergovernmental agencies and victims' families, the Working Group issues opinions on the compliance with international law and sends urgent appeals to governments to ascertain the whereabouts and condition of those allegedly detained. It can also conduct fact-finding visits to countries that have extended an invitation to the Working Group.