

Washington Post files UN petition for release of Iran-held reporter

Washington (dpa) - The Washington Post filed an urgent petition Wednesday with the United Nations for the release of the newspaper's jailed Tehran correspondent, Jason Rezaian, on the anniversary of his arrest in Iran.

The reporter faces 10 to 20 years in prison if convicted in Iran on charges of espionage and anti-government propaganda.

"Every aspect of this case - his incarceration, his trial, the conditions of his imprisonment - has been a disgraceful violation of human rights. And it violates common decency," Washington Post executive editor Marty Baron said in a press conference at the National Press Club in Washington.

The United Nations was "aware" of the petition filed by the paper, said UN spokeswoman Vannina Maestracci in New York. She noted that any further action will come from the UN's Human Rights Office in Geneva.

Rezaian's supporters say there is no available evidence against him.

"Release Jason to his family," National Press Club President John Hughes said. "As a Post reporter Jason is part of the Washington journalism community. He is like family to us."

Washington Post general counsel Jay Kennedy said that Rezaian has been denied due process, with Iranian authorities failing to inform the prisoner of the charges against him, waiting 10 months to bring him to trial and closing the trial to the public.

Rezaian's brother, Ali, said that the Iranian nuclear talks, which had been ongoing throughout Jason Rezaian's detention, had given the family hope that his release was imminent. Since the July 14 final agreement on the nuclear issues, the family has become desperate.

"In this past year my family has watched these on-and-off negotiations drag on. We have awaited each deadline hoping that they can provide an opportunity for the Iranians to end this political and inhumane detention of my brother," Ali Rezaian said.

He called for Iran to follow its own laws and international norms and release his brother as soon as possible.

"We've watched Iran ignore their own laws and demonstrate they are not a nation of laws, as they so disingenuously claim to be," he said.

<http://www.delhinews.net/index.php/sid/235043753>