

Press Release
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**PROFESSOR HOMA HOODFAR HOSPITALISED AFTER IRANIAN JUDICIAL
AUTHORITIES VIOLATE DOMESTIC LAWS, TRY TO DISMISS LAWYER, REFUSE
BAIL, AND KEEP HER IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT**

Montreal / London (30 August 2016) – It has been three months since Professor Homa Hoodfar was arbitrarily arrested and imprisoned in Iran. Since 6 June 2016, she has been held in solitary confinement in Evin prison on trumped up charges of collaborating with a hostile government against national security and of propaganda against the state, each of which carries a maximum sentence of 10 years. She had one brief visit with her lawyer in July but he was not allowed to discuss her legal case and has been denied all access to her case file. Disturbing details have since emerged about Professor Hoodfar’s deteriorating health, compounded by the psychological pressure and isolated detention she is enduring.

The family have been informed that Professor Hoodfar was hospitalised due to her rapidly declining health. She was very disoriented, severely weakened, and could hardly walk or talk. Professor Hoodfar is 65 years old. Her health is poor and she suffers from a serious neurological condition. Requests for a check-up by an independent specialist doctor have been ignored and it is unclear whether she is receiving her medication regularly. She also suffers from chronic tension headaches that require constant hydration and rest. The continued solitary incarceration and the illegal psychological pressure applied by the presiding judge to break her and confess to these fabricated charges are of great concern to professor Hoodfar’s family, friends, and the thousands of colleagues and activists worldwide who have signed petitions and letters of protests against the outrageous treatment of this renowned scholar.

In a brazen violation of Iran’s own laws and legal procedures, the court authorities (Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court) have tried to dismiss the lawyer chosen by Professor Hoodfar. This violates the rights of the accused under Iranian law. It also seems to demonstrate an intention to completely isolate Professor Hoodfar and bring her to a point to make a false confession. Indeed, throughout this process the Iranian judicial authorities have repeatedly ignored and violated Iranian laws. First, on 24 June 2016, the Prosecutor announced Professor Hoodfar’s indictment to the mass media without having informed her or her lawyer, and without having allowed her attorney to review the case file and to be present during the interrogations. In a now notorious statement, the prosecutor accused Professor Hoodfar of “dabbling in feminism”! Second, her lawyer’s numerous requests to post bail, as initially set by the court, have been ignored, and so have formal requests for independent medical specialists to examine her health. Third, she continues to be kept in solitary confinement despite Iranian laws dictating the immediate transfer of an accused to the general prison ward after the announcement of an indictment. Fourth, she has been denied regular visits by her family and consultation with her lawyer. Fifth, the court

officials have no authority to dismiss a lawyer chosen by the accused. The false accusations against Professor Hoodfar and her subsequent treatment are not only a travesty of justice, but also fearfully call to mind the tragic death by beating of Zahra Kazemi, another Canadian who was imprisoned by the Revolutionary Guards in 2009.

“We were asked by the Iranian judicial authorities to tone down the media on Homa’s case in order to allow the legal process to take its course. The family respected this request in good faith in the hopes that judicial authorities would, at the very least, follow their own laws and procedures and grant Homa’s lawyer access to her and her case file,” said Amanda Ghahremani, Professor Hoodfar’s niece and legal representative in Canada. “Instead, the court has blatantly and repeatedly violated Iran’s own laws, and the judicial authorities seem unwilling or unable to do anything about this. The court authorities are trying to dismiss Homa’s own lawyer. Formal requests for her release on bail have been ignored, even though a bail had been set. She continues to be kept in isolation. Given the alarming news of Homa’s hospitalisation and declining health, we are left with no choice but to publicise these travesties of justice widely, as it has become clear that the authorities are not prioritising her health and do not intend to respect Homa’s due process rights under Iranian law.”

Professor Hoodfar’s family, colleagues, and thousands of academics and feminist activists worldwide who have been following this case closely are distraught by these disturbing developments, and they demand the Iranian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release her. They also urge the Canadian and Irish authorities to do everything within their diplomatic ambit to secure her release.

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