



ASSOCIATION  
FOR MIDDLE EAST WOMEN'S  
STUDIES

His Excellency Ayatollah Ali Khamenei  
Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran  
c/o H.E. Mr. Gholamali Khoshroo  
Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations:

Your Excellency,

We write on behalf of the Association of Middle East Women's Studies (<http://amews.org/>), an organization of scholars and individuals with an interest in women and gender studies in the context of the Middle East/ North Africa and beyond, including transnational and diasporic communities in Europe as well as North and South America. AMEWS is affiliated with the Middle East Studies Association of North America, Inc. and works with academic networks around the world. Membership in AMEWS is open to anyone with an interest in Middle East/Muslim women and gender studies.

We are writing to call for the immediate release of Niloufar Bayani, a researcher, conservationist, and scholar who has been imprisoned in Iran since January 2018.

Ms. Bayani a McGill University and Columbia University alum, previously worked for UN Environment. On January 24, 2018, Ms. Bayani was arrested alongside eight of her colleagues at the Persian Wildlife Heritage Foundation, while conducting field research. She and her colleagues have been detained in Evin Prison ever since.

Nearly a year after their arrest, on January 30, 2019, Ms. Bayani and her colleagues were read part of a 300-page indictment in a closed-door trial. Ms. Bayani interrupted the reading, objecting that her forced confessions had apparently become the basis for the indictment. Her forced confessions, which she had since retracted, had been made while she was subjected to torture.

We urge you to release Ms. Bayani unconditionally, and to drop any charges that stem from her peaceful exercise of the right to academic freedom; and, pending this, to ensure immediately her well-being while in prison, and to ensure her case is addressed in a manner consistent with internationally recognized standards of due process, fair trial, and imprisonment, in accordance with Iran's obligations under international law.

In solidarity,

The AMEWS Human Rights Task Force

Nancy Gallagher, Chair, University of California, Santa Barbara

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Nadje Al-Ali, Brown University

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**cc: The Honorable Michelle Bachelet**

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

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**His Excellency Ayatollah Ali Khamenei**

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**cc: The Honorable Ayatollah Sadeqh Larijani**

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**cc: The Honorable Mike Pompeo**

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**cc: President Hassan Rouhani**

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**cc: The Honorable Justin Trudeau**

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