

URGENT APPEAL

# Iran: Nasrin Sotoudeh sentenced to 33 more years in jail

Sunday 17 March 2019, by [FIDH](#), [OMCT](#) (Date first published: 12 March 2019).

**The Observatory has been informed by the League for the Defence of Human Rights in Iran (LDDHI) about the conviction and sentencing of Ms. Nasrin Sotoudeh, a human rights lawyer and 2012 laureate of the European Parliament's Sakharov Prize, to 33 years in jail and 148 lashes.**

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Iran  
March 12, 2019

The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a partnership of FIDH and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), has received new information and requests your urgent intervention in the following situation in Iran.

## **New information:**

The Observatory has been informed by the League for the Defence of Human Rights in Iran (LDDHI) about the conviction and sentencing of Ms. Nasrin Sotoudeh, a human rights lawyer and 2012 laureate of the European Parliament's Sakharov Prize, to 33 years in jail and 148 lashes.

According to the information received, on March 9, 2019, Ms. Nasrin Sotoudeh received a copy of a court ruling issued after a one-day hearing held in absentia on December 30, 2018, by Branch 28 of the Islamic Revolution Court in Tehran. Ms. Sotoudeh refused to attend the hearing in order to protest the illegality of proceedings in the Islamic Revolution Courts. The court found her guilty and

sentenced her to 33 years in jail and 148 lashes on the following seven charges: “gathering and collusion against national security” (Article 610 of the Islamic Penal Code), “spreading propaganda against the system” (Article 500), “effective membership of the illegal and anti-security splinter groups Defenders of Human Rights Centre, LEGAM [1] and National Council of Peace” (Article 498); “encouraging people to commit corruption and prostitution, and providing the means for it” (Article 639), “appearing without the sharia-sanctioned hijab at the premises of the magistrate’s office” (Article 638); “disrupting public order and calm” (Article 618) and “spreading falsehoods with intent to disturb the public opinion” (Article 698).

Judge Mohammad Moqisseh sentenced her to the maximum punishment in each and every case, i.e. a total of 29 years. In addition, he used the provisions of Article 134 of the same law to impose four more years of imprisonment on the ground that Ms. Sotoudeh had committed “more than three crimes.” No lawyer represented her before the court, as she refused to appoint a lawyer to protest against provisions restricting the right of those accused of national security crimes to be represented by a lawyer of their choosing. Ms. Sotoudeh has 20 days to appeal the ruling.

The Prosecutor argued in the indictment that Ms. Nasrin Sotoudeh “removed her hijab during family visits in Evin prison” and “removed her headscarf at the Prosecutor’s Office”; “was a prominent, active and organised member of Defenders of Human Rights Centre, LEGAM and National Council of Peace”; “received the amount of 50,000 Euros in disguise of Sakharov prize for her subversive actions”; “was involved in a call for a referendum”; “helped the establishment of house churches”; “made false statements about detention of women who took off their hijab, accusing police agents of abuse”; “encouraged the people to commit corruption and prostitution”; and “was involved, alongside elements affiliated to the Gonabadi Order of Dervishes, in action outside the Evin prison.”

The Observatory expresses its deepest concern about the sentencing and continuing arbitrary detention of Ms. Nasrin Sotoudeh, which appears to be only aimed at punishing her for her legitimate human rights activities.

The Observatory further recalls that Ms. Nasrin Sotoudeh was already arrested and detained in June 2018 to serve a five-year prison sentence in a separate case (see background information).

The Observatory urges the Iranian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Ms. Nasrin Sotoudeh and to guarantee her physical integrity and psychological well-being. The Observatory further urges the Iranian authorities to drop all the charges and end all judicial harassment against her.

### **Background information:**

In August 2015, Ms. Nasrin Sotoudeh was summoned for interrogation following the renewal of her lawyer’s licence, nine months after she held a sit-in to protest against a three-year suspension of her licence. The summons did not specify any charges. However, she was unable to attend the interrogation due to a surgery on her foot at the time. Her husband went to the court in her place and presented medical documents regarding her condition and her inability to respond to the summons.

She was then given three weeks to go to the Islamic Revolution Court. However, when she did go, she was not allowed in, as a number of lawyers are barred from entering the court’s building. Ms. Sotoudeh was also summoned to appear before the Islamic Revolution Court on September 4, 2016. However, she was not allowed inside the court on the pretext that the colour and design of her clothing were not proper and on this occasion she was neither tried nor notified of any pending

charges. However, it was established after her arrest in 2018 that the court had sentenced her in absentia to five years on the same day.

On June 13, 2018, security forces arrested Ms. Nasrin Sotoudeh at her home in Tehran and transferred her to the capital's Evin prison. Upon her arrest, she was presented with an arrest warrant and was told that she was being taken to serve a five-year prison sentence, which had been handed down against her in absentia. Ms. Nasrin Sotoudeh was not shown the court's ruling related to the sentence and had not been informed of the conviction or the sentence prior to her arrest. This is in flagrant contravention of domestic and international fair trial standards. Ms. Nasrin Sotoudeh filed an appeal against the sentence. At the time of publication, it was still pending.

### **Actions requested:**

Please write to the authorities of Iran asking them to:

- i. Immediately and unconditionally release Ms. Nasrin Sotoudeh, as well as all other human rights defenders arbitrarily detained in Iran;
- ii. Guarantee in all circumstances the physical integrity and psychological well-being of Ms. Nasrin Sotoudeh, as well as that of all other human rights defenders in Iran;
- iii. Drop all charges pending against Ms. Nasrin Sotoudeh and meanwhile ensure that all judicial proceedings against her are carried out in full compliance with her right to a fair trial, as protected under international law;
- iv. Put an end to all acts of harassment, including at the judicial level, against Ms. Nasrin Sotoudeh as well as that all other human rights defenders arbitrarily detained in the country, and ensure they are able to carry out their activities without hindrance;
- v. Conform to all the provisions of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 9, 1998, in particular its Articles 1, 6, 9, 11 and 12;
- vi. Ensure in all circumstances respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with international human rights standards and international instruments ratified by Iran.

Addresses:

- Leader of the Islamic Republic, H.E. Ayatollah Sayed Ali Khamenei, Fax: + 98 21 441 2030, Email: info\_leader leader.ir; Twitter: @khamenei\_ir
- President Hassan Rouhani, Islamic Republic of Iran, Fax: + 98 21 644 54811; Email: media rouhani.ir; Twitter: @HassanRouhani (English) and @Rouhani\_ir (Persian).
- Head of the Judiciary, H.E. Hojattolislam Ebrahim Ra'eesi, Islamic Republic of Iran, Fax: +98 21 879 6671 / +98 21 3 311 6567, Email: info dadiran.ir / info dadgostary-tehran.ir / info bia-judiciary.ir
- Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mohammad Javad Zarif, Islamic Republic of Iran, Fax: +98-21-66743149; matbuat mfa.gov.ir
- Secretary General, High Council for Human Rights, Mr. Mohammed Javad Larijani, Islamic Republic of Iran. Email: info humanrights-iran.ir

- H.E. Mr. Javad Amin-Mansour, Ambassador, Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, Fax: +41 22 7330203, Email: mission.iran.ties.itu.int
- H.E. Mr. Peiman Seadat, Ambassador, Embassy of Iran in Brussels, Belgium, Fax: + 32 2 762 39 15. Email: secreteriat iranembassy.be

*Please also write to the diplomatic representations of Iran in your respective countries.*

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Paris-Geneva, March 12, 2019

Kindly inform us of any action undertaken quoting the code of this appeal in your reply.

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## **P.S.**

- 12/03/2019 Human Rights Defenders:  
<https://www.fidh.org/en/issues/human-rights-defenders/iran-nasrin-sotoudeh-sentenced-to-38-years-in-jail-and-148-lashes-in>
- The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders (the Observatory) was created in 1997 by FIDH and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT). The objective of this programme is to prevent or remedy situations of repression against human rights defenders. FIDH and OMCT are both members of ProtectDefenders.eu, the European Union Human Rights Defenders Mechanism implemented by international civil society.

To contact the Observatory, call the emergency line:

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## **Footnotes**

- [1] Campaign for “Step by Step Abolition of the Death Penalty”