

17 July 2009

His Excellency Ayatollah Mahmud Hashemi Shahroudi
Justice Ministry Bldg.
Pazdah-Khordad (Ark) Sq.
Tehran, Iran

By fax:

Your Excellency:

We are writing to express our grave concern at the detention of our esteemed fellow film maker Maziar Bahari and to request his immediate release. Mr Bahari has been detained since June 21. No charges have been brought against him, and he has not been granted access to a lawyer. As an award-winning documentary film maker he has earned global respect for his documentary films. Mr Bahari has made feature documentaries and reports for international broadcasters and is one of the most impartial and committed film makers in his field. As a journalist, he has been regularly reporting from the Middle East, principally on Iran and Iraq, for the past decade, providing consistently balanced and insightful reports.

We request his immediate release from custody and that he be allowed to resume his work. As a journalist, he was engaged in fulfilling his professional duties, reporting on critical events following the elections. At a minimum he is entitled to the full protection of the laws of Iran, including the right to legal counsel. The Islamic Republic of Iran's domestic laws recognize the right to free expression and Iran was one of the first countries in the world to ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in 1975, which guarantees all individuals the "freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media."

As a group of leading international film makers, who believe in the importance of free expression and who wish to ensure that their fellow professionals are permitted to do their work safely and freely, we ask you to consider this petition and return Mr Bahari to his friends, colleagues and family without further delay.

Sincerely,

Manski Vitali, President of "ARTDOCFEST" and General Producer of the national award of LAVR, RUSSIA
Rashid Masharawi, Filmmaker/Producer, Cinema Production Center, PALESTINE
Ally Derks , Festival Director, IDFA, THE NETHERLANDS
Rudy Buttignol, President and CEO, Knowledge Network Corporation, CANADA
Carmen Guarini, Filmmaker/Producer, Cine OJO, ARGENTINA
Amir Labaki, Film Critic/Festival Director, It's All True International Documentary Film Festival, BRAZIL
Victoria Belopolsky, Film Critic, Art of Film Magazine, RUSSIA
Dimitri Eipides, Director, Thessaloniki Documentary Festival, GREECE
David Wilson, Festival Director, True/False Filmfestival, USA
Cao Guimaraes, Filmmaker, BRAZIL

Dariusz Jablonski, Filmmaker, Apple Film Production, POLAND
Flora Gregory, Head of Documentaries and Features, Al-Jazeera English, UK
Orhan Eskikoy, Filmmaker, TURKEY
Özgur Dögan, Filmmaker, TURKEY
Hany Abu-Assad, Filmmaker, PALESTINE
Jane Balfour, Managing Director, Sales Agent, Jane Balfour Services, UK
Nishtha Jain, Filmmaker, INDIA
Erik Gandini, Filmmaker, SWEDEN
Kim Longinotto, Filmmaker, UK
Pelin Esmer, Filmmaker, TURKEY
Sevgi Ortaç, Artist, TURKEY
Wim Wenders, Filmmaker/Producer, GERMANY
Diane Weyermann, Executive Vice President, Documentary Production, Participant Media, USA
Don Edkins, Producer, Day Zero Films, Documentary Filmmakers Association, SOUTH AFRICA
Claire Aguilar, Vice President of Programming, ITVS, USA
Karina Maristany Espinasa, Journalist, VENEZUELA
Laura Michalchyshyn, President/General Manager, Planet Green at Discovery Channel, USA
Isabel Arrate Fernandez, Coordinator, Jan Vrijman Fund, THE NETHERLANDS
Edward Lachman, Cinematographer, ASC, USA
Nick Fraser, Editor, BBC Storyville, UK
Heddy Honigmann, Member of de DDG (Dutch Director's Guild), Filmmaker, THE NETHERLANDS
Cara Mertes, Director Documentary Film Program, Sundance Institute, USA
Jonathan Stack, President, Filmmaker, Highest Common Denominator Media Group, USA
Mazdak Taebi, Filmmaker, USA
Makoto Sasa, Filmmaker/Producer, Imakoko Media, Inc, USA
Renzo Martens, Artist, THE NETHERLANDS
Ulrich Seidl, Filmmaker, Ulrich Seidl Film Produktion GmbH, AUSTRIA
Tevfik Baser, Director, TURKEY
Ben Nguyen, Program Acquisitions - Documentary and Factual, SBS, AUSTRALIA
Montaser Marai, Journalist & Filmmaker, Aljazeera Network, QATAR
Alexey Fedorchenko, Filmmaker, February 29, RUSSIA
Catherine Olsen, Executive Producer – Documentaries, CBC Newsworld, CANADA
Aleksander Rastorguev, Filmmaker, Studio "KINO", RUSSIA
Kostomarov Pavel, Filmmaker, Studio "KINOKO", RUSSIA
Adriek Van Nieuwenhuijzen, Head of Industry Office, IDFA, THE NETHERLANDS
Heather Croall, Director, Sheffield International Documentary Festival, UK
Sandra den Hamer, Director, Film Museum Netherlands, THE NETHERLANDS
Simon Field, Producer, UK
Ikka Vehkalahti, Commissioning Editor, YLE, FINLAND
Todd Solondz, Filmmaker, USA
Jess Search, Chief Executive, Brit Doc, UK
Yves Jeanneau, Director, Sunny Side of the Doc, FRANCE
Paola Barreto-Leblanc, Filmmaker, BRAZIL
Rutger Wolfson, Director, International Film Festival Rotterdam, THE NETHERLANDS
Pieter van Huystee, Producer, Pieter van Huystee Film, THE NETHERLANDS
Sergey Dvortsevov, Filmmaker, RUSSIA
John Petrizzelli, Filmmaker, VENEZUELA
Jörgen Leth, Filmmaker, DENMARK
Hans Robert Eisenhauer, Commissioning Editor, ZDF/ARTE, GERMANY
Robbie Müller, Cinematographer, THE NETHERLANDS
Pawel Lozinski, Filmmaker, POLAND

