



BUNDESRECHTSANWALTSKAMMER

Der Präsident

Bundesrechtsanwaltskammer
Littenstraße 9 | 10179 Berlin

Chief Justice
Mr. Ebrahim Raisi
c/o Permanent Mission of Iran to the United
Nations
Chemin du Petit-Saconnex 28
1209 Geneva

SWITZERLAND

Berlin, 05.11.2020

Human rights lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh

Dear Mr. Raisi,

I am turning to you to express my grave concern with regard to the life-threatening situation of imprisoned Iranian human rights lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh.

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 166,000 lawyers, vis-à-vis authorities, courts and organisations – at national, European and international level.

As the representative of the German legal profession, we are committed - also at the international level - to defending the independence of lawyers. This independence is the only way to guarantee that lawyers are able to fulfil their role on an equal footing alongside judges and public prosecutors in a State governed by the rule of law. Lawyers are indispensable organs of the proper administration of justice and they contribute to the realization of the rule of law. We pay particular attention to lawyers who 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.

Nasrin Sotoudeh is one of Iran's most prominent human rights lawyers. She represented young people who were facing the death penalty, women, political prisoners and civil rights activists. She received numerous prizes, only recently she was awarded the Human Rights Prize of the Association of German Judges and the Alternative Nobel Prize.

Bundesrechtsanwaltskammer

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For her activity as a lawyer and her tireless commitment to human rights, Nasrin Sotoudeh was again arrested and put in prison in 2018. She was sentenced to 38 years in prison and 148 lashes.

To draw attention to the spreading COVID-19 pandemic and the lack of safety measures to protect the prisoners, she went on a hunger strike on 10 August 2020.

On 19 September 2020, Nasrin Sotoudeh, suffering from a severe deterioration of her health during the hunger strike, was transferred from prison to a hospital. It has been reported that she requires medical treatment for a heart condition. Without granting such treatment, she was moved back to Evin prison.

On 20 October 2020 she was asked to get ready for transfer to a hospital. However, she was not transported to a hospital, but to Shar-e Rey prison, also called Qarchak prison. Detention conditions in this prison are said to be even worse than in Evin prison. Placing Nasrin Sotoudeh in such unhygienic conditions without the necessary medical care means that she is deliberately exposed to the danger of death.

I am extremely concerned about Nasrin Sotoudeh's health, in particular due to the fact that she is left at the mercy of the Coronavirus without defence.

I would urge you to release Nasrin Sotoudeh immediately and unconditionally. She is a political prisoner held in prison only because of her peaceful human rights work as a lawyer. In this context, I would like to refer to Article 16 of the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers (1990):

"Governments shall ensure that lawyers (a) are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference; ... (c) shall not suffer, or be threatened with, prosecution or administrative, economic or other sanctions for any action taken in accordance with recognized professional duties, standards and ethics."

Please make sure that up until her release she is given access to the urgent specialist medical treatment outside the prison. I would furthermore ask you to ensure that she is granted contact with her family and, lastly, to prevent any harassment or intimidation of her family by the authorities.

Yours respectfully,



Dr. Ulrich Wessel
Rechtsanwalt und Notar