

# URGENT ACTION

## HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER ON HUNGER STRIKE

**Iranian human rights lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh resumed a hunger strike on 31 October over her arbitrary arrest and conditions of detention. She has remained in solitary confinement in Evin Prison in Tehran since her arrest on 4 September, with only occasional contact with family members. She is a prisoner of conscience, held in connection with her work as a lawyer.**

**Nasrin Sotoudeh** has spoken openly about failures in the administration of justice in Iran. She represented clients ranging from juvenile offenders facing the death penalty to Nobel Peace Laureate Shirin Ebadi. Following her arrest, she has been permitted infrequent calls to her family and rare calls (possibly only one) to her lawyer. Her most recent call to her husband took place on 31 October. On 3 November she met her two children and sister.

Her husband, Reza Khandan, is prevented from seeing her, apparently at least partly in reprisal for his public campaigning on her case. On 3 November her children are said to have found her in poor condition, having lost 10kg in weight, and with what her children called "a darker face". They are said to have cried throughout and after their meeting with her, which led a family member to describe the day as "one of the worst... of my life". On 31 October, following a meeting in Evin Prison with Tehran's Chief Prosecutor, she resumed the month-long hunger strike she had ended on 26 October, now extended to a "dry" strike, meaning she is not even drinking water.

At her trial, which is set for 15 November, she will face charges of acting against national security; gathering and colluding to disturb national security; and co-operation with a human rights body, the Centre for Human Rights Defenders (CHRD), which Shirin Ebadi co-founded. There are fears that she may have been tortured in detention.

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

- Calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Nasrin Sotoudeh, 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 and regular access to her family including her husband, and her lawyer;
- Reminding the Iranian authorities that the 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 that they are also 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 17 DECEMBER 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](mailto: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

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](mailto: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. Check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 197/10. Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/087/2010/en>

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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In the months preceding her arrest, Nasrin Sotoudeh, who had been banned from travel in 2008, was warned she could face reprisals for her continued advocacy on behalf of her clients. Her husband, Reza Khandan, also received threats warning him that she would risk arrest if he did not stop her from defending Shirin Ebadi.

Nasrin Sotoudeh's original lawyer, Nasim Ghanavi, has faced pressure from the authorities, including threats of arrest, apparently on account of her representation of Nasrin Sotoudeh. Nasim Ghanavi has consequently been forced to distance herself from the case, leaving her unable to effectively represent her client.

Now that the 15 November date for Nasrin Sotoudeh's hearing has been determined, the judge responsible for the case has reportedly granted permission for her new lawyer, Abdolfattah Soltani, to meet with her and it is thought that this meeting will take place in the coming days or week.

Recent months have seen increased persecution of defence lawyers. Mohammad Olyaeifard, a lawyer and board member of the Committee for the Defence of Political Prisoners in Iran, a human rights organization, 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 Olyaeifard is in poor health.

Abdolfattah Soltani and fellow lawyer Mohammad Ali Dadkhah, both colleagues of Shirin Ebadi and co-founders of the CHRD, were arrested after the disputed presidential election of June 2009 (UA 160/09 and UA 186/09) and, though both were later released on bail, they have court cases pending against them which could lead to their imprisonment and eventual disbarment. Another prominent lawyer, Mohammad Seyfzadeh, who is also a founder member of the CHRD, was sentenced at the end of October to nine years' imprisonment and to a 10 year ban on practising law, despite the fact that only the Disciplinary Court for Lawyers may impose such professional bans, for "forming an association... whose aim is to harm national security" and "being a member of an association whose aim is to harm national security" in relation to the CHRD. He was banned from leaving the country in 2009, as was Dr Hadi Esmailzadeh, another member of the CHRD.

Others have felt compelled to leave the country for their own safety such as Shadi Sadr, detained for a week in 2009 (see UA 139/09), and Mohammad Mostafaei, the lawyer of Sakineh Mohammadi Ashtiani, a woman sentenced to execution by stoning (see UA 175/09). Another of her lawyers, Javid Houtan Kiyani, was arrested on 10 October (see update of 3 November 2010 to UA 211/09).

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.. (For further information, see *Iran: Lawyers' defence work repaid with loss of freedom*, Index: MDE 13/093/2010, 1 October 2010, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/093/2010/en>)

Further information on UA: 197/10 Index: MDE 13/099/2010 Issue Date: 05 November 2010

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