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PEN American Center is an association of writers and editors working to advance literature,  
to defend free expression, and to foster international literary fellowship.

May 23, 2007

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Your Excellencies,

On behalf of the 3,400 members of PEN American Center, an international organization of writers dedicated to protecting freedom of expression wherever it is threatened, we are writing to express our grave concern over reports that Kian Tajbakhsh, a distinguished colleague and a dual citizen of the United States and Iran, has been detained and is currently being held without charge in Evin prison.

Mr. Tajbakhsh is a social scientist and urban planner who has published two books and numerous articles in his field and who has worked with a variety of Iranian and international organizations on research and development projects. According to our information, he was arrested at his home in Tehran on or about May 11, 2007, and he has been held since then in Evin prison, a facility notorious for its documented cases of torture and detainee abuse. We understand that Mr. Tajbakhsh has neither seen a lawyer nor been allowed visitors, and that he has not been formally charged or accused of any crime.

PEN American Center is deeply troubled by reports of Kian Tajbakhsh's arrest and we are seriously concerned for his health and welfare in the custody of Iranian authorities. We fear he is being held in violation of the due process and free expression guarantees outlined in the United Nations International Covenant

on Civil and Political Rights, to which Iran is a signatory. We seek assurances that he is being treated humanely, and we respectfully request his immediate and unconditional release.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,



Hannah Pakula  
Chair, Freedom to Write Committee



Larry Siems  
Director, Freedom to Write and  
International Programs

Cc: His Excellency Dr. Mohammad Javad Zarif  
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Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations  
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