



NEWS RELEASE

INTERNATIONAL BAR ASSOCIATION the global voice of the legal profession

[For immediate release: Tuesday, 18 August 2009]

IBAHRI concerned at lack of legality of mass trials in Iran

The **International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute** (IBAHRI) is gravely concerned at the lack of legality of the mass trials that commenced on 1 August 2009 of over 100 individuals, many of whom were critics of the recent presidential elections in Iran.

The IBAHRI is concerned by reports that lawyers representing defendants have been denied access to their clients, to prosecution case documents and to knowledge of the dates of trials, as well as to the courtrooms where trials are being held. In addition, the IBAHRI has received reports that lawyers who speak out against the trials are likely to face prosecution themselves.

Martin Šolc, Co-Chair of the IBAHRI, said: *'These trials are a direct violation of both Iran's international obligations as well as its own constitution. They fail to meet any minimum fair trial standards. Lawyers must be able to defend their clients free from persecution or fear of prosecution. It is imperative for lawyers to have full access to their clients, full access to case materials and the right to represent their client at trial.'*

'Any trials that take place in Iran must ensure defendants are guaranteed their fundamental rights as enshrined in the Iranian Constitution and in international law,' said Justice Richard Goldstone, Co-Chair of the IBAHRI. *'The IBAHRI urges the Iranian authorities to put an end to the trials and release those who have been imprisoned arbitrarily without charge of a specific criminal offence.'*

ENDS

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About the International Bar Association **the global voice of the legal profession**

The **International Bar Association** (IBA), established in 1947, is the world's leading organisation of international legal practitioners, bar associations and law societies. Its membership includes over 30,000 lawyers and nearly 200 bar associations and law societies spanning every continent. The IBA influences the development of international law reform and shapes the future of the legal profession throughout the world.

The IBA's administrative office is in London; regional offices are located in São Paulo, Brazil and Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Grouped into two divisions – the **Legal Practice Division** and the **Public and Professional Interest Division** – the IBA offers its members access to leading experts and up-to-date information across all areas of legal practice and professional interest. Through a network of specialised committees, the IBA enables an exchange of information and opinions regarding laws, practices and professional responsibilities pertaining to the practice of law globally. High-quality publications and world-class conferences further provide unrivalled professional development and networking opportunities for legal practitioners and professional associates.

The IBA's **Bar Issues Commission** provides a forum for IBA member bar associations and law societies to discuss any matter relating to law at an international level.

The IBA's **Human Rights Institute** works to promote, protect and enforce human rights under a just Rule of Law, and to preserve the independence of the judiciary and the legal profession worldwide.

In partnership with the **Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa**, the IBA created the **Southern Africa Litigation Centre**, based in Johannesburg, South Africa, to promote human

rights and the Rule of Law in Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The IBA was instrumental in establishing the **International Legal Assistance Consortium** in Stockholm, Sweden. This global consortium of non-governmental organisations provides technical legal assistance to post-conflict countries.

Through a grant-funded project, the IBA also maintains an office in The Hague which manages the IBA's **International Criminal Court (ICC) Monitoring and Outreach Programme**. This office follows the work and proceedings of the ICC, focusing primarily on the fair trial rights of the accused and the manner in which the Rome Statute and other legal documents of the Court are implemented as well as promoting greater understanding of the work of the Court among the IBA membership network worldwide. It works in partnership with bar associations, lawyers and civil society organisations disseminating information and promoting debate on the ICC in different jurisdictions across the globe. The programme also produces a dynamic news magazine about the ICC called **Equality of Arms Review** or EQ which is available on the IBA website.

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