



**LOBBY EUROPEEN DES FEMMES
EUROPEAN WOMEN'S LOBBY**

Brussels, 21 August 2008

His Excellency
Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi
Head of the Judiciary
C/o Ministry of Justice
Park-e Shahr
Teheran
Islamic Republic of Iran

Your Excellency,

I am writing to you on behalf of the European Women's Lobby (EWL), the largest coalition of women's associations in the European Union, representing over 2000 organisations, to express our serious concern about the situation of Kobra Najjar, who is facing execution by stoning as punishment for adultery, after having been forced by her husband to enter into prostitution. We urge you to ensure the immediate release of Kobra Najjar.

While appreciating developments such as the conversion of sentences of stoning into imprisonment, we are very concerned about the remaining threat of imposing stoning on Kobra Najjar and others who have been sentenced to stoning because of adultery.

We recall that Iran's own constitution provides for equality before the law, and that Iran is a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which provides for a clear prohibition of torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and punishment. It also limits the imposition of the death penalty "only for the most serious crimes." No criminal or other act justifies inhuman punishments such as stoning. We call on you to prohibit all cruel, inhuman and degrading punishments in accordance with Iran's obligations under ICCPR and to end the use of the death penalty for adultery.

We further urge you to convert all stoning sentences into time-limited imprisonment sentences, to remove stoning from the Penal Code of Iran, and to initiate a comprehensive review of the Civil and Penal Codes of Iran to remove all provisions that discriminate and perpetuate discrimination against women, including those regarding adultery.

We trust that you will do your utmost to ensure the release of Kobra Najjar. We urge your government to introduce changes in the Iranian legislation, corresponding to international legal standards and to constitutional obligations, to guarantee equality before the law.

Sincerely yours,

Kirsti Kolthoff
President of the European Women's Lobby

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