

Supreme Leader
Ali Khamenei
c/o Permanent Mission of Iran to the UN
Chemin du Petit-Saconnex 28
1209 Geneva
Switzerland

Dear Mr Khamenei,

Nasrin Sotoudeh, a prominent human rights lawyer and women's rights defender, has been unjustly sentenced to a total of 38 years in prison and 148 lashes following two grossly unfair trials. I appeal to you to release her as she is a prisoner of conscience.

On 9 February 2019, Nasrin Sotoudeh was informed by the office for the implementation of sentences in Tehran's Evin prison, where she is jailed, that the verdict in her most recent court case had been issued. She was allowed to read the verdict, which convicted her on seven charges and sentenced her to 33 years in prison and 148 lashes. Her trial took place on 30 December 2018 before Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran in her absence. She has not been allowed access to her lawyer. Some of the charges against her are related to her opposition to forced hijab (veiling) laws, including "inciting corruption and prostitution" and "openly committing a sinful act...by appearing in public without a hijab". Some of her legitimate activities that the authorities have cited as "evidence" against her include: opposing Iran's abusive, discriminatory and degrading forced hijab laws; removing her headscarf during prison visits; giving media interviews about the violent arrest and detention of women protesting against forced hijab. On 11 March 2019, Mohammad Moghiseh, the judge who pronounced the verdict, spread confusion by telling journalists that she had been sentenced to seven years in prison on two charges, one of which, "insulting the Supreme Leader", she was not on trial for. In response, Nasrin Sotoudeh has asked lawyers in Iran to raise a complaint against the judge for spreading lies before the disciplinary court for judges.

In September 2016, Nasrin Sotoudeh was sentenced to five years in prison in a separate case. Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran convicted her in her absence. She was not present during the trial because the court authorities said she was not wearing appropriate Islamic dress and refused her entry. She was charged with "spreading propaganda against the system" and "gathering and colluding to commit crimes against national security". However, the judge, in breach of procedure, convicted her on another charge, that of "assisting in hiding spies with the intent to harm national security", citing legitimate activities such as her meetings with foreign diplomats to convict her. This case is now pending review before an appeal court.

I urge you to release Nasrin Sotoudeh immediately and unconditionally as she is a prisoner of

conscience, jailed solely for her peaceful human rights work. Pending her release, please ensure that she has regular contact with her family and a lawyer of her choosing. I urge you to stop criminalizing the work of women's rights defenders, including those who peacefully protest against forced hijab, and abolish forced hijab laws.

Yours sincerely,