



For immediate release

UK AND EU MUST PUT PRESSURE ON IRAN DURING UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO RELEASE ALL BRITISH NATIONALS ARBITRARILY DETAINED

19 September 2017 – REDRESS calls for the immediate release of all British dual nationals arbitrarily detained in Iran ahead of the general debate of the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly which starts in New York today. REDRESS Director Carla Ferstman is travelling to the General Assembly with Richard Ratcliffe, husband of 38-year-old charity worker **Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe**, who was arrested by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in April last year, as pressure increases for the UK to do more to intervene in her case.

REDRESS has been supporting the families of those arbitrarily detained in Iran. In addition to Nazanin, this also includes **Kamal Foroughi**, who turned 78 in Evin prison earlier this month. The UK Government does not currently have consular access to either of them.

The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has found both of their detentions to be arbitrary, in violation of international law, and has called for their immediate release, identifying an emerging pattern involving the deprivation of liberty of dual nationals in Iran. But, the UK has not yet publicly called for their release, indicating in a recent parliamentary debate that it is not "in their best interests" at this time. The UK and the EU have previously confirmed that they have asked for Kamal's release on humanitarian grounds.

In March 2017, 261 MPs and Peers signed a letter seeking the release of Nazanin and Kamal. In October 2016, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on Iran calling for the release of Nazanin and Kamal as well as other EU-Iran dual nationals. In April 2017, 49 MEPs wrote to Iran's Head of Judiciary, Minister of Justice and the Head of Iran's Council for human rights expressing concerns for Nazanin's health and called on them to intervene to bring all dual nationals home immediately.

Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe is a 38-year-old British-Iranian mother, who has been arbitrarily detained in Evin prison since she was arrested at the airport last year as she was about to return to the United Kingdom from a family holiday with her young daughter Gabriella. Following an unfair trial conducted in secret, Nazanin was sentenced to five years' imprisonment for unspecified national security crimes. She spent seven months in solitary confinement in total which has resulted in a deterioration of her mental and physical health. She was recently diagnosed with advanced depression.

Kamal Foroughi is a 78-year-old British-Iranian grandfather who has been arbitrarily detained in Evin prison for more than six years after he was convicted of alleged "espionage" in an unfair trial in which no evidence was provided in justification. His wife, children and grandchildren all live in London and he has not received a visitor in more than 2,000 days and has very limited access to a lawyer. He was kept in solitary confinement for 18 months. He is at risk of blindness due to untreated cataracts and may be suffering from prostate cancer.

"The UK and EU must put Iran to task for its treatment of Nazanin and Kamal and other dual nationals and its continuing violations of international obligations," said Carla Ferstman, Director of REDRESS. ***"The respect of Britons' human rights must be at the forefront of the UK's foreign policy and must underpin its dealings with Iran and other countries where Britons are arbitrarily detained."***

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