

# URGENT ACTION

## HUNGER STRIKER'S HEALTH NOW CRITICAL

**Hunger-striking human rights lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh is in grave danger as her health deteriorates after 45 days on hunger strike. She is protesting at the Iranian authorities imposing a travel ban on her 13-year-old daughter among other things.**

Prisoner of conscience **Nasrin Sotoudeh**, who has been on hunger strike since 17 October, was transferred to Evin Prison's clinic on 26 November. She has been told that she must have checkups there every day as her blood pressure is severely low. According to her husband, **Reza Khandan**, she has been drinking only salt-water and sugar-water since the start of her hunger strike and her health is now in a critical state.

Nasrin Sotoudeh was transferred to solitary confinement in Section 209 of Tehran's Evin Prison, under the control of the Ministry of Intelligence, on 4 November, in what appeared to be a punitive measure. On 15 November, Reza Khandan reported that when he tried to visit her in Section 209, the authorities told him she was not there, though they had previously told him that she had been transferred there from the General Ward. Nasrin Sotoudeh's whereabouts were unknown until she was transferred to the General Ward on 21 November.

Nasrin Sotoudeh has told her family that she will continue her hunger strike until pressures placed on her family, including a travel ban on her 13-year-old daughter, are lifted.

### **Please write immediately in Persian, Arabic, English or your own language:**

- Calling on the Iranian authorities to release Nasrin Sotoudeh immediately and unconditionally, as she has been imprisoned solely for the peaceful exercise of her rights to freedom of expression and association;
- Urging them to allow Nasrin Sotoudeh regular access to her lawyer, family and independent medical care, and ensure she is treated humanely at all times, not punished in any way for her hunger strike, such as being placed in solitary confinement or forcibly fed;
- Urging them to lift the travel ban on Nasrin Sotoudeh's daughter and reminding them that the harassment and arrest of family members of prisoners, solely in order to stop them from speaking out publicly, would violate Iran's obligations as a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 11 JANUARY 2013 TO:**

#### Leader of the Islamic Republic

Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei  
The Office of the Supreme Leader  
Islamic Republic Street – End of Shahid  
Keshvar Doust Street  
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran  
Email: info\_leader@leader.ir

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

Twitter: "#Iran leader @khamenei\_ir

#### Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani  
[care of] Public relations Office  
Number 4, 2 Azizi Street  
Vali Asr Ave, above Pasteur Street  
intersection  
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran  
Email: info@dadiran.ir (Subject line: FAO

Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani) or  
info\_leader@leader.ir

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

#### **And copies to:**

Secretary General, High Council for Human Rights

Mohammad Javad Larijani  
High Council for Human Rights  
[Care of] Office of the Head of the Judiciary,  
Pasteur St., Vali Asr Ave. south of Serah-e  
Jomhuri, Tehran 1316814737,  
Islamic Republic of Iran  
Email: info@humanrights-iran.ir  
(subject line: FAO Mohammad Javad  
Larijani)

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.**

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the fifth update of UA 197/10. Further information:

<http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/007/2011/en>

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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Nasrin Sotoudeh, who is serving a six-year prison sentence in Tehran's Evin Prison, started a hunger strike on the morning of 17 October in protest at the authorities' denial of her repeated requests to have face-to-face visits with her 13-year-old daughter and five-year-old son. Nasrin Sotoudeh's health, which was already weakened by her previous hunger strikes, has deteriorated further after 45 days on hunger strike.

A hunger striker who continues to drink water with no other nutritional intake will usually begin to feel seriously ill at around the 40th day. Loss of hearing, unsteadiness, deteriorating vision and nausea are among the symptoms. Depending on their physical constitution, hunger strikers reach the critical phase after between 55 and 75 days, at which point hunger strikes are generally fatal. Taking minerals, vitamins or calories, as Nasrin Sotoudeh does, could delay the symptoms but the risk of permanent damage is not reduced.

Nasrin Sotoudeh was restricted to family visits in a "cabin" (behind a glass screen) after the prison authorities discovered she had been writing a defence for her upcoming court hearing on a piece of tissue paper. She has not been allowed to make phone calls for the past year.

On 12 November Nasrin Sotoudeh was allowed to have a face-to-face visit with her children. The meeting, which lasted only a few minutes, was in the presence of the prison guards. Reza Khandan was not allowed to meet her. Nasrin Sotoudeh has told her family that she will continue her hunger strike until the authorities lift their pressure on her family, in particular the travel ban imposed on her 13-year-old daughter. In July 2012, Reza Khandan and their daughter received an order informing them that they were banned from travelling; this appears to have resulted from a case that had been opened against them.

On 9 January 2011, Nasrin Sotoudeh was sentenced to 11 years in prison by Branch 26 of the Revolutionary Court for "spreading propaganda against the system" and "acting against national security", including membership of the Centre for Human Rights Defenders (CHRD) – an organization co-founded by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Shirin Ebadi. Nasrin Sotoudeh's sentence was later reduced to six years on appeal. She has denied all charges against her, including membership of the CHRD. She was also banned from practising law and travelling for 20 years, reduced to 10 years on appeal. Since her arrest on 4 September 2010, Nasrin Sotoudeh has been detained in Evin Prison, including a lengthy period in solitary confinement. Her health has been weakened by three previous hunger strikes in protest against her arrest and detention conditions. Her hunger strikes included three days of "dry" hunger striking (refusing water as well as food).

The UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers provide that lawyers must be allowed to carry out their work "without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference." In addition, it affirms the right of lawyers to freedom of expression, also provided for in Article 19 of the ICCPR, which includes "the right to take part in public discussion of matters concerning the law, the administration of justice and the promotion and protection of human rights".

Nasrin Sotoudeh was awarded the European Parliament's Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought on 26 October 2012, along with fellow Iranian Ja'far Panahi – a world-renowned film director – who is himself facing a six-year prison sentence and is banned from film-making, for his peaceful criticism of the Iranian authorities.

Names: Nasrin Sotoudeh (f), Reza Khandan (m)

Gender m/f: both

Further information on UA: 197/10 Index: MDE 13/071/2012 Issue Date: 30 November 2012

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