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Dear Editorial,

Please find enclosed the letter of a group of former political prisoners regarding the book “ Prisoner of Tehran “ written by Marina Nemat.

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Book Point  
Voice of America  
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The letter of a group of former and tortured political prisoners to Penguin Publications

## PROTEST AGAINST THE PUBLICATION OF THE PRISONER OF TEHRAN

In April 2007 The Prisoner of Tehran was published by Penguin Publications in English. The writer of the book, Marina Nemat, claims that The Prisoner of Tehran is her memoir of her two years and two months imprisonment in Evin Prison in Tehran.

For us who have spent many dark years in the in prison, the publication of any book that would shed light on the unknown facts of the prisons of the Islamic Republic, particularly during the 1980's, is a source of hope. Some of us the signatories of this letter, have published their memories and what they witnessed of their time in prison, some of which have been translated from Farsi into different languages.

Unfortunately we have to say that the publication of Ms. Nemat's book outraged us. The scenes and atmosphere described in the book not only fail to bring to light the reality of the prison experience but it also distorts the truth and presents it reverse. The atmosphere and scenes are fictional. For example I will bring to your attention just a few:

- The execution scene Ms. Nemat describes is so impossible that it can only be a fiction of the writer's imagination.
- The footloose nature of the prison, out of control of the guards and the ability to move freely with an interrogator, , description of the solitary cells of 209, and the behaviour of the interrogators and guards that seem to take shape only to form Marina Nemat's story is absolutely impossible for the Evin Prison of those years.
- The atmosphere that is shaped throughout the book, which cleverly conceals, that is, does not show any other side of the prison experience, which is the experience of prisoners that resisted and held their ground, is an insult to all political prisoners of Iran, and especially the women prisoners.

Unfortunately we cannot show all of the misrepresentations of the book page by page in a short letter.

If Ms. Nemat had presented this book as a novel or story, it would be another matter. But time and time again in public interviews, she has insisted that the book is documentary and factual.

We have also heard the writer reason on the Farsi language TV program, voice of America that her intention was to present her personal story and memories not description of the prison. This statement does not lessen her responsibility to the truth. These “personal” memories take place in Evin Prison, not the confines of her home. So any memory shaped in that prison will have to include the descriptions of the prison itself in that particular time period.

Our critique and protest to her book is not that her memories are personal ones, it is about the fact that she has replaced reality with fiction and that the book is made up and distorts the really of the prison experience.

We signatories to this petition have spent years inside the Islamic Republic’s Prison, and are familiar with the methods used for interrogation, minute trials, trials taking place even in the prison clinic next to the patient’s bed) and the behaviour of the interrogators and prison guards towards the prisoners and the scenes of execution and other things. We consider the publication of this book of distortions and fiction, an insult to ourselves and the thousands of political prisoners that were executed in the prisons of the Islamic Republic. We consider it our duty to document those horrific events and we strive to do so.

Setareh Abasi, in the 80,s; Hadi Aminian, in the 80,s; Soudabeh Ardavan, 1981-1990; Hamneshin Bahar, 1981-1988; Monireh Baradaran, 1081-1990; Behrouz Broumand, in the 80,s; Reza Fani Yazdi, 1983-1989; Shahram Fard, 1989; Shams Fathi, 1980; Rahmat Golami (Mafan), 1983-1988; Golroch Jahangiri, 1980-1981; Soudabeh Jazani, 1981-1983; Siavash Kohrang, 1987-1990; Kobra Matinzadeh, in the 80,s; Iraj Mesdaghi, 1081-1991; Mohamad Reza Moeeni, in the 80,s; Faezeh Monzavi, 1981-1983; Akram Mosavi, 1981-1986; Maryam Noori, 1985-1990; Fariba Sabet, 1983-1990; Azizeh Shahmoradi, 1984-1989; Shahab Shokouhi, 1983-1989; Behrouz Sauran, in the 80,s; Bahereh Toghanian, 1981-1990; Mina Zarin, 1981-1990