

To:

Boris Johnson, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom
Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Federal Republic of Germany
Leonore Gewessler, Minister for Climate Action, Republic of Austria
Emmanuel Macron, President of the Republic of France
Stefan Löfven, Prime Minister of Sweden

Dear Leader,

Letter from the families of hostages taken by the Islamic Republic of Iran for diplomatic leverage

As a delegate to the COP26 conference in Glasgow you will certainly be aware of the importance of establishing global policies to address the developing emergency of climate change. In order to be effective all countries must commit to them seriously and without reservation as responsible members of the global community.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is also participating in this conference and will be working alongside leaders from many Countries including the USA, UK, France, Germany, Austria, Sweden and Canada. Unfortunately, there is at least one hostage from each of these Countries currently being held by Iran solely to be used for political leverage. Each victim has been held for long periods in solitary confinement without access to lawyers and convicted of false charges during sham trials.

Iran has used hostage diplomacy for several decades and weaponizes our family members as collateral in diplomatic negotiations. This practice is not just a humanitarian scandal but also a threat to global diplomacy.

In response we respectfully request the global community to speak out to support the universal human rights of all the victims of this practice by:

1. Recognising our family members formally as hostages
2. Supporting the embedding into the current JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action) negotiations with Iran clear and effective mechanisms that discourage the taking of any new hostages
3. Ensuring that our family members are unconditionally released as a prior and completely separate transaction from the JCPOA

With kind regards,

*Richard Ratcliffe, husband of British-Iranian **Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe**, Hostage since 2016*
*Mariam Claren, daughter of German-Iranian **Nahid Taghavi**, Hostage since 2020*
*Sherry Izadi, wife of British-Iranian **Anoosheh Ashoori**, Hostage since 2017*
*Family of Austrian-Iranian **Dr. Massud Mossaheb**, Hostage since 2019*
*Harika Ghaderi, wife of Austrian-Iranian **Kamran Ghaderi**, Hostage since 2016*
*Gazelle Sharmahd, daughter of German-Iranian **Jamshid Sharmahd**, Hostage since 2020*
*Family of French **Benjamin Brière**, Hostage since 2020*
*Vida Mehrannia, wife of Swedish-Iranian **Ahmad Reza Djalali**, Hostage since April 2016*

Quotes:

Mariam Claren:

"My mother spent 194 days in solitary confinement and was interrogated 1,000 hours without legal access. She caught COVID-19 in Evin prison, like almost all women in the wing, they were all released for medical furlough – only the dual national, my mother Nahid Taghavi was not. The German Government knows very well what is going on – they must do more to secure her release."

Sherry Izadi:

"As private citizens, we can neither change Iran's hostage diplomacy, nor force the UK government to honour its debt and commitment. This is a job for the politicians and for the international community. We can only demand justice and bring light to the ordeal our loved one has been facing for far too long. We ask world leaders to put an end to this cruel political blame-game, which has achieved nothing other than pain and suffering. We can no longer witness our innocent dad/husband wasting away 10 precious years of his life in Evin."

Family of Dr. Massud Mossaheb:

"Dr. Massud Mossaheb has been arbitrarily detained in Iran since January 2019 and sentenced to 10 years in prison for false espionage charges in an unfair trial. 74 years old, suffering from chronic diseases that are not treated adequately, he is now enduring asthma and lung damage, due to his Covid infection in December 2020 in Evin prison."

Richard Ratcliffe:

"Monday marks the 16th day of my hunger strike in protest at the UK's approach to Nazanin's case, and its failure to deal with Iran's hostage taking. But Iran's leaders cannot just waltz in to the UK for COP26 as though it is normal to hold hostages. It is not a normal thing for governments to do, and the Iranian delegation needs to walk in shame."

Vida Mehrannia:

"Ahmad Reza Djalali is an Iranian-Swedish disaster medicine doctor, lecturer and researcher. He has worked in several universities in Europe, among which Karolinska University of Sweden, Università degli Studi del Piemonte Orientale of Italy, and Vrije Universiteit Brussel of Belgium. Dr. Djalali was arrested in April 2016 in Iran and sentenced to death on the charges of espionage. He has been supported by Nobel laureates, EU parliament and thousands of academicians, worldwide. As the report of the UN-HR council states, he has been repeatedly kept in solitary confinement, tortured and threatened during the period of his arrest. His situation can only be described as torture. Iran's regime addresses a determined case from Belgium to release Djalali."