

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

July 14, 2016

H.E. Mr. Gholamali Khoshroo
Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations
622 Third Avenue, 34th Floor
New York, NY 10017

Dear Ambassador Khoshroo:

We write to express our concerns about the imprisonment of Mohammad Hossein Rafiee Fanood, a 71-year-old retired professor of chemistry, who is serving a six-year sentence in Iran for peacefully expressing his political views. This issue was brought to our attention by students from Roger Williams University in Bristol, Rhode Island.

On June 16, 2015, Professor Rafiee was unlawfully arrested without warrant and imprisoned for “issuing statements against the state’s security,” a charge he faced for supporting nuclear negotiations between the Islamic Republic and the P5+1 nations. For several years, Professor Rafiee had been a vocal proponent of a negotiated and peaceful solution that would respect Iran’s sovereign rights while building confidence in the international community. Just such an arrangement came to pass when the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action was agreed to in July 2015, less than one month after Professor Rafiee’s arrest.

Among other pledges, the parties to the JCPOA reaffirmed their commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations as set out in the UN Charter. This document commits all member states to “universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all.” Iran is also a party to the UN’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which protect the peaceful exercise of freedom of speech and freedom of association. Professor Rafiee’s arrest and continued imprisonment cast doubt on the credibility of these commitments.

Article 110 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic grants the Supreme Leader the power to reduce or pardon criminal sentences on the recommendation of judicial officials. We noted with interest Ayatollah Khamenei’s March 29, 2016, decision to grant clemency on compassionate grounds to several hundred prisoners – including elderly people who had already served a significant portion of their sentences – and we ask your government to consider Professor Rafiee’s case in a similar light. Professor Rafiee is an elderly scholar who suffers from ill health, and his ailments are exacerbated by the conditions of his confinement. He poses no threat to the security of the state. We respectfully urge your government to lift any charges or convictions related to Professor Rafiee’s peaceful exercise of protected human rights, to ensure his case is

addressed in a manner consistent with international standards of due process, and in the interim, to attend to his well-being while in custody.

Thank you for your consideration of and attention to this matter.


Sincerely,



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



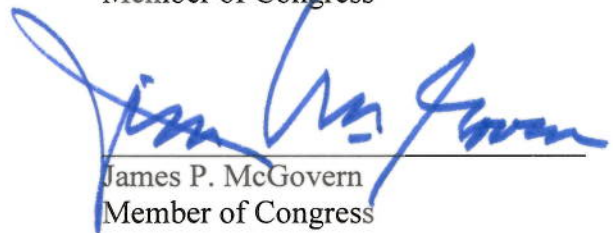
Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



James R. Langevin
Member of Congress



David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Copy for:

Interests Section of the Islamic Republic of Iran
Embassy of Pakistan
1250 23rd Street NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20037

H.E. Mr. Mohsen Naziri Asl
Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Office in Geneva
Chemin du Petit-Sacconex 28
1209 Geneva, Switzerland