



The Law Society of  
Upper Canada | Barreau  
du Haut-Canada

June 2, 2014

Office of the Treasurer

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President Hassan Rouhani  
Office of the President  
Palestine Avenue  
Azerbaijan Intersection  
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Your Excellency President Rouhani:

**Re: trial and ongoing harassment of Hadi Esmaeilzadeh**

I write on behalf of The Law Society of Upper Canada\* to voice our grave concern over the trial and ongoing harassment of human rights lawyer Hadi Esmaeilzadeh. When serious issues of apparent injustice to lawyers and the judiciary come to our attention, we speak out.

Hadi Esmaeilzadeh is an Iranian human rights lawyer and a member of the Defenders of Human Rights Centre (DHRC). Since the DHRC's office's closure in 2008, he has been interrogated by Iranian intelligence and security organizations and pressured to resign from the DHRC.

During a preliminary interrogation on July 12, 2011, Hadi Esmaeilzadeh was notified that he was being charged with "assembly and collusion with intent to commit anti-security crimes" based on his membership in the DHRC, and with "spreading propaganda against the State". He was also banned from traveling outside of Iran.

We are particularly concerned that lawyers for Hadi Esmaeilzadeh have not been given access to his file in preparation for his trial. His trial was scheduled for April 15, 2014 before Branch 15 of the Islamic Revolutionary Court.

The Law Society is deeply concerned about situations where lawyers are targeted in the legitimate exercise of their duties. International human rights instruments, including the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* state that respect for human rights is essential to advancing the rule of law. Article 16 of the *United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers* states "governments shall ensure that lawyers are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference; are able to travel and to consult with their clients freely; and shall not suffer, or be threatened with, prosecution or administrative, economic or other sanctions for any action taken in accordance with recognized professional duties, standards and ethics". Article 18 states "lawyers shall not be identified with their clients or their clients' causes as a result of discharging their functions".

The Law Society urges the government of Iran to:

- a. guarantee all the procedural rights that should be accorded to Hadi Esmaeilzadeh and other human rights defenders in Iran;

- b. guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of Hadi Esmailzadeh;
- c. put an end to all acts of harassment against Hadi Esmailzadeh and other human rights defenders in Iran;
- d. ensure that all Iranian lawyers can carry out their peaceful and legitimate activities without fear of physical violence or other human rights violations; and
- e. ensure in all circumstances respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with international human rights standards and international instrument

Yours very truly,

Thomas G. Conway  
Treasurer

*\*The Law Society of Upper Canada is the governing body for 46,000 lawyers and 6,300 paralegals in the Province of Ontario, Canada. The Treasurer is the head of the Law Society. The mandate of the Law Society is to govern the legal profession in the public interest by upholding the independence, integrity and honour of the legal profession for the purpose of advancing the cause of justice and the rule of law.*

Cc:

Mr. Mostafa Pourmohammadi  
Minister of Justice  
Department of Justice  
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran