

Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran
Grand Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei
The Office of the Supreme Leader
Islamic Republic Street
End of Shahid Keshvar Doust Street. Teheran
The Islamic Republic of Iran

Copenhagen, 21. October 2020

Your Excellency

We, the board and members of Danish PEN, are gravely concerned for the well-being of Iranian human rights lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh, who was handed over a total 38 years in jail and 148 lashes for her work as legal representative for human Rights victims.

We have received alarming reports that the health of Nasrin Sotoudeh has deteriorated following her transfer from hospital back to her prison cell.

Nasrin Sotoudeh, has been imprisoned since June 2018 and is serving a cruelly long sentence of 38 years in retaliation for her legal defense of human rights. In August 2020 she went on hunger strike, ending it six weeks later as her health became critical. She was subsequently transferred to hospital on 19 September to receive treatment for heart disease and other medical issues. However, she was returned to Evin Prison just a few days later, against medical advice that she should remain in hospital as her health needs continue to be acute. This decision has been described by UN experts as 'unfathomable'.

PEN International learned on 20 October that Sotoudeh has been transferred again, this time to Qarchak women's prison, 30 km outside Tehran and notorious for its appalling conditions. Sotoudeh's situation becomes more alarming with the news that several of the guards present in the hospital where Sotoudeh was being treated have contracted COVID-19. The poor sanitary conditions in Iran's prisons has exacerbated an already acute situation for political prisoners, leading the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, Mary Lawlor, to call for temporary release of all rights defenders.

On 22 September 2020 we called on the Iranian authorities demanding the release Nasrin Sotoudeh immediately and unconditionally. Sadly today, a month later, we must repeat this call, with added urgency in light of her deteriorating health.

Nasrin Sotoudehs must immediate be release and provided with the medical attention that she urgently needs.

Sincerely,



Per Øhrgaard, president



Mille Rode, general secretary