29 June 2026

Joint Statement on the Sentencing of Iranian Human Rights Lawyers

Nazanin Salari, Mahmoud Taravatrooy, and Masoud Ahmadian

The undersigned organisations strongly condemn the sentencing of Iranian lawyers and human rights defenders **Nazanin Salari, Mahmoud Taravatrooy, and Masoud Ahmadian** by Branch One of the Revolutionary Court of Shiraz. The convictions and supplementary punishments imposed against them represent a grave attack on the independence of the legal profession, the right to defence, and the legitimate work of lawyers who advocate for women's rights, children's rights, and access to justice.

Nazanin Salari, a woman human rights defender, lawyer, and a former head of the Human Rights Commission of the Fars Bar Association, has long worked to defend women and children and to strengthen legal protection for vulnerable communities. Her principled resignation from a position within the Fars Bar Association's disciplinary structures, in protest at institutional inaction over the rights of protesters, reflected a commitment to professional responsibility and justice.

Mahmoud Taravatrooy, a lawyer, human rights defender, and a former head of the Human Rights Commission of the Fars Bar Association, has provided legal counsel in sensitive and politically charged cases and has stood in solidarity with protesters and others denied meaningful access to justice. His work reflects the essential role of independent lawyers in protecting citizens from arbitrary power.

Masoud Ahmadian, a lawyer and member of the Fars Bar Association, has represented politically targeted individuals, advised fellow lawyers at risk, and advanced women's and children's rights through legal education and advocacy. His work defending due process and fundamental freedoms is precisely the kind of professional service that international standards require states to protect, not punish.

These three lawyers have been sentenced to prison on the basis of vague and overbroad national security charges, including "assembly and collusion to commit crimes against national security" and "propaganda against the state." The court also imposed punitive measures including a two-year travel ban and the revocation of their passports. Although they were acquitted of the charge of "cooperation with a hostile state," the remaining convictions are themselves deeply alarming and appear to criminalise peaceful, lawful, and professional human rights work.

The reported basis for these charges is particularly troubling, as they appear to stem from their participation in seminars on women's and children's rights, advocacy for legal reforms addressing domestic violence, efforts to combat violence against women and child marriage, and support for the rights of detained protesters and other persons facing politically motivated charges. These activities are central to the work of independent lawyers and crucial to the maintaining of the rule of law.

Furthermore, their prosecution is not an isolated matter[1]. It forms part of a broader pattern in Iran in which independent lawyers, human rights defenders, women's rights advocates, and civil society actors are targeted through broadly framed security charges.[2] When lawyers are punished for representing clients, supporting protesters, advocating legal reform, or defending women and children, the damage extends far beyond the individuals concerned. It undermines every person's right to a fair trial and erodes the possibility of justice itself.

The undersigned organisations wish to remind the Islamic Republic of Iran of its obligations under international law concerning the role and protection of lawyers.

Under Principle 16 of the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, States must ensure that lawyers are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment, or improper interference, and that they do not suffer, or face the threat of, prosecution or administrative, economic, or other sanctions for any action taken in accordance with recognised professional duties, standards, and ethics. Principle 18 further provides that lawyers shall not be identified with their clients or their clients' causes as a result of discharging their functions. Principle 17 requires that, where the security of lawyers is threatened as a result of their work, they be adequately safeguarded by the authorities.

These guarantees operate alongside Iran's binding obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which it is a State Party, including the right to liberty and security of person and the prohibition of arbitrary arrest and detention under Article 9, and the right to a fair trial, including access to legal assistance, under Article 14.

The persecution of lawyers for defending rights is a direct assault on justice. The targeting of Nazanin Salari, Mahmoud Taravatrooy, and Masoud Ahmadian sends a chilling message to the legal profession and to civil society in Iran more broadly.

The undersigned organisations therefore call on the Iranian authorities to respect these standards, including by taking the following steps:

1. Immediately quash the convictions and sentences imposed on Nazanin Salari, Mahmoud Taravatrooy, and Masoud Ahmadian;
2. Lift all supplementary punishments, including travel bans and passport revocations;

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[1] Centre for Supporters of Human Rights and International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute (November 2025) *No Defence: A Report on the Status of Lawyers and the Bar Associations in Iran: Challenges and Recommendations*, available at: https://en.cshr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2025/11/CSHR_Rep_EN_Sept25_5b.pdf.

[2] Lawyers for Lawyers. (2026, February 10) *End the systematic denial of legal counsel and arrests of lawyers in Iran*, available at: https://www.lawyersforlawyers.org/end-the-systematic-denial-of-legal-counsel-and-arrests-of-lawyers-in-iran/

3. End all judicial harassment and parallel proceedings arising from their legitimate professional and human rights work;
4. Guarantee their safety, liberty, and ability to continue practicing law independently;
5. Respect the independence of bar associations and the legal profession in Iran;
6. Ensure that all lawyers in Iran can perform their professional duties without fear of reprisals, harassment, intimidation, or undue interference, in accordance with international standards.

We further call on the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran, the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, the Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders, international bar associations, diplomatic missions, and all relevant human rights mechanisms to urgently raise this case with the Iranian authorities and demand the annulment of these unjust sentences.