

Antony Higginbotham MP
Member of Parliament for Burnley



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

22 November 2020

Dear Constituent,

Re: Re: Nazanin-Zaghari Ratcliffe and Anoosheh Ashoori

Thank you for contacting me about Nazanin-Zaghari Ratcliffe and Anoosheh Ashoori.

It's disgraceful what is happening with both of these individuals and I'm committed, as is the Government, to securing their release.

It is something I bring up consistently with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and I know from those discussions that they continue to work hard to assist British nationals detained in Iran. My thoughts are with Nazanin and Anoosheh, and their families at this time. Like you, I want to see them both released immediately.

As an update I am told that the UK Embassy in Tehran continues to request consular access to both, has asked to attend any future judicial hearings involving either case, and is also seeking to support families through what must be a difficult period.

I had the opportunity to bring this up in the House of Commons on the 3rd of November when I spoke about how the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, commonly known as the Iran nuclear deal, does not seem to be deterring Iran in its actions in the region or in respect to dual nationals. It's imperative that we hold Iran accountable for their actions.

Simply put, if Iran is not willing to play by international rules and norms, and continues to use hostage diplomacy, then it should not be rewarded with an easing of sanctions. You can see my contribution enclosed, or using the following link:

<https://www.antonyhig.co.uk/news/antony-questions-actions-iran-relation-nazanin-zaghari-ratcliffe>

It is particularly appalling that Iran began a new case against Nazanin and threatened her with being returned to prison. Whilst I am relieved that the groundless new trial was adjourned, this may just be a temporary reprieve.

I will continue to do all I can to call on the Iranian authorities to do the right thing, release those it is holding arbitrarily, and return to the international system. And I will also continue to ask the UK Government to consider when we might need to walk away from the Iran deal, if they refuse to work constructively with us.

Again thank you for taking the time to contact me and like you I hope for a resolution soon.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. Higginbotham'.

Antony Higginbotham MP
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