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**Hostage Scenario becomes clear: After 100 days Revolutionary Guard willing to close Nazanin’s case if agreement reached with UK government**

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Tuesday 12th July marks 100 days detention for Nazanin and Gabriella Ratcliffe.

The Revolutionary Guard have informed Nazanin’s family that they are holding Nazanin to pressure the UK government into an agreement. They have sent a message that they are willing to close her case and to release her if the UK government reaches this agreement.

To mark 100 days, Richard Ratcliffe will be presenting a letter to David Cameron asking him to do what he reasonably can.

He has also petitioned the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention to rule on the completely arbitrary nature of the legal process under which Nazanin is being held.

**100 Days**

Tuesday July 12 marks 100 days since Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe was detained and her now 2 year old daughter Gabriella’s passport was confiscated by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard. To date, no charges have been filed against Nazanin or Gabriella, and she has not had access to a lawyer.

**Revolutionary Guard Willing to Negotiate**

Nazanin’s interrogators have told Nazanin’s family that they are willing to close Nazanin’s case in pre-court provided the UK government reaches an agreement with them.

They gave a message to Nazanin’s parents on 21 June that her husband should put pressure on the UK government, directly, through Parliament or any other means to reach an agreement. The message, detailed by Nazanin’s main interrogator in the presence of his superior, Mr. Majidi was:

*"Tell Mr Richard to ask his government to reach the agreement. He should put pressure on the British government to make the agreement.”*

*"If they make the agreement then the case will be closed in the pre-court. We will not send the case to court if the agreement is reached."*

Upon questioning, the interrogator confirmed that *"We can do whatever we want. We can finish it anytime"* The interrogators also clarified that the UK government would know the agreement, and it did not relate to the nuclear deal.

The family were also told to ignore propaganda in the Iranian press appearing in the name of the Kerman branch of the Revolutionary Guard, alleging that Nazanin was involved in the soft overthrow of the Iranian regime. The family was told that these press releases were for political purposes to counter the stories in the foreign media. No charges have yet been made, and the decision on any actual charges lies solely with Tehran.

Nazanin has twice been promised release without charge, on May 6 and June 5, and twice that promise has been retracted.

**Foreign Office Communications**

Richard Ratcliffe relayed the message to the Foreign Office on 22 June, which they noted was unorthodox and should be treated with scepticism, but would be handled by the Embassy.

Subsequently, Richard Ratcliffe sent a request to the Head of the Judiciary via the British Embassy and the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and directly, for the release of Nazanin and Gabriella to mark the end of Ramadan. A similar message was sent directly to the Supreme Leader.

The Foreign Secretary raised Nazanin’s case with the Iranian Foreign Minister on 4 July.

There has been no public criticism of the Iranian authorities actions by a British Minister.

**100 Days Appeal**

To mark 100 days of Nazanin’s and Gabriella’s detention, Richard Ratcliffe and his mother Barbara Ratcliffe together with Tulip Siddiq MP will be presenting a letter to David Cameron on Tuesday 12 July asking him to intervene personally on their case in his final weeks as Prime Minister.

Immediately prior to this, Tulip Siddiq MP will also be asking a parliamentary question of the Foreign Secretary as to what the Foreign Office is doing to secure Nazanin’s and Gabriella’s release home.

**Arbitrary Detention**

Richard Ratcliffe has petitioned the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention on Nazanin’s case with Redress. <http://www.redress.org/international-jurisdictions/nazanin-zaghari-ratcliffe>

The Working Group next meets in Geneva next month, where it will rule on the illegality of Nazanin’s and Gabriella’s detention.

This week Parliamentarians will be discussing Nazanin’s case and others at a private meeting on rule of law in Iran.

**Note to News Desks & diaries:**

**The letter to David Cameron will be delivered to Downing St by Richard Ratcliffe, Barbara Ratcliffe (Richard’s mother) and Tulip Siddiq MP at 12.30pm**

**The text of the letter will be made available to the press on 12 July from 10:00, embargoed until it is delivered (12:30). It will be posted online at 1800**

**Quotations**

Richard says: *“The fact that the Revolutionary Guard are willing to close Nazanin’s case if the right deal can be done highlights just how arbitrary it is. That the Iranian authorities are willing to hold a mother and baby hostage for domestic politics and as a bargaining chip in their international negotiations shows that they have reached a very dark place. It is a strange way to do business and conduct international diplomacy.”*

*“I had hoped that Nazanin would be released for the Eid at the end of Ramadan, and requested it from the Supreme Leader and from the Head of the Judiciary directly and via the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. However the case has now been transferred to pre-court.”*

*“It has been a reality check for me that no UK Minister has expressed public criticism of Iranian actions or said that it is wrong to use a British mother and baby as political bargaining chip. I find that silence conspicuous. I imagine the Iranian authorities have noticed it also and have drawn their own conclusions about how much it matters that British citizens are treated this way.”*

*“Nazanin is being held because she has a British passport - her work for British charities and links to the outside is being used as a bogeyman in Iranian domestic politics and her passport makes her a bargaining chip for international negotiations. It is precisely because she is British dual national that she has been taken as collateral by Iran. It is because of that - it will ultimately be in the hands of the British government to solve. And that is why I am writing to the Prime Minister”*

*“It is not clear what the Revolutionary Guard want the UK to agree to, and how unreasonable that is, but after 100 days it is time my wife and daughter were home, and I would like David Cameron and his government to do what they reasonably can to bring that about.”*

*“As the politics of Brexit calm down, I hope that after 100 days British political leadership is again able to focus on Nazanin’s and Gabriella’s situation and solve it before another 100 days pass.”*

REDRESS director Carla Ferstman said: *“Nazanin has been held for almost 100 days without access to a lawyer and without being brought before a credible judicial body. This goes against the most basic fair trial standards, whatever legal system, and it is simply unacceptable for Iran to make her and her family suffer in this way.”*

*“Nazanin’s two-year old daughter has been cruelly cut off from her father in the UK, as well of course from being cared for by her mother. The long-term negative effects on this young family cannot be predicted.”*

*“On Richard’s behalf we filed a petition last month with the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention. Iran must do the decent and proper thing and allow this mother and child to return home immediately.”*

Amnesty International UK’s Individuals At Risk Campaigns Manager Felix Jakens said: *“As every day has gone by our concerns for Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe have grown. We’re extremely worried that she’s being used as a political pawn. We’ve always thought that her situation had all the hallmarks of a spurious, trumped-up case designed to exert diplomatic pressure on a Western country.”*

*“The Iranian authorities should resolve this now by either charging her with an internationally-recognised offence or by releasing her as soon as possible and allowing her to travel with her daughter back to the UK.”*

**Key Developments and Facts**

* On 1 July Nazanin’s family was Informed that her case had been transferred to the Public Prosecutors Office (pre-court) for review
* Prior to this the investigation phase of her case had been reopened by the Tehran branch of the Revolutionary Guard. During this period access to her was again very limited.
* On 15 June the Kerman Branch of the Revolutionary Guard issued a press release in the Iranian media on 15 June announcing that the investigation of Nazanin had been completed, and accusing her of the ‘soft overthrow’ of the regime. They issued a further press release on 25 June reiterating these claims.
* As of close of business July10 (day 98) no charges have been brought against her. She has still not had access to a lawyer.

**Location**

* On 13 June it was confirmed that Nazanin has been transferred to Evin Prison.
* Nazanin is currently being kept in Ward 2a of Evin Prison (control led by the Revolutionary Guard). She has told her family that she is in a cell with at least one other prisoner.
* Nazanin was told to inform her family that she would be released without charge on 5 June. She subsequently disappeared and was detained incommunicado until 13 June.
* Prior to 5 June, Nazanin was detained in Kerman, where she was kept in solitary confinement until May 18 (day 45). She was told to inform her family she would be released without charge on 6 May, when she also informed her husband.

**Communications**

* Since her move to Evin prison, Gabriella has been allowed to visit her mother three times, accompanied by her grandmother, on 13 June, 21 June and 2 July.
* She is not able to call her family freely since transfer to Evin, but has been allowed three telephone calls in the presence of her interrogators.
* She has been allowed to call her husband indirectly once, on 3 July ahead of the Eid.

**Iranian Embassy**

* The Iranian Embassy in London offered to meet with Richard Ratcliffe following the birthday party for Gabriella on June 10 and discuss its government’s actions.
* It subsequently retracted that offer on 3 July.
* The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tehran has offered to act as mediator with the Judiciary. It has transmitted a request for Nazanin’s and Gabriella’s release this Eid. This release was not granted.

**Foreign Office**

* The Foreign Office reported to Parliament on 28 June that they currently have four different consular cases of British citizens detained in Iran.
* The Foreign Secretary, Phillip Hammond, raised these cases with his Iranian counterpart on 4 July. Previously they were raised by the Minister for the Middle East and North Africa Tobias Ellwood on 18 May, and the Foreign Secretary on 17 May. Parliament debated the situation of Kamal Foroughi, one of these cases, on 19 May.

**Dual Nationals in Iran**

* The Revolutionary Guard have detained at least 3 dual national women since the Iranian Parliamentary elections in March, when a number of reformist women were elected, and hardliners were defeated, including one British, one Canadian and one French woman. All had been in Iran visiting their families.
* 16 July is the 6-month anniversary of the release of US dual nationals following the nuclear deal.
* On 6 July US congress, led by members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, issued a bipartisan resolution calling on Iran to release 2 US dual nationals currently held by Iran, Siamak and Baquer Namazi. See: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-resolution/808/text/ih?overview=closed&format=txt>

**Background:**

**Nazanin Zaghari Ratcliffe** lives in West Hampstead with her husband Richard and their daughter Gabriella. Nazanin visits her family in Iran once a year.

Nazanin is currently being detained without charge in Iran. Nazanin was arrested at the airport while on family holiday for Easter/Iranian New Year on 3 April. Her daughter Gabriella is currently stuck in Iran, having had her British passport confiscated by the Iranian authorities.

* A video of Nazanin’s story can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/SKLhE42umhg>
* More stories in national and international media, along with a petition signed by over 783,000 people so far, can be found at [www.freenazanin.com](http://www.freenazanin.com).

For the first two months of Nazanin’s detention, she was kept 1,000km from her family in Kerman Prison. It was confirmed on June 13 that she had been transferred to Evin Prison, Tehran.

In Evin Prison, Nazanin has been allowed a supervised telephone call to Gabriella and her parents once a week, though the family cannot contact her. She is not allowed to call her husband. Since she was moved to Tehran, she has had weekly family visits. She was allowed to see her daughter once during the two months she was in Kerman. At this first visit she had been too weak to stand up.

On Friday 10 June, the Free Nazanin Campaign celebrated Gabriella’s 2nd Birthday by the Iranian Embassy in Hyde Park. This celebration was the culmination of its birthday card campaign where thousands of people across the globe sent her cards via Iranian Embassies.

Since 3 April, Nazanin has been held without charge. On 15 June 2016, accusations appeared in the Iranian and international press from the Kerman branch of the Revolutionary Guard accusing Nazanin as being the ringleader of a global network of media companies and media organisations aimed at the soft overthrow of the Iranian regime. Her family dispute this as a ridiculous fantasy. Her actual charges remain as yet undefined. After almost 100 days she has still had no access to a lawyer. She has been refused access to British consular assistance. [Amnesty](https://www.theguardian.com/world/amnesty-international) International have said that *“She is a prisoner of conscience.”*

Nazanin works as a project manager for the Thomson Reuters Foundation, which delivers charitable projects around the world. It does not work in Iran. Nazanin is the third woman with dual citizenship in a European country to be detained in Iran whilst visiting relatives since March.

**Further Information**

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-3642765/Iran-accuses-British-Iranian-woman-bid-overthrow-regime.html>

<http://mobile.nytimes.com/aponline/2016/06/15/world/middleeast/ap-ml-iran-british-woman-detained.html?_r=0&referer=https://www.google.co.uk/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jun/15/briton-rejects-accusation-spying-against-wife-imprisoned-iran-nazanin-zaghari-ratcliffe>

The petition can be found at <https://www.change.org/p/david-cameron-mp-free-nazanin-ratcliffe?source_location=discover_feed>

Amnesty International’s appeal and letters for Nazanin can be accessed at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/4068/2016/en/>