

Ebrahim Raissi, Head of the Judiciary
c/o Permanent Mission of
Islamic Republic of Iran
to the United Nations
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Your Excellency,

Zeynab Jalalian is an Iranian Kurdish woman serving a life sentence in Khoy Prison, West Azerbaijan province, north-west Iran. She was arrested in March 2008 for her activities in support of the Kurdish struggle for self-determination and her association with the political wing of the Kurdish opposition group, Party for Free Life of Kurdistan (PJAK). She was held in solitary confinement for eight months, without access to a lawyer. She has said that, during this time, intelligence officials subjected her to torture and other ill-treatment including flogging her on the soles of her feet, punching her in the stomach, hitting her head against a wall, and threatening her with rape. She has said that on one occasion her head was hit against a wall so hard that her skull was fractured.

After feeling unwell and suffering from severe shortness of breath, Zeynab Jalalian was transferred on 2 June 2020 to Shahr-e Rey prison's medical clinic and subsequently tested positive for COVID-19. When Zeynab Jalalian asked to be transferred to hospital for medical care, she was told by the prison medical staff that the ministry of intelligence would not permit her to receive medical care in a hospital. Following local and international pressure, on 8 June 2020, Zeynab Jalalian was able to phone her family and said that she had been transferred to hospital. Zeynab Jalalian is still suffering from breathing problems and it is likely that she is suffering from permanent lung damage after she contracted the COVID-19, and this is in addition to the prior medical issues she has had and for which she has not been receiving care for.

I call on you to immediately provide Zeynab Jalalian with the specialized medical care she needs to receive from outside prison. Please implement the decision of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention promptly, and release her immediately and accord her an enforceable right to compensation. I urge you to order a prompt, independent and impartial investigation into her allegations of torture and other ill-treatment, bringing to justice anyone found responsible in a fair trial.

Yours sincerely,

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