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The Statements Made by Mohammad Mostafaei, Sakineh Ashtiani's Lawyer, in His Interview with Spiegel. Ashtiani's Children Respond Immediately!

In an interview with the German magazine Spiegel, Monday August 16, Mohammad Mostafaei, Sakine Ashtiani's lawyer in her stoning, i.e., 'adultery', case talked publicly about her husband's murder case and the probability of her involvement in it. In the interview with the world renowned German paper Mostafaei said, among other things, that Sakineh Ashtiani had drugged her husband [before her accomplice killed him] and thus had a hand in his murder.

Mostafaei's statements were met with immediate objection of Ashtiani's children. Sajjad Ghaderzadeh, Sakineh Ashtiani's son, responded the same day in an interview with the web magazine, Rooz OnLine:

'There is neither any evidence to prove my mother had a hand in my father's murder nor has she made any such confession. What the head of the judiciary of Eastern Azerbaijan province has announced [to this effect] is totally false.'

As a matter of fact, as the Farsi original of this PR was under translation into English, Ashtiani's children, Sajjad and Saeedeh, issued a letter on August 17, released through ICAS at once (in the Farsi original as well as in English simultaneously), in which they have reminded Mostafaei that as early as June 10, 2010, he had been dismissed by their mother, and requested him to therefore stop giving opinions about their mother's case in the capacity of her lawyer (<http://stopstonningnow.com/wpress/2378>).

As I have been working on this case since two-and-a-half years ago, following its every detail, I deem it necessary to clarify a few points here.

Firstly, it is a fundamental principle that no lawyer in the world is allowed to make public the confidential information contained in any case.

Secondly, what is at stake in the particular case of Sakineh Ashtiani is her very life. Any statement, therefore, that confirms, albeit implicitly, the statement made by Islamic republic's prosecutor can have a strong negative impact on her fate.

Thirdly, we are in possession of official court documents from Iran proving that the murder case has been tried in a different court where Mohammad Mostafaei was not the defending attorney.

Fourthly, Sakineh Ashtiani was acquitted on the murder charge. But she was convicted, by a different court, of having 'illegitimate (illicit) relationship' with two men – a charge different from 'adultery' (of a married woman) and therefore, according to Islamic code of punishment, not punishable by stoning. On this account she was sentenced to 99 lashes, which she was given in front of her son, plus 10 years' imprisonment for 'disturbing the social peace' (!). Both cases were thus officially closed. However, at a later date the Province Court of Eastern Azerbaijan in Tabriz reopened Ashtiani's case, and this time brought the charge of 'adultery' against her, asking for the punishment of stoning in accordance with the Shari'a law. In accordance with the new development in the case two-and-a-half years ago, I recommended Ashtiani's children to contact Mohammad Mostafaei, a well-known defense attorney in 'adultery' and child execution cases. They did, and, fortunately, Mostafaei accepted Ashtiani's case of 'adultery'.

The Islamic regime in Iran, under immense international pressure opposing Ashtiani's stoning or hanging sentences, has reopened her husband's murder case. Desperate for not having any evidence to prove its case, it puts Ashtiani under torture, and later promises her, through the person of Hossein Nobakht, Tabriz Deputy Prosecutor, that if she appears on (the state) television and makes its desired confessions, she will be saved from execution by hanging. The regime thus tries to present Ashtiani to the world as an accomplice in her husband's murder and thereby prepare the ground for her execution. It goes without saying, therefore, that under such momentous circumstances the statements made to Spiegel by Mohammad Mostafaei have been utterly irresponsible.

We therefore call on Mohammad Mostafaei and all those who express, on various occasions, their opinion on Sakineh Ashtiani's case to do so with utmost precision and sense of responsibility.

Also, we call on the media to refer to the information available through the ICAS, the International Committee Against Execution (ICAE), the statements made by Ashtiani's children, and those made by her murder-case lawyer, Hootan Kian.

All the above-mentioned information, as well as the official documents of the regime's courts, only underline Ashtiani's innocence of the trumped up murder charge.

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