

MEDIA STATEMENT

IAS CALLS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF IRANIAN CLINICIANS

29 July 2008 (Mexico City, Mexico) – The International AIDS Society (IAS) today expressed grave concern over the detention without charges of Doctors Kamiar Alaei and Arash Alaei, two internationally respected Iranian physicians, since their arrest by security forces at the end of June 2008.

IAS President, Pedro Cahn, called on the Islamic Republic of Iran to disclose the whereabouts of the two detained medical professionals, provide them access to lawyers and family, and either charge or release them immediately.

Dr. Kamiar Alaei is a doctoral candidate at the SUNY Albany School of Public Health, and Dr. Arash Alaei is a former Director of the International Education and Research Cooperation of the Iranian National Research Institute of Tuberculosis and Lung Disease.

Since 1986, the Alaei brothers have sought to integrate prevention and care of HIV/AIDS, sexually-transmitted infections and drug-related harm reduction into Iran's national health care system.

Their HIV/AIDS programs focused on harm reduction for injecting drug users have been widely acclaimed internationally. In addition to their work in Iran, the Alaei brothers have held training courses for Afghan and Tajik medical workers and have encouraged regional cooperation among 12 Middle Eastern and Central Asian countries.

In these activities, Iran's programs proved to be inspiring role models of close work with government and religious leaders to ensure support for education campaigns on HIV transmission and for HIV and harm reduction programs in prisons. Neither of the men is known to have any involvement in political activities.

They were to have presented a case study showcasing HIV/AIDS and harm reduction in the Islamic Republic of Iran on Thursday, August 7, 2008, at the 17th International AIDS Conference (AIDS2008) in Mexico City. AIDS2008 is the paramount gathering of all disciplines in HIV/AIDS and the premier global conference on any health/development issue held every two years.

As the world's leading independent association of HIV professionals, with more than 10,000 members from 172 countries and an independent voice in the global response to AIDS, the IAS joins global health professionals, HIV advocates and concerned individuals in asking for their immediate release.

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