

BUNDESRECHTSANWALTSKAMMER

The President

Bundesrechtsanwaltskammer
Littenstraße 9 | 10179 Berlin

Ayatollah Sayed Ali Khamenei
The Office of the Supreme Leader of the Islamic
Republic
Shahid Keshvar Doust Street
Teheran

IRAN

E-Mail: contact@leader.ir

Berlin, 15 March 2019

Iranian human rights lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh

Your Excellency,

The Bundesrechtsanwaltskammer (The German Federal Bar) represents the interests of the 28 German Bars and thus of the entire legal profession in the Federal Republic of Germany, which currently consists of approximately 164,500 lawyers, vis-à-vis authorities, courts and organisations – at national, European and international level.

Representing the German legal profession we also advocate the respect of internationally recognized human rights. It is our understanding that the protection of human rights – in compliance with the internationally recognized rules of international law - is an international duty.

We pay particular attention to lawyers who are facing harassment or are put in danger, who are constrained in the free exercise of their professional activities, who are threatened or persecuted, and who are exposed to repression going as far as imprisonment, because they are particularly committed to human rights.

We therefore take the liberty to draw your attention to the following issue:

According to the information available to us, Iranian lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh was arrested on 13.06.2018. While in prison, she was informed that in September 2016 an appellate court had sentenced her in absentia to five years of imprisonment. She had not been allowed to choose a lawyer for her defence. It is reported that in Iran only few lawyers who are selected by the State, are authorized to act as defence lawyers in criminal proceedings with a political background.

Following another hearing on 30.12.2018 in which neither Ms Sotoudeh nor her lawyer were permitted to participate, another sentence was passed. When Ms Sotoudeh asked to be defended by an independent lawyer, her request was rejected on the ground that the case had been closed. Now it is reported that Nasrin Sotoudeh is sentenced to 38 in prison and 148 lashes.

She is accused of, among other things, spreading propaganda against the State and colluding to commit crimes against national security. So far she has not received the judgment nor the grounds of the judgment. The charges brought against her were directly linked to her work as a lawyer. Ms Sotoudeh had defended women who had protested against and violated Iran's statutory obligation to wear a headscarf.

Nasrin Sotoudeh is well-known all over the world because of her commitment as a lawyer defending persons who are victims of political arbitrariness and persecution. She fought in particular against laws that discriminate women and against the arbitrary violation of rights in Iran.


According to recent reports, Nasrin Sotoudeh has now gone on a hunger strike in protest against the judgment and her treatment in prison. Since she does not accept the sentence, the next step will be an appeal procedure.

Should these reports be true, the actions of the Iranian authorities, the arrest and conviction of Nasrin Sotoudeh constitute gross violations of national and international law.

Therefore, we urge the authorities in Iran to:

- Immediately and unconditionally release our colleague Nasrin Sotoudeh, revoke the sentence against her and in addition to drop all charges against her;
- Guarantee the physical and psychological integrity and security of Nasrin Sotoudeh while she remains in detention, including ensuring she receives the medical attention needed.

Yours respectfully


Dr. Ulrich Wessels