

PRESS KIT

CCBE Human Rights Award 2019 Iran: endangered lawyers

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#EndangeredLawyers

#FreeIranianLawyers

Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe

The voice of European Lawyers

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PRESS RELEASE

CCBE Human Rights Award 2019

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The Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE) grants its 2019 Human Rights Award to four Iranian lawyers currently in prison: Nasrin Sotoudeh, Abdolfattah Soltani, Mohammad Najafi and Amir Salar Davoudi.



Nasrin Sotoudeh: 38 years in prison and 148 lashes

Nasrin Sotoudeh is an eminent Iranian lawyer, who has dedicated her career to defending women and children who are victims of domestic violence, but also to defending several Iranian activists and journalists. She has also defended young people sentenced to death for committing acts while they were minors, women who had been victims of acid attacks, as well as religious minorities. Since 2016, she has been defending women who were pursued by the courts and the police for refusing to wear the hijab. The authorities arrested her again in June 2018 for defending protesters against the mandatory use of the veil.

Abdolfattah Soltani: 10 years in prison

Abdolfattah Soltani is a lawyer and one of the co-founders of the Centre for Human Rights Defenders. He has been in detention since 2011. He has spent most of his career as a lawyer defending political prisoners. His health status is very worrying as he suffers from severe heart disorders. Since 2016, no leave has been granted to him.

Mohammad Najafi: 17 years in prison and 74 lashes

Mohammad Najafi is a lawyer who has been particularly active in the defence of Iranian political prisoners. The repression he has been suffering has recently increased. He has been repeatedly convicted for "disturbing the State", "publishing lies", "collaborating with enemy states through conveying information in interviews", "propaganda against the regime"

and "insulting the Supreme Leader", "publishing lies on the Internet (...) with the intention of disturbing public opinion".

Amir Salar Davoudi: 30 years in prison, 111 lashes and a fine of approximately \$4,000

Amir Salar Davoudi is an Iranian lawyer who has defended many political prisoners and members of religious or ethnic minorities. He is very active on social networks. He was arrested on 20 November 2018. He was convicted on multiple charges: "insulting the authorities", "insulting the Supreme Leader", "propaganda against the regime", "forming a group to undermine national security".

About the CCBE:

The Council of European Bars (CCBE) represents the Bars and Law Societies of 45 countries, and through them more than one million European lawyers. More information on the CCBE Human Rights Award and past recipients is available [here](#).

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About the winners: Iranian lawyers Nasrin Sotoudeh, Abdolfattah Soltani, Mohammad Najafi and Amirsalar Davoudi

Nasrin Sotoudeh



Nasrin Sotoudeh is an eminent Iranian lawyer of the Tehran Bar and a defender of human rights. She passed the bar in 1995. She has dedicated her career partly to defending women and children who are victims of domestic violence, but also to defending many Iranian activists and journalists.

Since the beginning of her career, she has not stopped fighting. She had to wait eight years before obtaining authorisation to practice as a lawyer. At the time she was already closely watched by the intelligence services, which considered her too involved with the opposition.

The first cases she defended were of young people sentenced to death for committing acts while there were minors. During her career, Nasrin Sotoudeh also represented women who had been victims of acid attacks, religious minorities and various campaigns for human rights, including the campaign to abolish the death penalty. The authorities arrested her again in June 2018 for defending protesters against the mandatory use of the veil.

Since 2016, she has been defending women who were pursued by the courts and the police for refusing to wear a hijab

The CCBE has acted in her support already since 2010 when she was arrested on charges of "propaganda against the State" and "collusion and gathering with the aim of acting against national security". She was convicted in 2011 to 11 years in prison as well as being banned from practicing her profession or leaving the country for a period of 20 years. Due to the international mobilization, she was released in 2013.

On the 4th of September 2016, Mrs. Sotoudeh was then sentenced in absentia to five years in prison. However, she only learnt of her sentence on the 13th of June 2018 when she was arrested in order to serve this sentence in Evin prison. On 30 of December 2018, Nasrin Sotoudeh was sentenced to 33 years in prison and 148 lashes.

In 2012, the European Parliament awarded Nasrin Sotoudeh the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought, and in 2018 she received the Ludovic Trarieux International Human Rights Prize.

CCBE letters in her support:

- [Sentencing of lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh \(13/03/2019\)](#)
- [Situation of lawyers in Iran \(01/10/2018\)](#)
- [Arrest of lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh \(15/06/2018\)](#)
- [Concerns regarding the suspension of Ms Nasrin Sotoudeh's law licence \(24/10/2014\)](#)
- [Solidarity with imprisoned human rights lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh \(22/11/2012\)](#)
- [Concerns regarding situation of lawyer Ms. Nasrin Sotoudeh \(12/12/2011\)](#)
- [Concerns regarding the sentencing of lawyer Ms. Nasrin Sotoudeh \(14/01/2011\)](#)
- [Concerns regarding the case of lawyer Ms. Nasrin Sotoudeh \(28/09/2010\)](#)

Abdolfattah Soltani



Abdolfattah Soltani is a lawyer at the Tehran Bar and one of the co-founders of the Centre for Human Rights Defenders. He has been in prison in Iran since 2011. To this day, the current regime refuses to grant him conditional release and provide him with adequate health care.

He has spent most of his career as a lawyer defending political prisoners. In principle, he should have already been released from prison because, under Iranian law, a prisoner can be released after having served one third of their sentence. Abdolfattah Soltani is currently serving a ten-year prison sentence.

According to various sources, the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence is opposed to his release because he insists on his rights and his innocence. In October 2012, Abdolfattah Soltani was awarded the International Bar Association's Human Rights Award.

CCBE letters in his support:

- [Concerns regarding Abdolfattah Soltani's conditions of imprisonment \(02/10/2015\)](#)
- [Concerns regarding the hunger strike of Mr Abdolfattah Soltani, human rights lawyer \(18/11/2013\)](#)
- [Concerns regarding the sentencing of human rights lawyer, Mr Abdolfattah Soltani \(06/03/2012\)](#)

Mohammad Najafi



Mohammad Najafi is a human rights lawyer in Iran particularly targeted for exercising his freedom of expression. In October 2018, lawyer Mohammad Najafi was sentenced to three years in prison and to the inhumane punishment of 74 lashes for the charges of "disturbing the state" and "publishing falsehoods". This judgment was related to his work as the defence lawyer for 22-year-old Vahid Heydari, who died suspiciously in detention at the 12th Police Station in Arak sometime between the end of December 2017 and the beginning of January 2018. Previous to this judgement, he had been detained from January 2018 to April 2018, in relation to his work in the case of Vahid Heydari.

In December 2018, he was then sentenced twice to a total of 14 years for "collaborating with enemy states through conveying information in interviews", "propaganda against the government", "insulting the supreme leader", and for "publishing lies on the internet (...) with the intention of disturbing public opinion". He was rearrested on the 1st of April

2019 after having been released four days earlier from Arak prison.

CCBE letters in his support:

- [Sentencing of human rights lawyer Mohammad Najafi \(14/02/2019\)](#)
- [Imprisonment of lawyer Mohammad Najafi \(14/11/2018\)](#)
- [Situation of lawyers in Iran \(01/10/2018\)](#)

Amirsalar Davoudi



Amirsalar Davoudi is an Iranian lawyer who has defended many political prisoners and members of religious or ethnic minorities. He is openly opposed to the policy of the Tehran regime and is very active on social networks: he ran a channel on the messaging service Telegram which allowed human rights lawyers to exchange views.

On 20 November 2018, he was arrested at his office by intelligence agents without a warrant. The conditions of Amirsalar Davoudi's detention are of serious concern: he has been held in solitary confinement since 20 November 2018. He is being held in Evin prison (Tehran) and is not allowed to receive any visits, except from of his parents on 21 January.2019 He was not able to consult his lawyer or the prison doctor. Human rights organisations have also expressed their fears about possible acts of torture.

On 1 June 2019, Amirsalar Davoudi was sentenced by the 15th Chamber of the Tehran Revolutionary Court to 30 years' imprisonment, 111 lashes and a fine of approximately USD 4,000 on multiple charges: "insulting the authorities", "insulting the Supreme Leader", "propaganda against the state", "forming a group to undermine national security". The latter charge is linked to the channel he was running on the messaging service Telegram.

CCBE letters in his support:

- [Sentencing of lawyer Amirsalar Davoudi \(03/09/2019\)](#)
- [Indictment against lawyer Amir Salar Davoodi \(29/04/2019\)](#)
- [Detention of lawyer Amirsalar Davoudi \(21/12/2018\)](#)

About the CCBE Human Rights Award

The objective of the CCBE Human Rights Award is to honour distinguished lawyers/lawyers' organisations that have demonstrated outstanding commitment and sacrifice to uphold human rights.

More information at the following link: <https://www.ccbe.eu/actions/human-rights-award/>

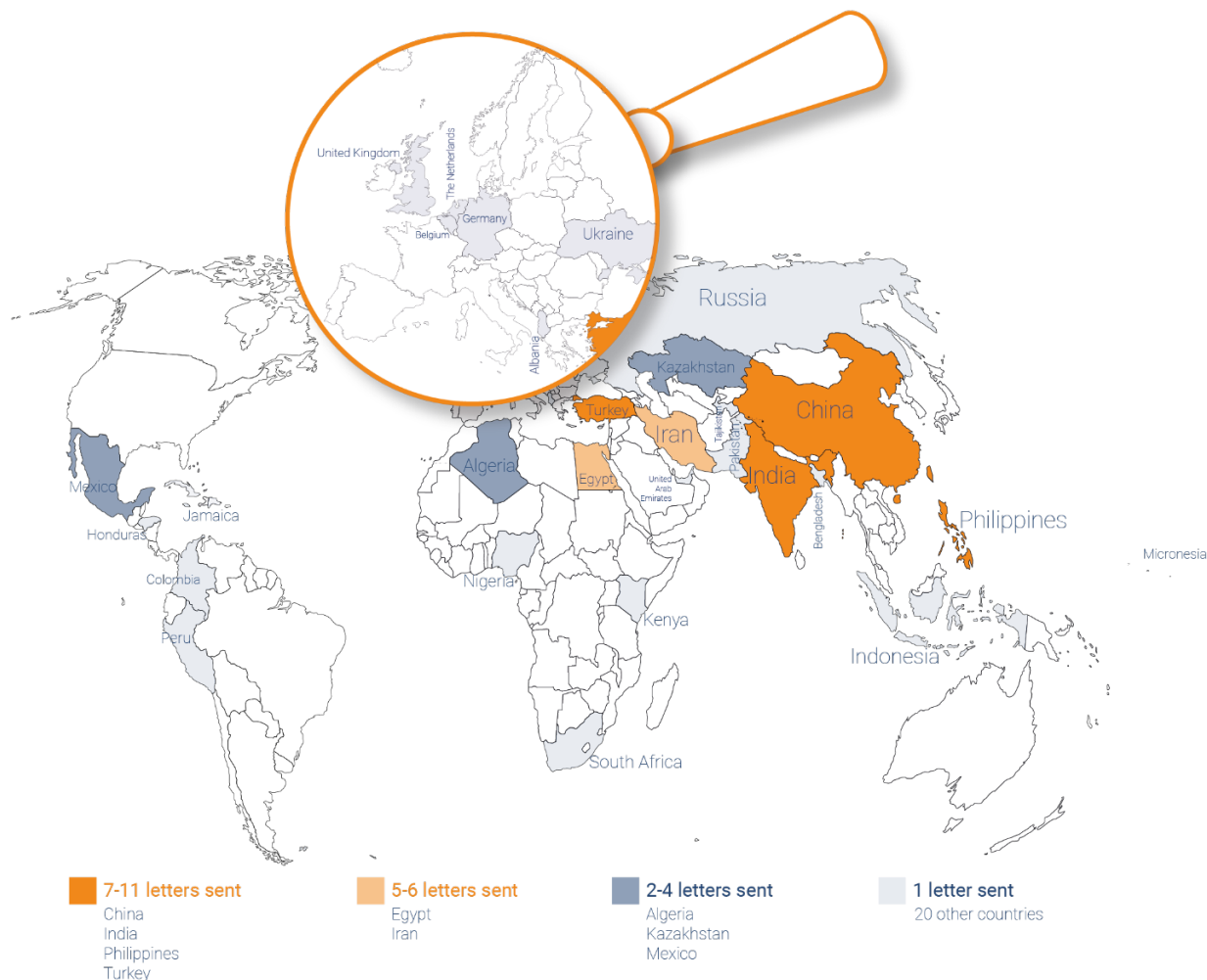
Past Winners of the CCBE Human Rights Award:

- 2018:** Polish lawyer Mikołaj Pietrzak for his exceptional involvement and continuous work in support of human rights and the Rule of Law.
- 2017:** Georgian lawyer Zaza Khatiaşvili for his outstanding work in support of persecuted lawyers in Georgia.
- 2016:** Four Turkish lawyers who have been particularly active in the defence of human rights and the rule of law in Turkey: Ayşe Bingöl Demir, Ayşe Acinikli, Ramazan Demir and posthumously Tahir Elçi, the President of the Diyarbakır Bar Association murdered in November 2015.
- 2015:** Intigam Aliyev, an Azerbaijani human rights lawyer who has devoted his life to protecting the rights of individuals against the repressive system of the Azerbaijani government
And Fengrui, a Chinese law firm which was particularly targeted by the attacks on human rights defenders which took place in July 2015.
- 2014:** Brazilian lawyer Valdênia Aparecida Paulino Lanfranchi for her life's work in defence of the most vulnerable in the disenfranchised areas of São Paulo, Brazil.
- 2013:** President and Bar Council members of the Istanbul Bar Association in recognition of their outstanding commitment, perseverance and courage in support of human rights in Turkey.
- 2012:** Pavel Sapelko, in recognition of his unwavering involvement in campaigning for human rights in Belarus.
- 2011:** Abderrazak Kilani, in his capacity as President of the Tunisian Bar Association, for his commitment and that of his Bar to human rights, in particular during the Jasmine Revolution.
- 2010:** Mexican lawyers David Peña Rodríguez and Karla Micheel Salas Ramírez, members of the National Association of Democratic Lawyers (ANAD) who represented the families of the victims of the uninvestigated assassinations of women in the Campo Algodonero case, also known as Ciudad Juárez femicides.
- 2009:** Posthumously to assassinated Russian lawyer Stanislav Markelov.
- 2008:** Chinese human rights lawyer Li Heping
And, the group of Spanish lawyers who represented defendants and victims in the trial following the 11 March 2004 Madrid train bombings.
- 2007:** Avocats Sans Frontières (ASF).

#Endangeredlawyers

Attacks on the profession of lawyer are becoming more frequent all over the world, particularly in countries where the political context is conducive to various forms of pressure against the activities of human rights defenders.

In **2019** the CCBE sent
74 letters in support of endangered lawyers
 in **29** countries around the world



36 % Murder | Attempt murder



35 % Arrest | Detention | Prison



25 % Threats | Assault | Harassment | Travel Ban



4 % Disbarment