

Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei
The Office of the Supreme Leader
Islamic Republic Street
End of Shahid Keshvar Doust Street
Tehran
Islamic Republic of Iran

Brussels, 18 November 2013

Re: **Concerns regarding the hunger strike of Mr Abdolfattah Soltani, human rights lawyer**

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 than 1 million European lawyers. In addition to membership from EU bars, it also has 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.

The CCBE writes to express its serious concerns over the situation of Mr Abdolfattah Soltani, prominent human rights lawyer and co-founder of the Human Rights Defenders' Center (CHRD), currently detained in Tehran's Evin prison.

My predecessor wrote to you in March last year to express her deep apprehension for the condemnation of Mr Soltani, sentenced to 18 years in prison by Branch 26 of Tehran Revolutionary Court on charges of "propaganda against the regime", "establishing the Defenders of Human Rights Centre", "assembly and collusion against national security" and "accepting an unlawful prize". He was also banned from exercising his profession for 20 years.

The CCBE has now been informed that, on 3 November 2013, Mr Mr Abdolfattah Soltani, began a hunger strike in order to protest about the lack of proper medical care for him and other prisoners of conscience held in Evin prison.

As previously stated, the CCBE believes that Mr Soltani's conviction and detention are an act of reprisal for his legitimate and peaceful activity in defence of human rights; in addition the CCBE has ground to fear that Mr Soltani's physical and psychological integrity might be at risk.

In view of the above, the CCBE respectfully urges your Excellency to take immediate and effective steps for the release of Mr. Abdolfattah from prison, the withdrawal of all charges brought against him and in addition, and especially, to ensure that he receives proper medical care in prison until his release.

Yours sincerely,



Evangelos TSOUROULIS
CCBE President