

Head of Judiciary Ebrahimi Raisi
c/o Permanent Mission of Iran to the UN
Chemin du Petit-Saconnex 28
1209 Geneva, Switzerland

Dear Mr Raisi,

Women's rights defender Saba Kordafshari was unjustly sentenced to 24 years in prison by Branch 26 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran on 27 August 2019 for her peaceful human rights work, including campaigning against Iran's discriminatory and abusive forced veiling laws and communicating about human rights violations. The 24-year sentence consists of 15 years for "inciting and facilitating corruption and prostitution" through promoting "unveiling", seven and a half years for "gathering and colluding to commit crimes against national security" and one and a half years for "spreading propaganda against the system". She is currently awaiting the outcome of her appeal. If her conviction and sentence are upheld, Saba Kordafshari would be required to serve 15 years of her prison sentence, as per Iran's sentencing guidelines.

Saba Kordafshari's trial was grossly unfair. She was not allowed to meet with her lawyer for over two months after her arrest on 1 June 2019. She was also barred from adequately preparing her defence as her lawyer was not permitted to review the court file against her until the day of the trial, 19 August 2019, and was informed of the trial date with just one day's notice. Her lawyer objected that her court file was incomplete and asked for the rest of the documents but was told by the authorities that it was "none of [his] business". On the day of the trial, Saba Kordafshari was taken handcuffed and blindfolded to court. She later told her family that there were cameras in the courtroom during the trial and that her interrogator and members of the Revolutionary Guards were present. She said that the judge denied her request to be released on bail.

I urge you to release Saba Kordafshari immediately and unconditionally as she is a prisoner of conscience, jailed solely for her human rights work. Pending her release, please ensure that she has regular contact with a lawyer of her choosing. I also urge you to stop criminalizing the work of women's rights defenders and abolish discriminatory forced veiling laws.

Yours sincerely,