

URGENT ACTION

DEMAND RELEASE OF HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER

Iranian human rights lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh was arrested on 4 September after her house and office were searched on 28 August and she was summoned to appear in court. She is currently in solitary confinement in Evin prison in Tehran. Amnesty International considers her to be a prisoner of conscience who is at risk of torture or other ill-treatment.

Nasrin Sotoudeh has defended many high profile human rights campaigners and political activists, as well as juvenile offenders on death row. She has spoken publicly about shortcomings in the rule of law and administration of justice in the course of judicial proceedings against her clients. Her clients include Nobel Peace Laureate Shirin Ebadi, who has several cases pending against her. In recent months, Nasrin Sotoudeh has been warned she could face reprisals for her continued advocacy for her clients, and her husband, Reza Khandan, has also received threats warning him to stop his wife from defending Shirin Ebadi or she would risk arrest.

Nasrin Sotoudeh is not known to have been formally charged, but the reasons stated on the summons include suspicion of "propaganda against the system" and "gathering and colluding with the aim of harming state security". She has not yet been granted access to her lawyer. She has not yet been able to see her family but is reported to have called them briefly on 8 September. She has two children, aged 10 and three years.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Persian, Arabic, English, or your own language:

- Expressing concern at the arrest of Nasrin Sotoudeh and calling for her immediate and unconditional release as she is a prisoner of conscience, held solely for her peaceful exercise of her rights to freedom of expression and association, including her work as a lawyer;
- Calling on the Iranian authorities to ensure that she is protected from torture or other ill-treatment while held, and she is granted immediate access to her family and her lawyer;
- Reminding the Iranian authorities that UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers not only state that lawyers must be allowed to carry out their work "without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference" but also expressly recognizes that they are entitled to freedom of expression, 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".

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 22 OCTOBER 2010 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

via website:

[http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/index.php?](http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/index.php?p=letter)

[p=letter](http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/index.php?p=letter) (English)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani
Howzeh Riyasat-e Qoveh Qazaiyeh
(Office of the Head of the Judiciary)
Pasteur St., Vali Asr Ave., south of
Serah-e Jomhuri

Tehran 1316814737

Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: **Via website:**

[http://www.dadiran.ir/tabid/75/Default.a](http://www.dadiran.ir/tabid/75/Default.aspx)

[SPX](http://www.dadiran.ir/tabid/75/Default.aspx)

First starred box: first name; **second box:** family name; **third:** email address

Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Director, Human Rights Headquarters of Iran

His Excellency Mohammad Javad Larijani

Bureau of International Affairs, Office of the Head of the Judiciary, Pasteur St., Vali Asr Ave. south of Serah-e Jomhuri, Tehran 1316814737, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: bia.judi@yahoo.com

Fax: + 98 21 5 537 8827 (please keep trying)

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives of Iran accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Nasrin Sotoudeh was previously banned from travel on 10 December 2008, when she was due to travel to Italy to receive the first annual Human Rights Prize awarded by Human Rights International, based in Italy.

Prior to her arrest, Nasrin Sotoudeh's assets were frozen and she was summoned to the tax office. Afterwards, she told the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran she had seen that 30 other lawyers had cases of tax irregularities being prepared against them, in what would appear to be a concerted effort by the authorities to prevent these lawyers from continuing their work.

Nasrin Sotoudeh is the latest well-known lawyer to have been arrested or forced to flee the country since the disputed presidential election of June 2009. Mohammad Olyaeifard is serving a one-year prison sentence for speaking out about the execution of one of his clients, a juvenile offender (see Iran urged to release lawyer imprisoned for criticizing juvenile's execution, 6 May 2010, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/iran-urged-release-lawyer-imprisoned-criticizing-juveniles-execution-2010-05-06>). . Mohammad Ali Dadkhah and Abdolfattah Soltani, colleagues of Shirin Ebadi, were both arrested after the election (UA 160/09 and UA 186/09) Though both were later released on bail, they have court cases pending against them which could lead to their imprisonment. Shadi Sadr, who was detained for a week after the disputed presidential election of 2009, has had to leave the country. Mohammad Mostafaei, who represented many juvenile offenders on death row and several individuals sentenced to stoning had to flee from Iran in July after his valiant defence of Sakineh Mohammadi Ashtiani, a woman sentenced to execution by stoning, contributed to an international outcry about her case and led to the arrest of Mohammad Mostafaei's wife and her brother. Another prominent lawyer, Mohammad Seifzadeh, who remains in Iran is also facing trial.

Amnesty International is concerned that such measures indicate the increasing desire of the Iranian authorities to prevent Iranians – particularly those facing charges relating to their peaceful exercise of their rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly - from being able to access good quality legal representation.

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