

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



H.E. Majid Takht Ravanchi  
Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran  
622 Third Avenue, 34<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10017

Dear Ambassador Ravanchi,

I am writing to express my concern over the treatment of LGBTI people in Iran. In 2022, Iran’s judiciary issued death sentences for LGBTI rights defender **Zahra Sedighi-Hamadani** (known as Sareh) and another woman **Elham Choubdar** citing “corruption on earth” as a charge against them. According to Amnesty International, these convictions and sentences are based on discriminatory treatment of the women’s real or perceived sexual orientation and/or gender identity and, in the case of Zahra Sedighi-Hamadani, her peaceful LGBTI rights activism.

After her arrest, Zahra Sedighi-Hamadani was held in solitary confinement, where a Revolutionary Guard agent subjected her to intense interrogations accompanied by insults directed at her identity and appearance. He also threatened to execute or otherwise harm her and take away the custody of her two young children. In July 2022, state media aired a homophobic video portraying Zahra Sedighi-Hamadani as a “criminal” for publishing online content that “promoted homosexuality” and “challenged the stigma around religiously forbidden sexual relations.” The video linked Zahra Sedighi-Hamadani’s peaceful online LGBTI rights activism to unfounded accusations of “gambling” and “smuggling women and girls from Iran to Erbil [Iraq]” in a bid to vilify her.

While the Supreme Court has overturned the convictions and death sentences of both women, they face additional legal proceedings which could result in the imposition of harsh sentences.

Under Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, everyone has “the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.” By prosecuting LGBTI people, the Iranian government violates this essential human right.

I urge you to drop all charges against Zahra Sedighi-Hamadani and Elham Choubdar. Moreover, I ask you to respect and protect the rights of all LGBTI people in Iran.

Yours sincerely,

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Address: \_\_\_\_\_