

2nd anniversary of Nasrin Sotoudeh's arbitrary detention

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IRAN

Nasrin Sotoudeh

Human rights lawyer

Arbitrarily detained since 13 June 2018

Ms. Nasrin Sotoudeh has been arbitrarily detained in Iran since 13 June 2018, where she is serving a total of 38.5 years in prison.



Ms. Nasrin Sotoudeh is a prominent human rights lawyer, 2012 laureate of the European Parliament's Sakharov Prize, and a major figure in the fight for human rights in Iran.

On 13 June 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 imposed against her *in absentia* on 4 September 2016. 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, in breach of domestic and international fair trial standards. Ms. Nasrin Sotoudeh filed an appeal against the sentence.

On 9 March 2019, Ms. Nasrin Sotoudeh received a copy of a court ruling issued after a one-day hearing held *in absentia* on 30 December 2018, by Branch 28 of the Islamic Revolution Court (IRC) in Tehran. Ms. Sotoudeh had refused to attend the hearing in protest against the illegality of proceedings before the IRC. The court found her guilty and sentenced her to 33.5 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 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). No lawyer represented her before the court, as she refused to appoint a lawyer to protest against provisions denying the right of those accused of national security crimes to be represented by a lawyer of their choosing. She subsequently refused to appeal the ruling in order to protest the unfairness and illegality of the trial.

Ms. Nasrin Sotoudeh was previously imprisoned for her peaceful and legitimate human rights activities in September 2010. Following national and international outcry over her detention, she was released in 2013 after serving more than three years of her six-year prison sentence.

In Iran, detainees are held in unsanitary and overcrowded prison conditions, which facilitate the spread of infectious diseases, including Covid-19. In Evin prison, where the women’s ward lacks medical and cleaning supplies, a large number of the female prisoners of conscience are detained in cramped and unsanitary spaces. They are at an even greater risk than the general prison population, because their health is often compromised by torture, denial of medical treatment, other ill-treatment and their own hunger strikes.

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