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PRESS RELEASE

Iran: Freedom of Expression on the Frontline

Tehran 14.02.11: A pro-democracy rally in solidarity with popular uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia is being held today in Tehran, and other major cities in the country. ARTICLE 19 is concerned by reports that the authorities have stepped up security in the capital, blocked access to internet sites, and started jamming satellite news channels in anticipation of the rally. ARTICLE 19 calls on the authorities of Iran to uphold the right to peaceful protest and freedom of expression, as stipulated in the Iranian Constitution.

“As thousands of pro-democracy protesters gather in Tehran and beyond to show their support for the Egyptian and Tunisian revolutions, we urge Iran to exercise restraint in the face of protests,” said Dr Agnes Callamard, ARTICLE 19 Executive Director.

“ARTICLE 19 also urges Iran to take heed of the revolutions in Egypt and Tunisia and immediately begin a process of real democratisation. The international community will be monitoring the Iranian government’s reaction to today’s protest very closely,” continued Dr Callamard.

Although Iran's establishment officially supports the Egyptian popular protests, it says the 14 February rallies in Iran are a "political move" by the opposition leaders. After contested presidential elections in June 2009, Iranian authorities have all but banned independent reporting of anti-government gatherings.

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FURTHER INFORMATION:

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- Visit Azad Tribune at: www.azadtribune.org
- Visit the Azad Tribune Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/pages/Freedom-of-Expression-in-Iran-Azad-Tribune/107851732590166
- ARTICLE 19 is an independent human rights organisation that works around the world to protect and promote the right to freedom of expression. It takes its name from Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees free speech.