



# ACTIVIST GUIDE



**FREE MAJID TAVAKKOLI**

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



# FREE MAJID TAVAKKOLI ACTIVIST GUIDE

## CONTENTS

- 3** **Background Information:**  
Imprisonment of Majid Tavakkoli; About Amnesty International
- 4** **Take Action:**  
Pass the Mic for Majid Tavakkoli and Shine a Light on Azadi Square
- 7** **Activism Resources:**  
Sample Writing Materials, Student Resolution, Teach-In
- 13** **Messaging:**  
Amnesty International's Talking Points
- 14** **Amnesty International Resources:**  
AI Resources on the Web & in the AIUSA Section



# BACKGROUND INFORMATION

## Background: Majid Tavakkoli

On 7 December 2009, Majid Tavakkoli was arrested after criticizing the government during a peaceful student protest at Amir Kabir University of Technology in Tehran. The protest, held on National Student Day, was one of many across the country to commemorate the murder of 3 peaceful student protesters in 1953. It also drew attention to the disputed presidential elections in 2009. After his arrest, Majid Tavakkoli was reportedly beaten and subjected to an unfair trial where he was denied the presence of his lawyer. He was sentenced to over eight years in prison on charges that included "participating in an illegal gathering," "propaganda against the system" and "insulting officials."

In response to protests following the 2009 presidential elections, authorities increased restrictions on freedom of expression, association and assembly. Many people were arrested, including political activists, students, human rights defenders, journalists and others. Today, hundreds of political prisoners, many of whom are prisoners of conscience, remain jailed across Iran.

Between January and May 2010, Majid Tavakkoli was held in solitary confinement. The day after his arrest, a news agency close to the government published photographs of Majid Tavakkoli wearing women's clothing, and said he had been wearing them at the time of arrest to escape detention. Many claimed that authorities forced Majid Tavakkoli to wear the clothes to humiliate him, and in response, hundreds of Iranian men posted internet photos of themselves wearing head scarves in solidarity with Majid Tavakkoli. His family was not informed of his whereabouts or his condition until they were allowed to pay him one 15-minute visit on 15 April 2010. Shortly thereafter, Majid was returned to solitary confinement, where he began a 7-day dry hunger strike. In August 2010, authorities transferred Majid Tavakkoli to Raja'i Shahr prison, which is used to house violent criminals. He is suffering from a respiratory condition that has worsened since his arrest.

Throughout his detention, Majid Tavakkoli has continued to write letters, praising fellow student activists and condemning violence against student protesters, his family, and other prisoners. His letters, along with his refusal to denounce leaders of student movements, have "earned" him additional years in prison and the risk of ill-treatment. Despite this, Majid Tavakkoli refuses to be silent. We too must not remain silent and stand in solidarity with Majid Tavakkoli and other Iranian students working for freedom of expression.

## About Amnesty International

Amnesty International is a global movement of people from across the world standing up for humanity and human rights. Our vision is of a world in which every person - regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, gender identity or sexual orientation - enjoys all of the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other internationally recognized human rights standards.

Our purpose is to protect people wherever justice, freedom, truth and dignity are denied. We investigate and expose abuses, educate and mobilize the public, and help transform societies to create a safer and more just world. We received the Nobel Peace Prize for our life-saving work.

We were founded in 1961 and today are the world's largest grassroots human rights organization with more than 3 million supporters, activists and volunteers in over 150 countries. We are independent of any government, political ideology, economic interest or religion and are funded mainly by our membership and public donations.



# TAKE ACTION!

## Key Actions

**PASS THE MIC FOR MAJID:** Take up the microphone to help share Majid Tavakkoli's hopes for "human rights, justice and peace" in Iran. Hold an open mic night, encouraging people to share spoken word and slam poetry about human rights and freedom of expression.

**SHINE A LIGHT ON AZADI SQUARE:** In June 2011, we will shine a light on freedom of expression and call for the release of Majid through a virtual protest in Azadi Square.

**SOLIDARITY CARD ACTION:** Send Majid Tavakkoli cards of support to honor his struggle for human rights.

**LETTER WRITING:** In the coming months, join other Amnesty activists in barraging **Iranian government officials** with letters, postcards, and petitions calling for the release of Majid Tavakkoli. Spread the word about Majid's case by submitting **Letters to the Editor** to your local paper, and if you would like to receive postcards, email [ikelly@aiusa.org](mailto:ikelly@aiusa.org)

**PASS A STUDENT RESOLUTION:** Mobilize your campus and spread a powerful message of solidarity with Majid Tavakkoli and other detained Iranian students—Work with your student government to pass a Student Resolution.

## Key Action: Pass the Mic for Majid Tavakkoli

### PASS THE MIC FOR MAJID TAVAKKOLI!

Take up the microphone and hold your own spoken word event to help share Majid Tavakkoli's hopes for "human rights, justice and peace" in Iran. Hold an open mic night, encouraging people to share spoken word and slam poetry about human rights and freedom of expression. An open mic means that anyone who shows up at the event can sign up to read or perform! Activists across the country will be raising their voices for Majid Tavakkoli. By dedicating the night to all of those students in Iran who, like Majid Tavakkoli, are fighting for their right to freely express themselves, you can help support their efforts and raise awareness for their cause.

#### Things to keep in mind:

##### VENUE

Pick a venue where the speakers can be heard! Coffee shops, bars, or a space in your student center would work well. Make sure you get permission and confirm the space before advertising, and line up appropriate sound equipment for participants.

##### PUBLICIZE YOUR EVENT

Publicize through facebook, word of mouth, posters, flyers, emails, and class announcements. Reach out to local interest groups to include communities with a stake in the issue (student and human rights groups, local Iranian groups, etc). Try to get free blurbs in community newspapers and on public radio.

Inform people ahead of time that they will be invited to share their own message of solidarity with Iranian students. Encourage them to come prepared with a song, a poem, or just their thoughts on the issue.

##### PROGRAM

- Intro: Prepare an introduction to kick off the program. You'll want to explain the purpose of the event—dedicating the night to supporting students' rights to freedom of expression—and invite individuals to come up to the microphone and express their messages of solidarity.
- Make sure you identify someone to MC to ensure a smooth transition between speakers.
- Kick it off: Even before your introduction, identify someone who is prepared to come speak after you. This will help set the tone of active participation.

##### OTHER SUGGESTIONS

- Confirm a local band or other form of entertainment to play at the end of the night to generate even more enthusiasm.
- Invite local leaders or activists to come speak at the event.
- Have a place where people can sign up to speak, and continue to remind people throughout the night that they can still sign up.
- Take action! Bring a petition, letter-writing materials, or postcards for people to sign throughout the night.



# TAKE ACTION!

## Our Own Azadi Square



## Key Action: Virtual Protest in Azadi Square

Majid Tavakkoli is one of the hundreds of people who have been jailed in Iran for simply exercising their right to freedom of expression. Azadi Square (Freedom Square) in Tehran is a place where demonstrations have occurred throughout Iran's history. Recently, it was the site for student led demonstrations in 2009, which took place in the days and weeks following the disputed Presidential elections in Iran.

We will shine a light on freedom of expression in Iran through a virtual protest in Azadi Square.

### It's easy! Here's how:

1. Identify a location to rename Azadi Square. This can be a prominent place in your community, or simply some place close to home, like your front yard.
2. Make a sign, noting that you are in Azadi Square. Here are some suggested slogans: Free Majid Tavakkoli! Or, Shine a light for human rights in Iran! For more slogans visit: [www.amnestyusa.org/majid](http://www.amnestyusa.org/majid). Template signs that you can download and print are also available at [www.amnestyusa.org/majid](http://www.amnestyusa.org/majid). But, feel free to get creative and create your own. Need some inspiration? Check out the photos on Flickr: <http://www.flickr.com/groups/1618371@N25/>
3. Temporarily rename your location Azadi Square. You can do this by simply holding or posting your sign or try to get a more formal proclamation made by your student government or city officials.
4. Take a picture to document this momentous event. The picture can be by yourself or with a large group of people.
5. Upload your pictures to the Amnesty International Flickr account and please note city, state, and country. These pictures will be compiled and used to create a virtual protest in Azadi Square, calling for the freedom of Majid Tavakkoli and all prisoners of conscience in Iran.

Questions? Please email: [ikelly@aiusa.org](mailto:ikelly@aiusa.org)



# TAKE ACTION!

## Key Action: Organize an Azadi Square Event

### LOOKING TO MAKE AN EVEN BIGGER IMPACT? PLAN A CAMPUS-WIDE PROTEST!

#### Here's how:

**WHAT:** Since the contested elections in Iran in June 2009, students like Majid Tavakkoli have held protests in Azadi Square, demanding the peaceful right to freedom of expression. Because we cannot travel to Iran ourselves, we will stand in solidarity with Majid Tavakkoli through transforming places in our communities into Azadi Square.

**PURPOSE:** This event will not only lend support to Majid Tavakkoli and other Iranian students, it will also educate the public about Majid Tavakkoli's case, attract media attention, indirectly pressure public officials, and increase awareness for this cause.

**PLAN:** Regardless of the size of your protest, you'll need to put time and effort into organizing this event. Here are some things to keep in mind. It can be helpful to create a smaller planning team to help organize the event. Rename a prominent place in your school or community Azadi Square. Do this informally by simply posting a sign or try to get a more formal proclamation made by your student government or city officials. Once a location is chosen, you should also let your local police station know to find out if you need a permit. Make fliers and signs to hold at the protest. Invite school or community leaders to speak, and make sure you have a podium, speaker, microphone if needed.

**PROMOTION:** This may be the most important task: get people to come! Create an email group list or facebook page and start inviting people. Distribute strategic updates about your event to this group, and encourage them to forward your emails to people they know who'd want to attend. Post flyers around the neighborhood, at community centers, and on school and church bulletin boards. Build momentum by holding a planning meeting, network with other groups, and make announcements in college classrooms.

Contact media outlets and specific reporters at least 1-2 weeks prior to your event and follow up with a faxed or emailed copy of a media advisory a few days before the protest. (Media advisories are concise: "who, what, where, when, why.") Follow-up phone calls are helpful to secure media coverage.

**PUT INTO ACTION:** Have fun! If you have guest speakers at your protest, make sure there's a schedule of events. [Download a sign-in sheet](#). Have flyers handy with some facts about your cause, petitions to gather signatures from the crowd and create some extra signs for people to hold. Hang a backdrop of Azadi Square or make a prominent sign that makes it clear that you are virtually protesting there. Whether you have a big crowd or a few people, take lots of pictures to document this momentous event.

**FOLLOW UP:** Send copies of your photos to Ilona Kelly, [ikelly@aiusa.org](mailto:ikelly@aiusa.org). We'll use the pictures to create a protest in Azadi Square to support the rights of students and others in Iran to freedom of expression and assembly. You can also upload your photos directly to Flickr: <http://www.flickr.com/groups/1618371@N25/>

# ACTIVISM RESOURCES

## Sample Resources

**Sample Solidarity Action**

**Additional Writing Materials: Sample Letter, Letter to the Editor (LTE), Petition**

**Sample Student Resolution**

**Teach-in “How To”**

## Solidarity Action

***“The prisoner’s worst nightmare is the thought of being forgotten.”***

-Maziar Bahari, Iranian-Canadian journalist, after his release from four months of detention in Evin Prison

Solidarity messages lend support to prisoners and remind them that we have not forgotten their struggle for human rights. Amnesty encourages you to send your own solidarity message to Majid Tavakkoli. You can say "thinking of you" or "hoping you are well." You may send a greeting in either English or Farsi (Persian) but please do not mention Amnesty International or specifics of the recipient's case. Please also refrain from mentioning the political situation, human rights or U.S.-Iran relations. We suggest sending cards with pictures of landscapes, spring flowers or the like, in keeping with the message of hope and renewal. Please do not choose cards that have pictures of people, and please do not use cards that depict bottles of wine or other alcoholic beverages.

**MAIL TO:**

Majid Tavakkoli  
Faze 3, Entehaye Khiabane Yaas  
Shahrak Baharestan (Miyanrood)  
Shiraz 7179743355  
Islamic Republic of Iran

**A SAMPLE MESSAGE OF HOPE:**

“We do not forget you. Hoping for your speedy release and wishing you strength and courage.”



# ACTIVISM RESOURCES

## Sample Letter to Iranian Authorities

Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani  
(care of) Public Relations Office  
Number 4, 2 Azizi Street  
Vali Asr Ave., above Pasteur Street intersection  
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran  
Email: [info@dadiran.ir](mailto:info@dadiran.ir) or [bia.judi@yahoo.com](mailto:bia.judi@yahoo.com)

Your Excellency:

I am deeply concerned about the imprisonment of student leader **Majid Tavakkoli**. He was sentenced to more than 8 years in prison simply for exercising his right to freedom of expression by speaking at a university rally in Tehran to mark National Student Day in December 2009. I urge you to bring about his immediate and unconditional release and to order a prompt and impartial investigation into the reports that he was beaten during arrest. While he remains imprisoned, please provide Mr. Tavakkoli with access to adequate medical care, including assessment and treatment by an independent specialist outside of prison if necessary.

I urge you to respect the rights of all Iranians to freedom of speech in accordance with Iran's obligations under Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Yours sincerely,

*copy to:*  
Iranian Interests Section  
2209 Wisconsin Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20007  
Fax: 202-965-1073

## Write Your Own Letter to the Editor

**Writing letters to the editor is a great way to further raise awareness about the current** situation in Iran with a large audience and keep human rights at the heart of the dialogue. To significantly increase the chance that your letter is printed, please keep the following points in mind:

- Use AI talking points to guide your letter, but also use your own words, style, and voice as well
- Try to frame your letter as a response to a recent article, editorial, or event covered in your newspaper. If you do not find an article to respond to, introduce Majid Tavakkoli's case in the first line.
- Keep your letter concise and to the point. Check your newspaper's website for guidelines on word count; bear in mind that most newspapers will only accept letters of 150-200 words.
- Make sure to give your contact details, including phone number. (Phone numbers will not be published; editors generally call authors to confirm the validity of the letter before publishing.)
- Include your Amnesty International affiliation at the bottom of your letter if appropriate; however, be aware of mentioning the organization too many times and sounding self-promotional.
- Check with your newspaper's website to submit your letter via postal mail, fax or email.
- Wrap your letter up by explaining what you think needs to happen now and make a call to action using one of Amnesty International's talking points.

NOTE: If your letter is published, please send a copy to Individuals at Risk, 600 Pennsylvania Ave. SE, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Washington, D.C. 20003, or email it to [ikelly@aiusa.org](mailto:ikelly@aiusa.org)

# ACTIVISM RESOURCES

## Sample Petition

### Protect Freedom of Expression in Iran! Free Majid Tavakkoli!

To: Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani  
(care of) Public relations Office  
Number 4, 2 Azizi Street  
Vali Asr Ave., above Pasteur Street intersection  
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran  
info@dadiran.ir or bia.judi@yahoo.com



Your Excellency:

We are deeply concerned at the imprisonment of student leader **Majid Tavakkoli**. He was sentenced to more than 8 years in prison simply for exercising his right to freedom of expression by speaking at a university rally in Tehran to mark National Student Day in December 2009. We urge you to bring about his immediate and unconditional release and to order a prompt and impartial investigation into the reports that he was beaten during arrest. While he remains imprisoned, please provide Mr. Tavakkoli with access to adequate medical care, including assessment and treatment by an independent specialist outside of prison if necessary.

We urge you to respect the rights of all Iranians to freedom of speech in accordance with Iran's obligations under Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

**Your Signature**

**Printed Name**

**City/State**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



# ACTIVISM RESOURCES

## Sample Student Resolution

### Resolution in Support of the Iranian Students' Movement (<http://www.students4iran.org>)

**WHEREAS**, the [NAME OF INSTITUTION] is an institution dedicated to promoting excellence in all aspects of the student experience and upholding the rights of students; and

**WHEREAS**, on [DATE] the [NAME OF INSTITUTION] passed a [NAME OF RELEVANT OR SIMILAR RESOLUTION PREVIOUSLY PASSED]; and

**WHEREAS**, on [DATE] the [NAME OF INSTITUTION] passed a resolution which expressed solidarity [EXAMPLE OF RELEVANT PASSED RESOLUTION]. We cite this as precedent for [NAME OF INSTITUTION] to show support for students globally who have built active movements demanding their basic rights and freedoms.

**WHEREAS**, the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) has detained, tortured, raped, or killed students and violated the human rights standards enshrined in **the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and other international recognized human rights standards, including International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Cultural and Social Rights (ICESCR).**

- Majid Tavakkoli, a 24-year-old student from Tehran's Amir Kabir University of Technology, is one of the most prominent symbols of Iran's student movement. He was arrested on December 7, 2009, after giving a speech about the IRI's human rights abuses during a Students' Day rally. Mr. Tavakkoli was held in solitary confinement for a prolonged period of time and sentenced to 8.5 years in jail on various politically motivated charges, including —insulting the Supreme leader|| and —propaganda against the state.|| There is growing concern around his health due to the respiratory problems he has developed since his incarceration as well as due to a hunger strike he undertook to protest his transfer to solitary confinement
- Bahareh Hedayat, a student and member of the One Million Signature/Gender Equality campaign, was jailed on December 31, 2009, shortly after delivering a YouTube video message to the European Students Union (ESU), which then nominated her for the 2011 Student Peace Prize. She studied Economics at Tehran University where she became an active member of the Student Union. In May 2010, she was sentenced to a 9.5 year prison term for various politically motivated charges, including —participating in gatherings following the election.||
- The Iranian authorities continue to deny equal access to education to religious minorities, including the Baha'i and Alevi religious communities that are still not permitted to attend universities in Iran. This constitutes blatant discrimination based on religious affiliation or ethnicity, which is expressly prohibited by international human rights instruments. Various minority ethnic and sub-ethnic groups are also denied equal access to education due to resistance against teaching in minority languages.

**WHEREAS**, the IRI has violated Iranian students' rights to education, to freedom of expression, assembly, and association, and to freedom from discrimination.

- a. Neglecting the rights of religious and ethnic minorities and political and human rights activists by depriving them their right to education;
- b. Discriminating against women during the student admissions process;
- c. Suspending and/or expelling students from school as a means to pressure and punish them for activism or exercising their rights to freedom of expression, assembly, and association.



# ACTIVISM RESOURCES

## Sample Student Resolution Continued

**WHEREAS**, the IRI has increasingly undermined and violated students' rights to education and to freedom of expression, assembly and association.

- a. Overhauling the humanities and social sciences programs in universities;
- b. Disregarding the university administrations' independence from the government.

**WHEREAS**, the IRI has demoted, forced into retirement, and/or not renewed the contracts of professors as a means to silence their criticisms, expressions of dissatisfaction, or oppositions to the current system.

**WHEREAS**, students and prisoners of conscience have been subjected to poor prison conditions and inadequate/restricted access to medical care.

- a. Prisoners of conscience and students have been forced to endure overcrowding, disease, unsanitary conditions, malnutrition, spoiled food, and dirty bedding;
- b. IRI authorities have arbitrarily restricted access to medical care as a means to pressure and punish students and prisoners of conscience; and

Refusing temporary releases or medical leaves for students and prisoners of conscience in order to seek proper medical or specialist treatment outside of prison.

**WHEREAS**, officials responsible for abuses against Iranian students have not been held accountable.

- a. The failure to hold accountable the police and militia members who attacked the student dormitories after the 2009 presidential election, particularly on June 14, 2009;
- b. The failure to hold accountable the officials who ordered the shooting of peaceful protesters, costing many innocent lives, including those of several students; and

The failure to investigate and hold accountable those responsible for the abuses against student protesters who were detained by the security forces and caused several prisoner deaths.

**WHEREAS**, there are Iranian-Americans and Iranian nationals attending or working at [SCHOOL NAME], many of whom are concerned about their family and friends still in Iran.

**WHEREAS**, various prominent organizations and institutions, including the European Union Parliament, University Associated Student Bodies throughout North America, and the European Students Union, have made motion of their support for Iran's students.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, the [NAME OF INSTITUTION] demonstrates its solidarity with the Iranian students' movement and its efforts to ensure Iran's students their academic freedom, their right to education and other fundamental human rights.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the [NAME OF INSTITUTION] expresses its support for 1) an immediate end to the violations of the Iranian students' human rights; 2) the Iranian students' right to education; 3) an end to the IRI's continuous infringements on academic freedom; 4) an end to impunity for officials responsible for human rights abuses; and 5) an end to the poor prison conditions and inadequate medical care for students and prisoners of conscience.

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, the [NAME OF INSTITUTION] recognizes the importance of academic freedom and of all people to enjoy free from discrimination all of the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other internationally recognized human right standard, including in particular the right to education and rights to freedom of expression, assembly and association.



# ACTIVISM RESOURCES

## Organizing a Teach-In

A Teach-in is a session hosted by any group or organization to discuss an important topic. Teach-ins are informative sessions on recent events which people may not be able to understand clearly through news sources alone. It is a chance to inform people about an issue and provide them with opportunities to take action

**What is the goal of the teach-in?** The primary goal of your teach-in for Majid Tavakkoli is to inform the participants about the particulars of the case in such a way that they leave feeling energized and excited to take action. Students should come away knowing exactly what they can do, and feeling confident that they have a sufficient grasp of the background information to spread the word to others. In response to protests following the 2009 presidential elections, Iranian authorities increased restrictions on freedom of expression, association and assembly. Many people were arrested, including political activists, students, human rights defenders, journalists and others. Today, hundreds of political prisoners, many of whom are prisoners of conscience, remain jailed across Iran. It is so important that we continue to keep the light on Majid Tavakkoli's case to ensure that he is treated humanely, is protected from torture and other ill-treatment, and is unconditionally released. Majid Tavakkoli, sentenced to 8 ½ years of prison for exercising his right to freedom of expression, is a light for thousands of people working for their basic human rights.

**Where should you hold your teach-in?** You can hold a teach-in just about anywhere, but make sure to keep in mind your audience when choosing a location. If you are a leader or member of a student group, and you would like your fellow students to attend the teach-in, it is a good idea to have it either on or near campus, in a central location that others can get to without too much trouble. Cafeterias, lecture halls, classrooms, large conference rooms, or available study rooms are all good choices. If you are a leader or member of a community group, you could use a community center or a faith center with a recreational room. Libraries also typically have large meeting rooms that you could reserve. Other, more informal settings work as well. You could hold a teach-in at your home or in the lunch room during your break at work, or even outside in a park. The important thing to consider is that your participants should be in a setting that is comfortable to them, so that they feel at ease and receptive.

**Who is the audience for your teach-in?** If you are a student, the answer to this question is fairly simple. Your audience will most likely be other students and faculty members from your school. But anyone, whether part of a student group, community group, or acting as an individual, can expand the attendance of their teach-in by inviting other groups that would be interested in hearing about Majid Tavakkoli's case.

### AGENDA FOR 1 HOUR TEACH-IN

#### I) Welcome and Overview (about 5 minutes)

- Introduce yourself, and if the group is small enough, you may have people introduce themselves as well.  
Go over the agenda for the teach-in

#### II) Background on conditions in Iran (10 minutes)

- Explain the situation in Iran, highlighting the Iranian government's crackdown on peaceful political protesters since the contested elections of June 2009.

#### III) The case of Majid Tavakkoli (10 minutes)

- Who is he? Why is he being jailed? Educate participant about his condition, his status as a detainee in Evin prison, and his continued activism despite ill-treatment and detention.

#### IV) What can you do? (5-10 minutes)

- Explain some key actions that people can do, together or separately. You want people to leave knowing how to take action for Majid Tavakkoli!

#### V) Discussion (25 minute)

- This is the most important part of the teach-in because it engages participants and encourages them to get involved. Answer any questions and identify an event that you can all engage in. Leave some time to make a plan to meet again to finish planning your event!



# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S MESSAGING

## Amnesty International's Talking Points: Majid Tavakkoli

- Even before the election of President Ahmadinejad in 2005, Amnesty International has made many detailed recommendations to the Iranian government about human rights abuses, but serious violations continue and the circle of repression ever widens. Repression has only grown worse in the aftermath of the contested 2009 elections.
- People in Iran continue to be arbitrarily arrested, often without warrant, by state officials who fail to identify themselves. Many are held for weeks or even months – often in solitary confinement – in detention centers outside of the control of the Judiciary, in prolonged incommunicado detention without access to families or lawyers, and in conditions amounting to enforced disappearances. Unlawful killings, and the all too frequent reports of torture and other ill-treatment by state actors who enjoy near total impunity, are still not being investigated.
- Hundreds of political prisoners, sentenced after unfair trials, are held across Iran; many of them are prisoners of conscience. Thousands of others in Iran are suffering restrictions on their rights to expression, association and assembly which are guaranteed under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
- Majid Tavakkoli is one of these prisoners. After being denied access to his lawyer, he was sentenced in an unfair trial to 8 ½ years in prison, faces poor prison conditions, and is at risk for ill-treatment solely because he exercised his right to peaceful freedom of expression. Despite poor treatment and detention, Majid Tavakkoli continues to speak out, lending his support and encouragement to other student activists around the country.
- Amnesty International calls for the immediate and unconditional release of Majid Tavakkoli and all other prisoners of conscience in Iran. Amnesty International also urges that until his release, Majid Tavakkoli is treated humanely according to international human rights standards, is protected from torture and other ill-treatment, and has access to adequate medical care.

### AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S MESSAGING

In light of the situation in Iran, Amnesty members are encouraged to participate in coordinated actions with other organizations to express solidarity and support for the Iranians' rights to freedom of expression. In this respect, there are a few points to consider before committing yourself to being involved with other organizations.

Please exercise caution when supporting or organizing events in solidarity for Iranian students and make sure to focus on Amnesty International's messages and the overall human rights framework when participating. Even if opposing messaging is present, as long as Amnesty activists are clearly identified with Amnesty messaging/signs and prepared with Amnesty talking points, effective collaboration can still occur in the name of international solidarity and human rights!

Amnesty International relies on its independent and impartial research and funding to maintain utmost integrity and credibility in the global human rights movement and beyond. Therefore, Amnesty activists should be particularly careful about sharing any public platform, making joint public statements, jointly organizing a rally, demonstration or other event so as not to be seen supporting a particular economic, social political or religious ideology or to take sides on a conflict. AI groups and student groups should check with Amnesty International before partnering with non AI Individuals and organizations.

It is important to remember that Amnesty International does not lobby the U.S. government on Iran, and does not circulate letters in Congress about human rights violations in Iran. This is because of the tenuous relationship between the U.S. Government and the Iranian Government. As a result of their strained relationship, the U.S. Government does not have influence with Iranian government officials; therefore U.S. officials' involvement could have potentially negative consequences on the case. **Amnesty International does not call for regime change.** Amnesty is working for the right to freedom of expression in Iran—we focus on neutrality and human rights.



# AMNESTY RESOURCES: CONTACTS

## On the Web

**FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO TAKE ACTION, VISIT:**

[www.amnestyusa.org/majid](http://www.amnestyusa.org/majid)

**TO RECEIVE CASE UPDATES AND TO CONNECT WITH OTHER ACTIVISTS TAKING ACTION FOR MAJID TAVAKKOLI, JOIN OUR GOOGLEGROUP:**

<http://groups.google.com/group/SFC-Majid?hl=en>

**FRIEND “AMNESTY WEST” ON FACEBOOK:**

<http://www.facebook.com/amnestywest>

**FOR THE MOST CURRENT INFORMATION ON GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES, VISIT AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL USA’S “HUMAN RIGHTS NOW” BLOG:**

<http://blog.amnestyusa.org/>

## In the Amnesty International USA Section

### **WESTERN REGIONAL OFFICE**

350 Sansome St, Ste 210

San Francisco, CA 94104

Phone: 415-288-1800

Email: [aiusasf@aiusa.org](mailto:aiusasf@aiusa.org)

**ILONA KELLY**, Individuals at Risk Campaigner for Africa and the Middle East

Email: [lkelly@aiusa.org](mailto:lkelly@aiusa.org)

**ADRIAN GROENENDYK**, Western Regional Special Focus Case Coordinator

Email: [groenendyk.adrian@gmail.com](mailto:groenendyk.adrian@gmail.com)

**ELISE AUERBACH**, Amnesty International USA Iran Country Specialist

Email: [aiis@uchicago.edu](mailto:aiis@uchicago.edu)