

Head of the Judiciary Ebrahim Raisi
C/o Permanent Mission of Iran to the UN
Chemin du Petit-Saconnex 28
1209 GENEVE, ZWITSERLAND

Noordwijk, the Netherlands, April 2019

Dear Mr. Ebrahim Raisi,

Eight conservationists who have been detained in Tehran's Evin prison since their arrests in late January 2018 are awaiting a court verdict following a grossly unfair trial. Their names are Niloufar Bayani, Houman Jowkar, Morad Tahbaz, Taher Ghadirian, Amirhossein Khaleghi, Sepideh Kashani, Abdolreza Kouhpayeh and Sam Rajabi. Without providing any evidence, the authorities have accused them of using scientific and environmental projects as a cover to collect classified military information. The charges against the scientists, who are linked to the Persian Wildlife Heritage Foundation, stem from their research activities on endangered species in Iran. The unfair trial, held before Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court, relied almost entirely on "confessions" allegedly made under torture and later retracted, as the main evidence against them.

I urge you to release all eight conservationists immediately and unconditionally, as they are detained solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedoms of expression, association and assembly. Please ensure that, pending their release, they are protected from torture and other ill-treatment and are given regular access to their families and lawyers of their own choosing.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am kindly awaiting your reply.

Yours sincerely,