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Iran: Release of US-Iranian journalist welcome

Amnesty International has welcomed the news that the US-Iranian journalist, Roxana Saberi, is to be released from jail in Iran later today (Monday).

“We are delighted that justice has been served by the appeal process and that Roxana Saberi is due to be released from prison in Tehran today,” said Hassiba Hadj Sahraoui, Amnesty International’s Deputy Director of the Middle East and North Africa region. “She should, however, never have been imprisoned in the first place.”

Roxana Saberi was convicted of "collaborating with a hostile state" by Tehran’s Revolutionary Court, behind closed doors, in April and originally sentenced to eight years in prison. Yesterday, a court heard an appeal against her conviction and commuted the sentence to a suspended two-year term on the charge of "collecting classified information", with a five-year ban on working as a journalist in Iran.

“Although Ms Saberi’s release is welcome, it should be unconditional,” said Hassiba Hadj Sahraoui. “We are concerned that she may face travel restrictions, like those imposed this weekend on Narges Mohammadi, an aide to Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Shirin Ebadi, and Soraya Azizpanah, the editor of Rasan magazine, who were banned from attending a conference in Guatemala.

“We are also calling on the Iranian authorities to release all other prisoners of conscience in Iran, including the Alaei brothers - both doctors - who are imprisoned on similar charges and whom we believe are held solely in relation to their work with international and specifically US institutions in the field of HIV and AIDS prevention and treatment.”