

ORDRE DES AVOCATS
A LA
COUR D'APPEL DE PARIS

Le Président

Mister Sadegh Mahsouli
Ministry of Interior
Dr Fatemi Avenue
Teheran
Iran

Paris, January the 5th, 2009,

CCB/MG/ET

Minister of the Interior,

I am writing on behalf of the Paris Bar which represents more than 21 000 lawyers. The Paris Bar is deeply concerned about the situation and security of human rights defenders in Iran and in particular by the closure of Ms Shirin Ebadi's Human Rights Defenders Center.

On December, the 21, while members of the organisation were about to celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, police officers entered the Centre without any search warrant and closed it immediately.

According to the authorities, the organisation has never obtained its legal license required by law for any association or political party in Iran. Although, all administrative requirements have been filled in.

On behalf of the Paris Bar, I would like to express my astonishment towards what could stand for an act of intimidation towards Ms Shirin Ebadi and all the human rights defenders in Iran.

The Paris Bar is deeply concerned about the situation of Ms Shirin Ebadi and asks you to guarantee the right of peaceful assembly, in compliance with international human rights standards, and in particular with the provisions of Article 21 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, signed and ratified by Iran, which states:

"The right of peaceful assembly shall be recognized. No restrictions may be placed on the exercise of this right other than those imposed in conformity with the law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order, the protection of public health or morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others."

I have no doubt that you will take all necessary measures to ensure that such acts of intimidation against lawyers and human rights defenders do not happen again. I call upon you to ensure to Ms Shirin Ebadi and her colleagues the right to organize meeting freely in the premises of the Center.

I ask you to authorize the reopening of the Human Rights Defenders Center's and to grant it the legal status which has been requested for several years.

I thank you in advance for providing attention to our request.

Sincerely Yours,



Christian Charrière-Bournazel
Bâtonnier de l'Ordre des avocats de Paris