

To Mr. Josep Borrell Fontelles

High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

Europe, September 6th, 2022

Your Excellency,

Negotiations with Iran on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) have been taking place for months. Meanwhile, several European citizens are being held hostage by the Islamic Republic of Iran. We, the families of French, Swedish, German, and Austrian citizens, who have been illegally detained by the Iranian regime, are outraged that the European Union seems to be ignoring these crimes.

Swedish citizen Ahmadreza Djalali has been unjustly detained for 6 years and is living under the constant threat of execution. German citizen Jamshid Sharmahd has been kidnapped and unjustly detained for over 2 years. Mr. Sharmahd has spent more than 760 days in complete isolation and might face a death sentence. Austrian citizen Kamran Ghaderi has been unjustly detained for close to 7 years. Mr. Ghaderi is in danger of developing cancer from an untreated tumor and the lack of medical care. French citizen Benjamin Brière has been unjustly detained for 2 years without any respect for human rights or the chance of due process.

These European citizens have been subjected to torture, grossly unfair trials based on fabricated charges, without access to legal counsel or proper medical care. Some of them have pre-existing medical conditions and their health is deteriorating as we speak. All of them are held hostage by a dictatorial regime that does not even abide by the minimum standard of international legal and human rights.

All of them wonder, whether EU officials have forgotten them and how much longer they will have to endure this ordeal. We sadly want to echo these questions and kindly ask you to clarify your stance on the fate of our beloved ones: Will their release be prioritized? Will the European Union prioritize the defense of its values, the defense of human rights, over economic and other interests?

The importance of fundamental common values such as freedom, democracy, equality and the maintenance of individual human rights is the centerpiece of the European legal system and tradition. Indeed, the *European Convention on Human Rights* stresses the obligation of European countries to respect human rights and do all within their power to ensure the safety of Europeans no matter where in the world they may be. Iran is no exception. However, the Islamic Republic of Iran has trampled the fundamental rights of our loved ones and families.

All EU countries are party to the *International Convention Against the Taking of Hostages*, yet there has been no clear and loud condemnation of the hostages of EU countries. After having spent years imprisoned in a country where officials have no minimum respect for justice, law and humanity, the hostages' hopes have vanished, and they suffer in ways unimaginable. Their lives are being wasted every second that passes.

For hundreds or thousands of days, have we been waiting for our loved ones to return home. We are deeply impacted by the damages created by Iran's government to our families. We are calling on you, your Excellency, to prioritize the observance of human rights and the lives of your citizens.

We are looking forward to your actions and your reply

Blandine Brière, sister of French citizen Benjamin Brière

Harika Ghaderi, wife of Austrian citizen Kamran Ghaderi

Vida Mehrannia, wife of Swedish citizen Ahmadreza Djalali

Gazelle Sharmahd, daughter of German citizen Jamshid Sharmahd