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Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada

NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations
Promoting human rights by protecting those who defend them

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BY AIRMAIL

Leader of the Islamic Republic,
His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed Ali Khamenei, The
Office of the Supreme Leader,
Shahid Keshvardoost St., Jomhuri Eslami Ave.,
TEHRAN, **ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN**

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Amsterdam, 12 December 2014

Subject: Arrest of human rights lawyer Ms. Nasrin Sotoudeh on 10 December 2014

Your Excellency,

The Dutch Lawyers for Lawyers Foundation (L4L) is committed to helping lawyers around the world who are prevented from exercising their profession without any improper interference.

Lawyers Rights Watch Canada (LRWC) is a committee of lawyers who promote human rights and the rule of law internationally through advocacy, legal research and education. LRWC has Special Consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

L4L and LRWC hereby express their grave concern regarding the recent arrest of human rights lawyer Ms. Nasrin Sotoudeh in Iran.

On Wednesday 10 December 2014, Ms. Sotoudeh was arrested and detained for several hours by the Iranian authorities. Her husband confirmed her arrest on Facebook, adding that it was the authorities' present to them on the occasion of international human rights day, which is celebrated annually on 10 December.

Nasrin Sotoudeh is a well-known Iranian lawyer, famous for her defence of those whose fundamental rights are being violated, be it persons who received the death penalty for facts committed when they were minors, the defence of Baha'is, opposition activists following the 2009 presidential elections, and others in need of her competent assistance. She is a winner of the 2012 Sakharov Prize of the European Parliament. Ms. Sotoudeh was previously arrested in 2010, and sentenced to eleven years imprisonment in 2011, and she was released in September of 2013. On October 18, 2014, Tehran's Bar Association communicated a ruling to Ms. Sotoudeh that her law license is to be suspended for three years, based on a complaint filed by the Islamic Revolution Court's Prosecution Office in Evin prison. The complainant had asked for her license to be revoked based on her conviction and sentence in 2011. End of October 2014, she was arrested again, whilst participating in a peaceful protest against acid attacks on women.

L4L and LRWC urge the Iranian Government to stop its campaign of harassment of Ms. Sotoudeh and other human rights lawyers, by repeatedly arresting them and banning them from practicing as a lawyer. This repulsive campaign seems to be aimed at obstructing these human rights defenders to provide protection to those most in need of their assistance.

We would like to draw your attention to the implementation of the United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers. In particular in this case the applicability of paragraphs 16 and 17 of these

Basic Principles. According to paragraph 16, the government is under an obligation *"to ensure that lawyers are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference"*. Paragraph 17 states that *"where the security of lawyers is threatened as a result of discharging their functions, they shall be adequately safeguarded by the authorities"*.

It follows from paragraph 23 that *"Lawyers like other citizens are entitled to freedom of expression, belief, association and assembly. In particular, they shall have the right 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 organizations and attend their meetings, without suffering professional restrictions by reason of their lawful action or their membership in a lawful organization."*

These principles are universally applicable. Therefore, your government is under an obligation to adequately protect and support its lawyers.

In view of the above, Lawyers for Lawyers respectfully urges you to:

- i. Ensure the protection of Ms. Sotoudeh against arrests and other interferences in her life and her profession as a lawyer, and to drop all charges against her;
- ii. Ensure her personal and professional safety and to enable her to carry out her professional duties while not being intimidated, restricted or hindered in doing so; and
- iii. Guarantee under all circumstances that human rights lawyers in Iran are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.

We would like to thank you for your attention for this very important matter. We are confident of your good will and sense of justice and will continue to closely monitor this case.

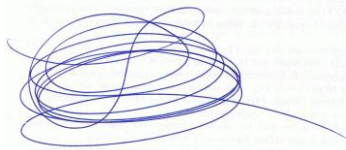
Sincerely,

Lawyers for Lawyers



Adrie van de Streek
Executive Director

Lawyers Rights' Watch Canada



Gail Davidson
Executive Director

Letters concerning the same topic were sent to:

- President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, His Excellency Hassan Rouhani
- Head of the Judiciary, His Excellency Ayatollah Sadeq Larijani

Copies of this letter were sent to:

- H.E. Mr. Mohsen Naziri Asl, Ambassador, Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Geneva
- Iranian Bar Association, in Tehran
- Alireza Jahangiri, Ambassador of the Islamic republic of Iran to the Kingdom of the Netherlands