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Press Statement

Sean McCormack, Spokesman

Washington, DC

August 1, 2006

Iran: Death of Jailed Student Dissident

The United States condemns the Iranian government's severe repression of dissidents, and its continued crackdown on civil society and those fighting for personal freedom in Iran. The regime's actions resulted in the recent death of imprisoned Iranian student activist Akbar Mohammadi. Mr. Mohammadi died on July 30, reportedly as a result of a prolonged hunger strike, still in the notorious Evin Prison where he has been held for his role in pro-democracy student demonstrations in July 1999. Unfortunately, Mr. Mohammadi's detention was not an isolated case.

His brother Manouchehr Mohammadi remains imprisoned for participating in the same 1999 rallies, and there are recent reports that his parents may have been arrested as well. These arrests, and the harsh treatment of dissidents and opposition leaders, are part of a deliberate campaign by the Iranian government to silence the student movement in particular, and civil society more broadly.

The United States is gravely concerned about the crackdown by the Iranian regime against its opponents and dissenters, and about the status of those who are currently being held by the Islamic Republic. Ali Akbar Moussavi Khomeini, a former Member of Parliament and student leader, has been imprisoned since his arrest during a June 12 women's rights rally in Tehran. Iranian labor union leader Mansour Osanloo, one of many wrongfully arrested in December 2005, continues to languish behind bars.

We send our deepest condolences to the family, friends and supporters of Mr. Mohammadi, and we call on the Iranian Government to respect the human rights of all Iranian citizens, including students, members of religious minorities, workers, and women, and to release those arrested and imprisoned as a consequence of defending universally accepted human rights and freedoms.

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