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Press Statement

Sean McCormack, Spokesman

Washington, DC

September 1, 2006

Iran: Arrest of Student Activists

The United States is deeply concerned about the detention of a number of Iranian student activists, including the re-arrest of well-known student leader Ahmed Batebi.

Mr. Batebi was re-arrested while on parole from a 15-year sentence at Evin prison handed out as part of the July 1999 government crackdown on Iranian university students. Student activists Abofazl Jahandar, Kheirollah Derakhshandi and Jamal Zaher-Poor were among others detained in the past few days. Many of those arrested are being denied communication with their families and otherwise being held in violation of accepted international norms.

We call on the Iranian government to respect the rights of its citizens and to free Ahmed Batebi and all those imprisoned as a consequence of defending universally accepted human rights. The Iranian regime's continued efforts to suppress freedom of speech and assembly make clear the hollowness of its professed openness to peaceful dialogue and debate.

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