



# BRISMES

British Society for Middle Eastern Studies

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BRISMES Administrative Office, Department of PAIS, University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL

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Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran  
Chief Justice Ebrahim Raisi, Head of the Judiciary

c/o Ambassador Hamid Baeidinejad  
Iranian Embassy in London  
16 Princes Gate  
London SW7 1PT  
By email: [iranemb.lon@mfa.gov.ir](mailto:iranemb.lon@mfa.gov.ir)

21 April 2021

Your Excellencies,

We write on behalf of the Committee on Academic Freedom of the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (BRISMES) to express our concern about the prosecution and imprisonment of Touraj Amini, a historian of the Qajar dynasty and Iranian Constitutional movement. Founded in 1973, BRISMES is the largest national academic association in Europe focused on the study of the Middle East and North Africa. It is committed to supporting academic freedom and freedom of expression, both within the region and in connection with the study of the region, both in the UK and globally.

Mr. Amini was sentenced by the Karaj Revolutionary Court to one year imprisonment and two years in exile for the alleged offenses of producing propaganda against the regime. The evidence used against him was a series of books and articles he authored within his area of expertise on religious minorities in the Qajar and Pahlavi eras. On appeal, this sentence was reduced to six months imprisonment.

The Committee on Academic Freedom is deeply concerned that this scholar has been sentenced to prison for merely exercising his rights to freedom of expression and academic freedom, which Iran's own laws and Constitution purport to protect. Academic freedom requires freedom of the press and expression, respect for the rule of law and transparency. Mr. Amini's nonviolent activities may have been subjected to unfair treatment, in clear violation of Iran's domestic and international obligations. By sentencing him to prison, his

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right to academic freedom is unfairly withheld. We respectfully ask that all charges against Mr. Amini be dropped, his undeserved prison sentence be cancelled and that he be allowed to continue his research and publish his academic works in Iran.

Thank you for your attention. We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

**Professor The Baroness Afshar OBE**

President, BRISMES

on behalf of BRISMES Committee on Academic Freedom