

SVENSKA P·E·N

FÖRSVARAR DET FRIA ORDET

GRUNDAT 1922



His Excellency Hassan Rouhani
President of the Islamic Republic of Iran
The Presidency
Pasteur Street, Pasteur Square
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

November 2nd, 2017

Your Excellency,

It is with great concern we, the undersigned representatives of PEN, the world-wide organization working to defend freedom of expression, have learnt that the well-known poet and academic Sedigheh Vasmaghi has been detained in Evin prison in Tehran. On 14 October Sedigheh Vasmaghi travelled from Sweden, where she has been living since 2012, the past three years as a scholar at the University of Uppsala.

When she arrived at Tehran airport she was taken for questioning and subsequently released. A week after, on 21 October she was summoned to the Revolutionary Court. After a hearing, which reportedly lasted only 12 minutes, she was brought to Evin prison.

We fear that the sole reason for Sedigheh Vasmaghi's arbitrary arrest is her literary work and legitimate academic studies about women's right as well as her opposition to the death penalty and stoning as punishments. As a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights Iran has an obligation to allow peaceful freedom of expression.

Furthermore, we are worried about her poor health with severely deteriorated eyesight.

We, the undersigned presidents of PEN in Denmark, Norway and Sweden, call on Your Excellency to ensure the prompt and unconditional release of Sedigheh Vasmaghi.

Pending her release we ask Your Excellency to ensure that Sedigheh Vasmaghi, without delay, has regular and unrestricted access to her family and lawyers of her own choosing; that she has an effective opportunity to challenge the legality of detention and that she, while in prison, receives all necessary medical treatment.

Yours sincerely,

Elisabeth Åsbrink
President Swedish PEN

William Nygaard
President Norwegian PEN

Per Øhrgaard
President Danish Pen

Sirpa Kähkönen
President Finnish PEN