



National Association of Women Lawyers®

The voice of women in the law™

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September 18, 2006

High Commissioner for Human Rights
Louise Arbour
UNOG-OHCHR
1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

Re: Dr. Shivin Ebadi and the Center for the Defense of Human Rights

Honorable High Commissioner Arbour:

I am writing to you on behalf of the National Association of Women Lawyers (NAWL), an association of women lawyers in the United States of America, with ECOSOC consultative status. We are writing to urge you to use your good offices to persuade the government of Iran to reverse its decision to close the Center for the Defense of Human Rights, lead by the distinguished Nobel Laureate, Dr Shivin Ebadi. As you probably already know, the government allegedly is closing the Center because it is operating without a permit, yet the Center is unable to obtain a permit due to governmental inaction. The work of the Center in protecting human rights of Iranian citizens is invaluable and should, in our opinion, be strongly supported by the United Nations, as a model for human rights advocacy. We are also most concerned about threats of criminal prosecution directed at Dr. Ebadi and her colleagues as they continue their important work.

We therefore urge your active support and prompt intervention.

Most respectfully,


Eva Herzer

Co-Chair International Law Committee