



Unitatem et Libertas

Association of Iranian Human Rights & Allies

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UNHCR Turkey
Azizye, Enis Behic
Koryurek Sk. No 15, 06690
Cankaya / Ankara

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To Whom it may concern

We are writing to express our grave concern over the planned deportation of Ms. Shilan Mirzaei, an Iranian human rights activist and refugee in Turkey, who is facing imminent danger of being forcibly returned to Iran.

Ms. Mirzaei is a registered asylum seeker under the international protection of UNHCR in Turkey. She fled Iran in 2022 after being persecuted for her peaceful activities in defense of human rights and democracy. She has been involved in various campaigns and protests against the Iranian regime's violations of civil and political rights, especially the rights of women, ethnic minorities, and prisoners of conscience.

According to reliable sources, Ms. Mirzaei was arrested by Turkish authorities on October 24, 2023, and transferred to the Bandirma deportation camp in northern Turkey, where she remains detained. She was informed by the camp officers that the Iranian embassy had formally requested her extradition back to Iran, where she would face torture, imprisonment, and possibly execution.

Ms. Mirzaei has refused to sign any deportation or repatriation documents, and has appealed to UNHCR for urgent intervention and protection. However, she has not received any response or assistance from UNHCR so far. She fears that she could be deported at any moment without due process or access to legal counsel.

We urge UNHCR to take immediate action to prevent the deportation of Ms. Mirzaei and to ensure her safety and security in Turkey. I also request UNHCR to expedite her resettlement process to a third country where she can enjoy her rights as a refugee and continue her peaceful activism.

The deportation of Ms. Mirzaei would be a flagrant violation of the principle of non-refoulement, which prohibits the forcible return of refugees or asylum seekers to a country where they face persecution or serious harm. It would also contravene Turkey's obligations under the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, as well as the European Convention on Human Rights and other international human rights instruments.

We appeal to UNHCR to uphold its mandate and responsibility to protect refugees and asylum seekers in Turkey, especially those who are at risk of being deported to Iran or other countries with poor human rights records. I also call on UNHCR to work with the Turkish government and civil society to improve the conditions and prospects of refugees and asylum seekers in Turkey, who number at least 3.9 million according to UNHCR's own statistics¹.

We appreciate your attention and action on this urgent matter.

Sincerely,
Dr Nazak Tavakoli
Mr Afshin Payravi
Directors of Association Of Iranian Human Rights And Allies