

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**International AIDS Society and amfAR, The Foundation for AIDS Research,
to Honor Pioneering Iranian Doctors Arash Alaei and Kamiar Alaei
with Inaugural Elizabeth Taylor Award**

*Brothers to Receive Award from Actress Sharon Stone at Opening Session of
XIX International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2012)*

20 July 2012 (Washington, DC) –Dr. Arash Alaei and Dr. Kamiar Alaei sat in prison during the last International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2010) as supporters held signs urging their release. On Sunday, 22 July, the brothers will stand before the assembled AIDS 2012 delegates to accept the inaugural *Elizabeth Taylor Award in Recognition of Efforts to Advocate for Human Rights in the field of HIV* to honor their efforts to put issues of drug use and HIV on Iran’s national health care agenda and their engagement in human rights issues after their release from prison.

The Elizabeth Taylor Award is presented by amfAR, The Foundation for AIDS Research and the International AIDS Society (IAS) in honor of amfAR’s Founding International Chairman Dame Elizabeth Taylor, a highly visible, vocal and relentless champion of the human rights of all people living with or affected by HIV. Sharon Stone, amfAR’s Global Fundraising Chairman, will present the award during the cultural programme of the AIDS 2012 Opening Session on Sunday, 22 July, at 18:00 at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Washington, D.C.



“I’m immensely proud that my grandmother’s advocacy on behalf of all people affected by HIV/AIDS is being given a lasting tribute by having this worthy award named in her honor. I’m doubly proud that the award’s first recipients, Drs. Kamiar and Arash Alaei, so admirably personify the courage and compassion that my grandmother challenged people to find in themselves when confronting this disease,” said Taylor’s grandson, Quinn Tivey.

Kamiar Alaei was released from prison in the fall of 2010 and attended the 6th IAS Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention in July 2011 to speak out for this brother’s release. Arash Alaei was released in August 2011.

“In advocating for the health and human rights of Iranians living with and at risk for HIV, the Alaei brothers demonstrated tremendous courage and fortitude,” said Kenneth Cole, Chairman of the Board of amfAR. “Their example should inspire all of us to rededicate ourselves to advocate for human rights and against stigma and discrimination as a core component of the AIDS effort, just as Elizabeth Taylor did in the very early days of HIV.”

“Many of us attending AIDS 2012 followed the Alaei brothers’ struggle and campaigned for their release, so it is a great honor and pleasure to welcome them back to the International AIDS

Conference as delegates and colleagues,” said Elly Katabira, President of the IAS. “As an association of health professionals working in HIV, the IAS is especially proud to recognize our peers for their unwavering commitment to the human rights and dignity of those they serve.”

The brothers were actively involved in AIDS research in Iran and, along with other clinicians and advocates, helped make the country a leader in prevention of HIV and treatment for people living with HIV, including enlightened policies on needle exchange and one of the region’s best prison programmes. The doctors shared their knowledge by holding training workshops for Afghan and Tajik health professionals.

At the time of their arrest, Kamiar was studying for his doctorate in public health at the State University of New York (SUNY) at Albany School of Public Health, and both doctors were working with organizations in New York to share ideas on HIV and harm reduction best practices. Iranian authorities detained them in June 2008 without cause and without charges or a trial. After a one-day, closed-door trial, they were convicted on January 19, 2009 and sentenced under charges of being in “communications with an enemy government” and “seeking to overthrow the Iranian government under article 508 of Iran’s Islamic Penal Code”. Kamiar was sentenced to three years in prison and Arash was sentenced to six years. Both were freed early following highly visibly international efforts.

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About amfAR, The Foundation for AIDS Research:

amfAR, The Foundation for AIDS Research, is one of the world’s leading nonprofit organizations dedicated to the support of AIDS research, HIV prevention, treatment education, and the advocacy of sound AIDS-related public policy. Since 1985, amfAR has invested more than \$340 million in its programs and has awarded grants to more than 2,000 research teams worldwide.

About the IAS:

The International AIDS Society (IAS) is the world’s leading independent association of HIV professionals, with over 16,000 members from more than 196 countries working at all levels of the global response to AIDS. Our members include researchers from all disciplines, clinicians, public health and community practitioners on the frontlines of the epidemic, as well as policy and programme planners. The IAS is the custodian of the biennial International AIDS Conference, which will be held in Washington, D.C., in July 2012, and lead organizer of the IAS Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention.

About Elizabeth Taylor:

In 1985, Elizabeth Taylor joined with Dr. Mathilde Krim and a small group of physicians and scientists to form the American Foundation for AIDS Research (amfAR). As amfAR’s International Founding Chair, she used her celebrity to take the issue of HIV/AIDS to the mainstream media. In October 1991, Taylor established The Elizabeth Taylor AIDS Foundation (ETAF). With a focus on direct services for people living with HIV/AIDS, ETAF provides funding to AIDS service organizations throughout the world to assist those living with HIV/AIDS. During her lifetime, Elizabeth Taylor’s advocacy efforts served to raise much-needed funds and

awareness of the AIDS pandemic. Her legacy of humanitarian service and commitment to fighting HIV/AIDS continues through the work of The Elizabeth Taylor AIDS Foundation.
www.ElizabethTaylorAIDSFoundation.org.

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