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VENICE SCHOOL OF HUMAN RIGHTS in partnership with the EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT call for immediate release of Sakharov laureate Nasrin Sotoudeh



Fellow human rights defenders now gathered in Venice for the [Venice School of Human Rights](#) organised

by the European Inter-University Centre for Human Rights and Democratisation EIUC/GC in partnership with the European Parliament, stand by Ms Nasrin Sotoudeh and are united in a call for the Iranian authorities to fully respect her rights when in detention, during any legal proceedings. Her physical, moral and psychological integrity must be respected in full. We furthermore recall that Ms Sotoudeh is entitled to have any new charges against her communicated clearly and promptly. She is entitled to a legal counsel of her own choosing without any undue limitations, in line with Iran's commitments under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Today during the closing of the Venice School of Human Rights, the Secretary General of EIUC/GC, **Prof. Manfred Nowak**, will deliver a speech about the case and present a letter of appeal addressed to His Excellency **Jahanbakhsh Mozaffari, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Republic of Italy that will be signed by European Parliament Vice President and Chair of Subcommittee on Human Rights, Heidi Hautala MEP, and all Faculty and participants of the Venice School of Human Rights.**

The appeal will bring the attention of the Iranian authorities concerning the arrest of a human rights lawyer, and an internationally renowned human rights defender, Ms Nasrin Sotoudeh, on 13 June in Tehran. It is the understanding that the arrest occurred after she had announced plans for a public protest against changes proposed by the Iranian government to Article 48 of the 2015 Code of Criminal Procedure. The proposed “Note” to Article 48 would deny defendants charged, among others, with offences related to national security, the right to appoint a lawyer of their own choosing. Instead, for example in Tehran, the defendants would be obliged to choose their representative from a list of 20 lawyers pre-approved by the Head of the Judiciary.

During the arrest the security officials reportedly informed her that she had been convicted in absentia and sentenced to five years. A great miscarriage of justice, Ms Sotoudeh had not been informed of the charges, proceedings or sentencing in any form, beforehand. She was then transferred to Evin prison. We are alarmed by the reports that she was arrested to prevent her from holding this public protest.

Ms Sotoudeh has a long history of defending dissidents and those who fight for freedoms. After she defended the protesters arrested during the Green Movement uprising in 2009, she was convicted in 2011 of conspiring against state security and spreading propaganda. For this, she received a sentence of eleven years. She spent much of her imprisonment in solitary confinement. Due to the inhumane prison conditions she had to endure, she went on hunger strike twice.

The European Parliament awarded Ms Sotoudeh the Sakharov Prize in 2012 for her work in defense of human rights, at a high personal cost. Soon after, in 2013 she was pardoned. After being released Ms Sotoudeh promptly resumed her fearless human rights work and advocacy.

As it appears that Ms Sotoudeh may be held in Evin Prison Ward 209, reserved for political prisoners, in

solitary confinement, the Venice School of Human Rights and the European Parliament look forward to a prompt response.

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