

DR. CAROLINE LUCAS

Green Party
for the South East of England

Rt Hon Liam Byrne MP
Minister of State
The Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

September 12th 2007

Dear Minister,

Re: Pegah Emambakhsh - H.O ref: B1191057

Pegah Emambakhsh is an Iranian woman who is being held in Yarls Wood Immigration Removal Centre. If deported to Iran, Pegah faces imprisonment and execution by stoning, due to her sexual orientation.

Pegah escaped from Iran and sought asylum in the UK in 2005, after her partner was arrested, tortured and subsequently sentenced to death by stoning. Her father was also arrested, interrogated and tortured for information about her whereabouts.

The UK Border and Immigration Agency (BIA) rejected Pegah's claim for asylum and her appeal against the decision has failed. Pegah was arrested and taken to Yarls Wood Immigration Centre in Bedfordshire, where, as far as I am aware, she is still being held. However, Pegah has recently received the offer of asylum in Italy.

It was a grave miscarriage of justice and contravention of human rights that her appeal for asylum was rejected by the UK in 2005. Despite her traumatic past experiences, Pegah has been an active and respected member of the community in Sheffield, volunteering for a refugee-support organisation.

After her plight received wide media coverage in Italy, Pegah's case has now been taken up by the Italian government, and she has been offered asylum in the city of Venice. The Mayor of Venice, Massimo Cacciari, has stated that the city "places a secure living facility at the woman's disposal".

I, therefore, strongly urge you to ensure that Pegah is not deported to Iran where there is little doubt she would be persecuted in an extreme manner, and possibly stoned to death. Pegah is at even greater risk of persecution now that she has received visible media attention. I would strongly urge you to ensure that, if the UK is unwilling to review its position, Pegah is permitted to go to Italy, where she can live in safety and be reunited with her children.

Yours sincerely,



Caroline Lucas - Green Party MEP for South East England.