



16 October 2019

**Support letter from ACPA for our friends and colleagues  
Fariba Adelkhah and Roland Marchal, scientific prisoners in Iran**

The news of the arrest of our friend and colleague Roland Marchal, CNRS researcher at the Centre for international relations (CERI) at Sciences Po and chief editor of our journal *Politique africaine* from 2002 to 2006 was announced in the French press on the 15th of October.

He was arrested early June, along with another of our dear friends and colleagues, Fariba Adelkhah, research director at CERI, Sciences Po and an expert on Iran. He has similarly been incarcerated in Tehran, in Evin prison, for more than four months. Revealing Roland's name or not, was discussed at length among his relatives and colleagues after only Fariba's name was revealed in Iran in July. We eventually took the decision to *not* release his name to the press, following the advice of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but also taking into account the experiences of colleagues from other countries who have also been imprisoned in Iran and especially the risks faced by our friends and by those who work to help them in Iran. For the last four months, the silence kept by our entire academic community but also by the informed journalists was remarkable. This is the manifestation of both a great solidarity and an extreme prudence necessary to address a particularly complex and worrying situation.

Roland is an internationally recognized sociologist, a great specialist of Africa and a very hard working, rigorous and solid researcher. He has been doing fieldwork for several decades on conflicts in Somalia, Chad, Sudan, Central African Republic and more recently in Mali. No doubt that he did not imagine that it would be in Iran, which is remote from his areas of expertise, that he would be arrested and charged with a « threat to the security of the state ».

We are deeply affected and revolted by our colleagues' long and unfounded incarceration. We are in full support of the action of the European academic association of FASOPO (Fonds d'analyse des sociétés politiques), of which Fariba and Roland are founding members. As soon as they were arrested, FASOPO immediately mobilized a community of researchers. We stand with them to reiterate the call for their immediate release, and the suspension of all scientific and cultural cooperation with Iran. We call on French and European universities to immediately interrupt their exchanges with Iran, both in the field of hard sciences and social sciences. We also call on academics around the world to express their solidarity with our friends and colleagues and with all academic prisoners held in Iran.

Fariba and Roland are of the same style: that of intellectuals extremely active on the academic scene, totally devoted to their research and driven by values of intellectual honesty and professional ethics far removed from the accusations they are now facing. These are two strong voices from the academic field that, in addition to being sorely missed by their family, friends and colleagues, are also missing to our scientific community.

We express our unwavering support to them and their families and ensure we will remain mobilized until their release. Please disseminate this information as widely as possible in your African and international networks.

You can find the [FASOPO press release](#) on the [FASOPO website](#) where you will find a press review, the biographies of Fariba and Roland and the press releases translated in several languages.

**Laurent Fourchard** (Outgoing President of ACPA) and **Sandrine Perrot** (President of ACPA)  
For the **Associations des Chercheurs de *Politique africaine* (ACPA)**