

## CCBE statement on the repression in Iran condemning the use of the death penalty

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The Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE) represents the bars and law societies of 46 countries, and through them more than 1 million European lawyers. The defence of the rule of law, the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms and the upholding of the democratic values inextricably linked to these rights are the most important missions of the CCBE.

The CCBE wishes to express their grave concerns over the continued repression in Iran which resulted in more than 750 deaths, hundreds of injuries and thousands of arrests of those who rallied in solidarity for human women rights following the tragic death of Mahsa Amini. Moreover, the CCBE wishes to reiterate their strong opposition to the use of death penalty in all circumstances.

In this respect, CCBE recalls that the freedom to demonstrate peacefully is provided for in Article 21 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, ratified by Iran in 1975. The Iranian State is also bound to respect its obligations under the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, including the respect of women's rights.

The CCBE is concerned about the repression suffered by many human rights defenders, in particular lawyers who are in turn subject to pressure, threats and arrests in the exercise of their profession, defending and assisting protestors. Between August 2022 and January 2023, at least 45 lawyers were arrested simply for exercising their legitimate activities as lawyers.

Attacks on human rights lawyers and women's rights activists have intensified in Iran in recent years. In this context, the undersigned organisations strongly condemn the arbitrary detention of several Iranian human and women rights defenders, in particular lawyers, including Nasrin Sotoudeh<sup>1</sup>, who was sentenced to 38 years of imprisonment for defending women who peacefully demonstrated against compulsory hijab. Her husband, Mr. Reza Khandan, was also arrested for defending the same cause.

In addition to this, many execution sentences have been issued in order to squash the protests. So far four of the detained protestors have already been executed. In this context, the CCBE strongly condemns these sentences. We consider the death penalty a violation of the first right of any human being, i.e. the right to life, and believe that its abolition would contribute to the fostering and protection of human dignity and the gradual development of a global culture of human rights.

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<sup>1</sup> Who also received the [CCBE Human Rights Award](#) 2019 together with Iranian lawyers Abdolfattah Soltani, Mohammad Najafi and Amirsalar Davoudi.

**In view of the above, the CCBE therefore urges the Iranian authorities, as well as the EU and the International community to ensure the following:**

- **end persecution and ensure that everyone has access to a lawyer of their choice from the moment of their arrest;**
- **end the use of death penalty;**
- **end all forms of harassment and intimidation of lawyers in Iran;**
- **guarantee the immediate and unconditional freedom of all human rights and women rights defenders, including lawyers arbitrarily detained by the Iranian authorities;**
- **accept a public enquiry into the death of Mahsa Amini and the other victims by an independent international commission.**