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Farzad KAMANGAR,

Let my heart keep beating !

- Archives - Archives Générales 2006 - 2022 - 2009 - Février 2009 No. 13 - International - Iran -

Date de mise en ligne : jeudi 29 janvier 2009

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Farzad Kamangar is a 33-year-old teacher, human rights activist and journalist. He was a teacher in rural areas of Iranian Kurdistan. Prior to his arrest in August 2006, he taught in the town of Kamyaran, Kurdistan. He has been subjected to the most brutal physical and emotional tortures since his arrest. Farzad Kamangar has been accused of "endangering national security" and "belligerence against God", prefabricated charges the Islamic regime in Iran brings wholesale against almost all rights activists. So far, sixteen members of the Kamangar's extended family have been executed by the regime for their political activities. Farzad Kamangar was sentenced to death by hanging on February 2008 after a sham trial. The following is his letter from death row to the clergyman, Qolaam-Hosyn Ezhei, Islamic regime's Minister of Intelligence. It has been translated and distributed by International Committee Against Executions.

January 5, 2008

I have been in prison for many months now. Prison was supposed to crush my will, my love and my humanity. It was supposed to tame me. I have been detained in a ward with walls as tall as history, continuing to eternity itself. They were supposed to separate me from my beloved people, from the children of my land. But I travelled through the tiny window of my cell to far away places everyday and felt myself amongst them and like them. They, in turn, would see the reflection of their grievances imprisoned in me. Prison thus deepened our bonds. The darkness of prison was supposed to erase the very meaning of the sun and light from my mind, but I have witnessed the growth of pansies in the darkness and silence. Prison was supposed to force my mind to consign time and its value to oblivion. I have, however, relived the moments outside prison, and given birth to a new "me" in order to choose a new path.

I have also, like prisoners before me, wholeheartedly embraced every degradation, insult and cruelty that came my way, hoping to be the last person of a tormented generation who has had to endure the darkness of imprisonment in the fervent hope of seeing a new dawn.

One day, I was labeled "belligerent" for having waged war against their "God." The noose of justice was thus woven, ready to take my life. And since that day I have been unwillingly awaiting my execution.

But I have decided, with all my love for my fellow human beings, that if I am to lose my life, let all my organs go to those who may find life receiving them. And let my heart, with all the love and passion in it, be donated to a child. It makes no difference where s/he might be : on the banks of the Kaaroon, slopes of Mount Sabalaan, fringes of the Eastern Desert ; or to a child that beholds the sun rise from the Zagros Mountains. All I want is that my rebellious, restive heart may keep beating in the chest of a child who would, more rebelliously than I, reveal his/her childhood wishes to the moon and the stars, and hold them

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witness so that s/he may not betray them later as an adult. All I want is that my heart may keep beating in the chest of one who loses patience over the children who go to bed hungry ; one that would keep the memory of Haamed – my sixteen-year-old student – alive in my heart who wrote, "even my smallest wish won't come true in this life," and hanged himself.

Let my heart keep beating in someone's chest, no matter what language s/he might speak. All I want is for her/him to be the child of a worker with calloused hands whose coarseness would keep the sparks of rage against inequalities alive. Let my heart keep beating in the chest of a child who may be a rural teacher in a not-so-distant future, whom the children would greet every morning with their delightful smiles, and with whom they would share all their joys and games. Then the children might not know the meaning of such words as poverty and hunger, and the terms "prison," "torture," "oppression" and "inequality" might be devoid of all meaning in their world. Let my heart keep beating in a tiny corner of your immense world. Only be careful with it, for it is the heart of a person full of untold stories of the people of his land, whose history abounds in pain and suffering. Let my heart keep beating in the chest of a child so that one morning I can cry at the top of my lungs and in my mother tongue [Kurdish] : I want to become a breeze carrying the message of love of all humanity to all corners of this immense world.

Farzad Kamangar

Patient in the Infectious Diseases Ward

Rajaa'i Shahr Prison, Karaj

28 December 2008

Originally written on 22 December 2008

Security Ward 209

Evin Prison

Iran