

Your Excellency;

I am writing to express my grave concern on a journalist Hengameh Shahidi who is in a critical condition in Tehran's Evin prison. She has been on hunger strike for 29 days in protest at her arrest on 9 March. She has a heart condition and is refusing her medication. She is being held in solitary confinement and has been denied access to a lawyer.

I should be calling on the Iranian authorities to release Hengameh Shahidi immediately and unconditionally, as she appears to be held solely for the peaceful exercise of her rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly. I am also calling on them to ensure, pending her release, that she has access to adequate specialized medical care and to a qualified health professional who can provide health care in compliance with medical ethics, including the principles of confidentiality, autonomy and informed consent. The authorities should also ensure, pending her release, that she is protected from any reprisals for her hunger strike, including prolonged solitary confinement, which constitutes cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and may amount to torture.

Your attention on this matter would be highly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,