

URGENT APPEAL - THE OBSERVATORY

New information
IRN 006 / 0910 / OBS 108.3
Arbitrary detention / Sentence to prison
Iran
January 10, 2011

The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint programme of the International Federation for Human Rights (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 Iranian League for the Defense of Human Rights of the sentencing of Ms. **Nasrin Sotoudeh**, prominent human rights lawyer, known for defending juveniles facing death penalty, prisoners of conscience, human rights activists and children victims of abuse.

On January 9, 2010, Ms. Nasrin Sotoudeh was sentenced by the Tehran Revolutionary Tribunal to 11 years of imprisonment, and banned from practicing law and traveling for 20 years on charge of "acting against national security," of "not wearing hijab during a videotaped message" and of "propaganda against the regime."

Background information:

On August, 28, 2010, Ms. Sotoudeh's office and home were searched by members of the services of intelligence and her assets frozen.

On September 4, 2010, Ms. Sotoudeh went to Evin prison court, where she had been summoned by the Revolutionary Prosecutor's Office on allegations of "propaganda against the State" and "collusion and gathering with the aim of acting against national security" following interviews given to international media as well as for belonging to the Defenders of Human Rights Centre (DHRC). After her questioning by a magistrate, Ms. Sotoudeh was arrested. Her lawyer was not permitted to be present during the questioning.

A few days before her arrest, she had reported to the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran as to how the authorities were using tax harassment against human rights lawyers in order to limit their working conditions. She gave the example of Ms. Shirin Ebadi who was subjected to the payment of a tax bill of hundreds of thousands of dollars on the money she had been granted for her Nobel Peace Prize.

During her detention she was held for long periods in solitary confinement and denied contact with her family and lawyer. She came close to death after three dry hunger strikes to protest her prison conditions and violations of due process. She has reportedly been tortured in prison in order to force her to confess.

On November 28, 2010, Ms. Nasrin Sotoudeh appeared before the Tehran Revolutionary Tribunal. At the hearing, her lawyers requested her release on bail, which was denied by the Tribunal.

The Observatory expresses its deep concern about the sentence and the judicial harassment against her and denounces her arbitrary detention, which seems to merely aim at sanctioning her human rights activities.

The Observatory more generally points out that this case is part of a wave of arrests and harassment against a number of Iranian human rights lawyers, some of whom remain detained.

The Observatory therefore demands the immediate and unconditional release of all human rights lawyers and defenders currently detained in Iran in relation to their human rights activities.

Actions requested:

Please write to the Iranian authorities and ask them to:

- i. Guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of Ms. Nasrin Sotoudeh as well as all human rights defenders in Iran;
- ii. Release her immediately and unconditionally, since her detention is arbitrary as it only aims at sanctioning their human rights activities;
- iii. In the meantime, provide her with all the medical treatment she would require during her detention;
- iv. Put an end to acts of harassment - including at the judicial level - against her as well as against all human rights defenders in Iran;
- v. Conform in any circumstances with the provisions of the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted on December 9, 1998 by the United Nations General Assembly, in particular:
 - article 1, which states that “everyone has the right, individually or in association with others, to promote the protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels”,
 - article 5(c), which reads that “everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, at the national and international levels, [...] to communicate with non-governmental or intergovernmental organizations”,
 - article 9 which notably states that “everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, inter alia [...] to offer and provide professionally qualified legal assistance or other relevant advice and assistance in defending human rights and fundamental freedoms,
 - and article 12.2 which provides that “the State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually and in association with others, against any violence, threats, retaliation, de facto or de jure adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the present Declaration”;
- vi. Ensure in all circumstances respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with international human rights instruments ratified by Iran.

Addresses:

- Leader of the Islamic Republic, His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed Ali Khamenei, The Office of the Supreme Leader, Shoahada Street, Qom, Islamic Republic of Iran, Faxes: + 98 21 649 5880 / 21 774 2228, Email: info@leader.ir / istiftaa@wilayah.org / webmaster@wilayah.org
- President Mr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the Presidency, Palestine Avenue, Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, Fax: + 98 21 649 5880. Email: dr-ahmadinejad@president.ir

- Head of the Judiciary, His Excellency Ayatollah Sadeq Larijani, Ministry of Justice, Park-e Shahr, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, Fax: +98 21 879 6671 / +98 21 3 311 6567, Email: lrjpr@iranjudiciary.com / bia.judi@yahoo.com
- Minister of Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Manouchehr Mottaki, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Abdolmajid Keshk-e Mesri Av, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, Fax: + 98 21 390 1999, Email: matbuat@mfa.gov
- Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Chemin du Petit-Saconnex 28, 1209 Geneva, Switzerland, Fax: +41 22 7330203, Email: mission.iran@ties.itu.int
- Embassy of Iran in Brussels, 15 a avenue Franklin Roosevelt, 1050 Bruxelles, Belgium, Fax: + 32 2 762 39 15. Email: iran-embassy@yahoo.com

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

Paris-Geneva, January 10, 2011

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

The Observatory, a FIDH and OMCT venture, is dedicated to the protection of Human Rights Defenders and aims to offer them concrete support in their time of need.

To contact the Observatory, call the emergency line:

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