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*Le Président*  
The President

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**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 situation 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 situation of Ms Nasrin Sotoudeh. The CCBE previously sent you two letters dated 17 December 2010 and 13 January 2011 respectively, expressing our concerns about Ms Sotoudeh's arbitrary detention, judicial harassment and unfair sentence.

The CCBE was informed that 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 eleven years of prison, then reduced to six years after several appeals, banning her from practising law and travelling for 20 years, seemed therefore solely to sanction her work as a lawyer.

The CCBE notes that the pressure against Nasrin Sotoudeh and her family has increased in the past months. In August 2011, her husband Reza Khandan and her two children were arrested a few hours after refusing to show the guards the notebook in which he wrote advice provided by his wife during their weekly visit.

In October 2011, Ms. Sotoudeh refused to wear the chador (not mandatory) inside the prison. As retaliation, the authorities banned her weekly visit for three weeks. As a result of these humiliating and undignified circumstances, Nasrin Sotoudeh began on three occasions a hunger strike to protest against her imprisonment conditions.

In this context, the CCBE wishes to draw to your attention the following Articles of the United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers (1990):

Article 16 states that:

*Governments shall ensure that lawyers (a) are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference; (b) are able to travel and to consult with their clients freely both within their own country and abroad; and (c) shall not suffer, or be*

*threatened with, prosecution or administrative, economics or other sanctions for any action taken in accordance with recognized professional duties, standards and ethics.*

Furthermore, Article 23 states that:

*Lawyers like other citizens are entitled to freedom of expression, belief, association and assembly. In particular, they shall have the rights to take part in public discussion of matters concerning the law, the administration of justice and the promotion and protection of human rights and to join or form local, national or international organisations and attend their meetings, without suffering professional restrictions by reason of their lawful action or their membership in a lawful organisation. In exercising these rights, lawyers shall always conduct themselves in accordance with the law and the recognised standards and ethics of the legal profession.*

In view of the above, the CCBE respectfully asks for the immediate and unconditional release of Ms Nasrin Soutoudeh. The CCBE also urges you to guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of all human rights defenders presently detained in your 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', with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

Georges-Albert Dal

President