



March 8, 2010

Her Excellency Chancellor Angela Merkel
Bundeskanzleramt
Bundeskanzlerin
Willy-Brandt-Straße 1
10557 Berlin

Re: Arrest of Iranian Kurdish dissident and human rights activist

Dear Chancellor,

The Foundation for Democracy in Iran wishes to lodge an official protest with your government for the unwarranted - and apparently arbitrary and illegal - arrest of an Iranian Kurdish dissident, Rahman Haj Ahmadi, the Secretary General of the Free Life Party of Iranian Kurdistan, PJAK.

Mr. Ahmadi has been living in Germany for the past 45 years, and in 1984 he became a German citizen. He was taken from his home on the afternoon of Friday, March 5, 2010, by German government security officers who reportedly showed no warrant for his arrest.

From the facts and indications available to us thus far, it appears that this arrest and detention took place on an unlawful basis, in violation of German law and German Constitutional protections, and also in violation of a number of human rights standards that the German Government has endorsed and is bound to follow under the European Convention on Human Rights.

There was no warrant served on Mr. Ahmadi. The arresting officers broke into his home to make the arrest without announcing their presence or showing a warrant. The reason for the arrest was not made known to him. He was not given access to a lawyer promptly. His house and personal effects were searched without a warrant. He is being held beyond the time that it permitted before charges are filed and legal representation must be provided. There also are considerable questions raised about whether there is any valid legal basis for the arrest in the first place under German and European law. In other words, there are serious due process questions raised by this arbitrary and unexplained arrest and detention of a German citizen.

As a human rights advocacy organization that works with all spectrums of the pro-freedom movement inside Iran, FDI normally seeks to bring to the attention of European and U.S. public

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opinion the rampant violation of human rights inside Iran. The arrest of Mr. Ahmadi presents an unusual case, in that his human rights have been violated in Europe, by a European government.

We understand that the German High Court is refusing to release Mr. Ahmadi on bail. **We urge you in the strongest possible terms to release Mr. Ahmadi immediately.**

Your government has been in the forefront of the discussions among the P5+1 over Iran's nuclear weapons program. This is an opportunity, Madame Chancellor, for Germany to come to fore as a defender of the rights of political dissidents residing on German soil, whose sole crime is to seek to bring about a respect for human rights and secular democracy in their land of origin, Iran.

As you undoubtedly know, a German court last year upheld PJAK's claim that it has no ties to the PKK. Your government is fully aware that Mr. Ahmadi and PJAK have not engaged in violent activities or the promotion of violent activities in Germany. and indeed that PJAK is one of the leading organizations bringing world-wide attention to human rights abuses in Iran as organizers of one of the most effective human rights alert networks dealing with cases involving arbitrary arrests, detention and persecution in that country. It is ironic and inconceivable that a Western Democracy such as Germany would be subjecting him to similar treatment.

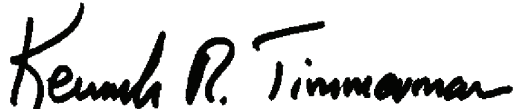
I have interviewed Mr. Ahmadi many times as a reporter, and I have visited PJAK camps in northern Iraq. I can personally attest to the fact that PJAK has no ties to the PKK on the ground in northern Iraq, despite the attempts by the governments of Turkey and Iran to link the two groups.

As Mr. Ahmadi himself will tell you, the primary work of PJAK is to change the culture of Iranian Kurdistan from a tribal, semi-feudal society, into a modern, open, secular society that respects women's rights and understands the value of freedom and personal responsibility. More than 30% of PJAK activists inside Iran are women.

Our biggest fear, Madame Chancellor, is that these actions on the part of your government will encourage the Iranian regime to resume its assassination campaign against Iranian dissidents living in Europe. As we and other human rights organizations have documented, more than 200 Iranian dissidents were murdered by regime hit teams until the "Mykonos" trial in Germany created sufficient pressure on Tehran to get them to suspend these criminal acts.

It would be a tragedy if the actions of your government served to turn back the clock and mark the resumption of Iranian government terror operations on European soil.

Sincerely,



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Co-signed:

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