

URGENT ACTION

LAWYER ENDS HUNGER STRIKE BUT STILL DETAINED

Following an intervention by parliamentarians, Iranian human rights lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh ended her 49-day long hunger strike on 4 December 2012 after the travel ban on her 13-year old daughter was lifted by Iran's judiciary. Her health is frail due to her prolonged hunger strike and she needs specialized medical care. Amnesty International is calling for her immediate and unconditional release.

Prisoner of conscience **Nasrin Sotoudeh**, ended her 49-day hunger strike after judicial authorities agreed to meet her demand to lift a travel ban imposed on her 13-year-old daughter. **Reza Khandan**, Nasrin Sotoudeh's husband, and a number of women's rights activists met with parliamentarians regarding her case. Emerging parliamentary concern, expressed following this meeting, appears to have prompted judicial officials to lift the restriction. A member of the parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Commission has also stated that a number of parliamentarians plan to visit Evin Prison.

On 2 December, Reza Khandan reported that Nasrin Sotoudeh's health had deteriorated and that she was suffering from loss of vision, dizziness, unsteadiness and low blood pressure. It is unclear whether she has access to a diet appropriate to someone coming off a prolonged hunger strike.

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

- Urging Iranian parliamentarians to take action to secure the release of Nasrin Sotoudeh, reminding them that imprisonment for peacefully exercising the right to freedom of expression or work as a lawyer is contrary to Iranian and international law, and calls into question respect for the rule of law in Iran;
- Urging them to obtain assurances from prison officials that Nasrin Sotoudeh is being given full access to the specialized medical treatment required for those who have not had food for prolonged periods, including access to independent doctors of her choice.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 17 JANUARY 2013 TO:

Speaker of Parliament

Ali Larijani
Majles-e Shoura-ye Eslami
Baharestan Square
Tehran
Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: a.larijani@parliran.ir
Fax: +98 21 3355 6408
Salutation: Your Excellency

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

And copies to:

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

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 sixth update of UA 197/10. Further information:
<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/067/2012/en>

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



URGENT ACTION

LAWYER ENDS HUNGER STRIKE BUT STILL DETAINED

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The judicial order to lift the travel ban on Nasrin Sotoudeh's daughter followed months of campaigning at both national and international levels. At the same time that Iranian MPs raised concerns with judicial officials in Iran, on 4 December, Navi Pillay, and the High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed her concern about Nasrin Sotoudeh, urging the Government of Iran to promptly release her along with all other activists who have been arrested and imprisoned for their peaceful human rights activism in Iran. Amnesty International urges Iranian parliamentarians to continue to fulfil their responsibilities to uphold the human rights of their constituents whether through amending national legislation and policies or at an individual level.

Nasrin Sotoudeh started a hunger strike on the morning of 17 October 2012 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. She was transferred to Evin Prison's clinic on 26 November and was told that she must have checkups there every day as her blood pressure was very low. According to her husband, Reza Khandan, she drank only salt-water and sugar-water since the start of her hunger strike. 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 back to the General Ward on 21 November.

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 lasted only a few minutes and was in the presence of the prison guards. Reza Khandan was not allowed to meet her. Nasrin Sotoudeh told her family that she would continue her hunger strike until the authorities lift 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). 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. 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 13/073/2012 Issue Date: 7 December 2012

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL

