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## **Health fears for imprisoned Sakharov prize winner in Iran**

News that Iranian human rights lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh has won the Sakharov Prize – EU award for human rights and freedom of thought - came as her health deteriorated due to a hunger strike in protest at the Iranian authorities' refusal to allow her face-to-face visits with her 13-year-old daughter and five-year-old son.

The prisoner of conscience, who has been in prison since September 2010 has been on hunger strike for 10 days and was taken to the medical facility in Tehran's Evin Prison on 22 October.

“For three months now Nasrin Sotoudeh has only had visits from her children while behind a glass screen – ever since the authorities discovered she had been using a tissue to write her defence for an upcoming court hearing,” said Ann Harrison, Deputy Director of Amnesty International's Middle East and North Africa programme.

“The Iranian authorities have imposed a travel ban on her daughter and on one occasion held her husband overnight in prison for their peaceful advocacy on her behalf. Despite espousing the importance of the family in Iranian life, the authorities do their utmost to silence the families of prisoners of conscience and political prisoners. This is a shocking example of the lengths to which Iran will go to suppress criticism of their policies and practices.

“By harassing the family members of prisoners solely in order to stop their legitimate public campaigning, the Iranian authorities are trampling wholesale on their international human rights obligations.”