

**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**

Re: Concerns regarding the sentencing of lawyer Ms. Nasrin Sotoudeh

Your Excellency,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE), which, through the national Bars and Law Societies of the Member States of the European Union and the European Economic Area, represents more one million European lawyers. In addition to membership from EU bars, it has also observer representatives from a further eleven European countries' bars.

The CCBE, through its Human Rights Committee, places great emphasis on respect for human rights and the rule of law. The CCBE is particularly concerned by the situation of human rights defenders in the world.

We are writing to you once more to express our serious concerns over the harsh sentence imposed on prominent human rights lawyer Ms Nasrin Sotoudeh. The CCBE previously sent you a letter dated 17/12/2010 expressing our objection to Ms Sotoudeh's arbitrary detention and the judicial harassment against her which appeared merely aimed at sanctioning her human rights activities.

According to the information received, upon her arrest in September 2010, Ms Sotoudeh was denied access to a lawyer, placed in solitary confinement and was not permitted to talk to her family on the phone for a month. Especially worrisome is the fact that her health has been weakened by three hunger strikes in protest at her detention without charge or trial and at her conditions of detention.

Ms Sotoudeh was ultimately convicted of "propaganda against the regime", "acting against national security" and "not wearing hijab during a videotaped message", charges which appear either to not be proper criminal offences or are unsubstantiated by evidence. Her sentence of 11 years of prison, being banned from practising law and travelling for 20 years, therefore seems solely to sanction her work as a lawyer.

In view of the above, the CCBE respectfully asks for the immediate and unconditional release of Ms Nasrin Sotoudeh. The CCBE also implores you to guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of all human rights defenders presently detained in the country, and asks you to put an end to acts of harassment against all human rights defenders in Iran and to ensure in all circumstances respect for fundamental freedoms in accordance with international human rights instruments ratified by Iran.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Dal', written above a long horizontal line that ends in a sharp arrowhead pointing to the right.

GEORGES-ALBERT DAL
President