

NASRIN SOTOUDEH

TIMELINE OF HER PROFESSIONAL LIFE,
BEFORE AND AFTER ARREST



WHO IS NASRIN?

Nasrin Sotoudeh, 50, is an award-winning lawyer, human rights activist and mother of two who is sentenced to six years in prison. She has been detained and imprisoned since September 2010. Ms. Sotoudeh is a member of the Defenders of Human Rights Center, the One Million Signatures Campaign to Change Discriminatory Laws against Women, and the Society for Protecting the Rights of the Child.

Since January 2013 Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) authorities began to grant her short furloughs. They used Sha'baan, the holy month of Islam as the excuse to release her on a temporary basis from Evin prison the last time in June 2013. She is currently imprisoned.

BEFORE ARREST

Nasrin Sotoudeh has represented a long list of Iranian activists and individuals on death row (E.g. juvenile offenders, political prisoners).

Some of her more well-known clients are: imprisoned journalists Isa Saharkhiz and Keyvan Samimi, imprisoned political activist Heshmatollah Tabarzadi, imprisoned student activists Zia Nabavi and Shabnam Madadzadeh, and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Shirin Ebadi.

During the post-election aftermath Ms. Sotoudeh [also represented](#) the families of Meysam Ebadi and Ahmad Nejati-Kargar, two individuals [who were killed](#) during street protests.

Additionally, Ms. Sotoudeh was the lawyer on the cases for Arash Rahmanipour and Iranian-Dutch citizen Zahra Bahrami, who were both executed following the IRI 2009 Presidential election. IRI authorities have placed Ms. Sotoudeh under constant pressure for talking to foreign media about the unlawful actions taken against her clients. In their viewpoint, she was spreading propaganda against the regime and acting against national security.

TIMELINE

DECEMBER 2008: Ms. Sotoudeh is stopped at Imam Khomeini airport and prevented from travelling to Italy to receive the first annual Human Rights Prize awarded by Human Rights International Italy. She is approached by security guards who seize her passport and inform her that she was not permitted to travel. To compensate for her absence, Ms. Sotoudeh submits a [video recording](#) of her acceptance speech.

NOVEMBER 2009: Ms. Sotoudeh appears in court [to defend](#) another of her clients, university student [Atefeh Nabavi](#).

JANUARY 2010: Following the execution of her client, Arash Rahmanipour, IRI authorities place Ms. Sotoudeh under pressure for talking to [foreign media](#) about the [unlawful nature](#) of Mr. Rahmanipour's arrest and conviction. [She tells](#) the German news site Deutsche Welle: "They did not allow me to attend [Mr. Rahmanipour's] interrogation session or his trial. When I insisted to attend the hearing, they threatened me with arrest. They even confiscated my license."

FEBRUARY 2010: Ms. Sotoudeh and her sister report to a police station in Tehran following a summons order from IRI authorities. Ms. Sotoudeh [is interrogated](#) about her family and trips that she had taken abroad. According [to the Feminist School](#), Ms. Sotoudeh refuses to answer the questions, claiming the interrogator did not possess a warrant. She also refuses to sign any documents that bind her to return to the police station in the event that authorities summon her again.

MARCH 2010: She [defends](#) her client, [Khadijeh Moghaddam](#), a women's rights activist and member of the One Million Signatures Campaign.

MARCH 7, 2010: Ms. Sotoudeh participates in a ceremony held in Tehran commemorating International Women's Day. Due to tough restrictions and the high dangers of arrest in Iran, which as a result make the formation of large gatherings difficult, various groups organize separate events across the country. Ms. Sotoudeh [attends](#) an event called, "Green Gathering of Women's Rights Activists in Iran". In a statement released after the program, participants [describe](#) their experience as "a spark of hope for all women's rights activists who look to the Green Movement for the defense of their identity and rights".

AUGUST 2010: IRI security forces raid Ms. Sotoudeh's office and confiscate the hard drives of her computers. According to Reza Khandan, her husband, the arrest warrant read: "Nasrin Sotoudeh: accused of acting against national security and collusion." The search warrant did not elaborate on collusion with whom or which country. Independent sources believe the pressures were related to Ms. Sotoudeh's defense of Iranian-Dutch citizen, Zahra Bahrami, who was sent to prison in 2009 (and was held there until her execution in late January 2011).

ARREST & TRIAL

Nasrin Sotoudeh was arrested and detained on September 4, 2010. Throughout her imprisonment Ms. Sotoudeh has been held in solitary confinement for long durations without any contact with the outside world and has been reportedly interrogated and psychologically tortured repeatedly.

Her colleague, lawyer Mohammad Ali Dadkhah [has described](#) her arrest as "illegal", stating, "According to the law, legal malpractice is actionable only through the administrative court specifically for lawyers. This means that a case brought against a lawyer must be initiated by the bar association's disciplinary committee."

Overall Ms. Sotoudeh has begun more than four lengthy hunger strikes throughout the first two years of her imprisonment, and her physical health has suffered as a result. She has been connected to IVs multiple times and has suffered from digestive problems. Mr. Khandan [said in a media](#) interview from 2010: "I didn't recognize Nasrin because her face was so gaunt. She weighed 125 Lbs. at the time of her arrest, but since her detention she has lost approximately 28 Lbs."

SEPTEMBER 4, 2010: Nasrin Sotoudeh arrives to Evin Prison after receiving a summons order. She is accompanied by her husband and one of her lawyers, Nasim Ghanavi. Prison officials only allow Ms. Sotoudeh to enter the building and refuse Ms. Ghanavi the right to be present during her client's interrogation session. After hours of waiting, Ms. Ghanavi is informed that her client has been arrested. According to Reza Khandan, because Ms. Sotoudeh had thought she

would only be held for an hour, she did not say her goodbyes to him or their daughter Mehraveh and son Nima before she was sent to prison.

Following Ms. Sotoudeh's arrest, Mr. Khandan reveals in an interview with the German news site Deutsche Welle that Islamic Republic officials had threatened him and Ms. Ghanavi with arrest if they gave any interviews to the media regarding Ms. Sotoudeh.



SEPTEMBER 18, 2010: Ms. Sotoudeh has her last phone call with her family and informs them she will launch a hunger strike if her rights continue to be violated. She is held in solitary confinement.

SEPTEMBER 25, 2010: Ms. Sotoudeh launches a hunger strike. She is denied the right to contact her family or lawyer.

OCTOBER 2010: One Million Signatures Campaign [publishes a petition](#) with nearly 1,600 signatures calling for Nasrin Sotoudeh's release.

Former Czech President, Vaclav Havel calls for the release of Ms. Sotoudeh.

After 27 days Ms. Sotoudeh breaks her hunger strike when IRI authorities grant her a visit with her sister.

OCTOBER 31, 2010: Nasrin Sotoudeh goes [back on hunger strike](#) to protest the mishandling of her case file.

Tehran's Attorney General visits the prison and meets with Ms. Sotoudeh, but, according to Reza Khandan, their discussion proves fruitless. Ms. Sotoudeh decides to continue with her hunger strike.

NOVEMBER 2010: Ms. Sotoudeh tells her husband and two children in a prison visit on November 3 that she is on a *dry* hunger strike (refusing liquids as well). According to reports, Ms. Sotoudeh's children are distressed upon seeing their mother's drastic weight loss.



NOVEMBER 10, 2010: Ms. Sotoudeh begins to drink liquids (I.e. water).

NOVEMBER 15, 2010: Branch 26 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran, presided by Judge PirAbassi, charges Ms. Sotoudeh with "Acting against national security" and "Propaganda against the regime". The trial takes place in the presence of Ms. Sotoudeh's lawyers Abdolafattah Soltani, Mahnaz Parakand, Mina Jafari and Nasim Ghanavi. According to the lawyers, the trial proceeds smoothly. But, due to minor problems with the manner in which the defense is presented, Judge PirAbbassi delays the court to a later date in the same month. Reza Khandan is barred from attending his wife's trial. However, he is allowed to meet with his wife for a few minutes.

Mr. Khandan announces that Ms. Sotoudeh has broken her hunger strike as per the requests of her family and lawyers.

DECEMBER 2010: On December 6, Ms. Sotoudeh's family is quoted as stating that the day before Ms. Sotoudeh had informed them she would be launching a dry

hunger strike the next day. According to the Committee of Human Rights Reporters, the family states that Ms. Sotoudeh is on hunger strike for the following reasons:

1. More than 95 days (at the time) of temporary detention (held without charge) without bail, despite the fact that her court hearing was held nine days ago and she had two young children at home.
2. False promises by judicial and security officials to overturn her temporary detention.
3. Judge PirAbassi's lack of impartiality in the court hearing (E.g. finding Ms. Sotoudeh guilty before the end of the trial) and other laws he violated in the presence of Ms. Sotoudeh's lawyers and other members of the Central Bar Association of Iran.
4. The disappearance of 12 legal letters from her case file, which contain requests from Ms. Sotoudeh.
5. Her lawyers were threatened during the court hearing.
6. Judge PirAbassi's announcement in court that Ms. Sotoudeh would be charged with heavier crimes for hiring lawyers who are deemed unacceptable and untrusted by the court.
7. Ms. Sotoudeh's incarceration in Evin Prison's women's ward 209 for a period of 95 days with the intent to increase the pressure on her through the exposure of unbearable conditions.
8. The ban on allowing Ms. Sotoudeh's two young children to visit her in prison. The children, Mehraveh and Nima were allowed one visit in the 95 days, but it was a reportedly traumatic experience due to altercations between Ms. Sotoudeh's family and prison officials.
9. The refusal of prison officials to provide Ms. Sotoudeh with a pen and paper.

10. Prison officials' lack of timely announcement of the death of Ms. Sotoudeh's father and their refusal to grant her temporary leave to attend his funeral (a legal right of every prisoner under Iran's laws).

DECEMBER 12, 2010: Reza Khandan reports on a recent conversation he had with his wife: "Nasrin contacted me. She didn't sound well at all. She's still on hunger strike and has visited the [prison's] medical clinic on numerous occasions. I asked her specifically what her demands are before she would consider breaking her hunger strike, she said that she wishes to see the annulment of the unjust laws devised after the 2009 [presidential] election [in Iran]. She stated the same in our last visit together."

DECEMBER 16, 2010: Ms. Sotoudeh is transferred to the prison clinic, reportedly due to her rapidly deteriorating health. According to reports, Ms. Sotoudeh continues with her dry hunger strike. Reza Khandan expresses deep worry for the health of his wife on behalf of him and his two children and announces that he is unable to obtain any updates on her health, because as a result of the Muharram holidays, judicial authorities are not in their offices for him to receive any answers.

On December 20, Ms. Sotoudeh is allowed a phone call to her family. She confirms that she was being held in the prison clinic due to her deteriorating health. She announces that she has decided to end her hunger strike because of her duties as a mother to her two young children.

JANUARY 2011: On January 9, Judge PirAbassi sentences Ms. Sotoudeh to 11 years in prison and bans her from practicing law and leaving the country for 20 years. The sentence is delivered to Ms. Ghanavi and she is given 20 days to request an appeal. Ms. Sotoudeh is issued one year in prison for "Propaganda against the regime" and ten years for "Acting against national security" and "Violating the Islamic dress code (hijab) during a filmed speech". Mr. Khandan is summoned to branch 1 of the Revolutionary Court for questioning. He says in an interview with the Committee of Human Rights Reporters that the word "defendant" was used to refer to him in the summons order.

Reza Khandan is arrested on the morning of January 16 when he arrives to the Prosecutor's office as per the summons order he had received a week earlier. According to the One Million Signature's Campaign, the charges against Reza

Khandan are unclear. According to reports, the increased pressure on Mr. Khandan is likely a consequence of the media interviews he has given regarding his wife's condition in prison. Family members say that the court issued a \$50 thousand USD bail for his release, but the bail that Ms. Sotoudeh's sister posts is not accepted by IRI authorities.

The next day Mr. Khandan is released on bail. According to the Feminist School, Mr. Khandan is charged with "Encouraging public opinion and publishing lies". Mr. Khandan confirms that the bail his sister-in-law, Giti Sotoudeh posted was rejected and therefore his family was forced to introduce an alternative guarantor in order to post bail.



SEPTEMBER 2011: On September 13, Branch 54 of the Appeals Court reduces Ms. Sotoudeh's 11-year prison sentence to six years and her 20-year ban from leaving the country and practicing law to 10 years. The sentence is delivered to another of Ms. Sotoudeh's lawyers, Mina Jafari.

JANUARY 2011: European Parliament [issues a resolution](#) for the release of Nasrin Sotoudeh and other political prisoners in Iran.

The Law Society of England and Wales [urges](#) IRI authorities to release Ms. Sotoudeh.

IRI authorities hang (execute) Ms. Sotoudeh's client, Iranian-Dutch citizen Zahra Bahrami.

A week before Ms. Bahrami's execution, her daughter, Banafsheh Nayebpour [told](#) an Iranian opposition website: "Ms. [Nasrin] Sotoudeh...bravely defended my

mother and was the only person who gave an interview to a Dutch newspaper and said that the charges related to 'possession of narcotics' are trumped-up and fabricated. I think because [Ms. Sotoudeh] spread news and defended her clients it landed her in trouble (i.e. imprisonment)." **APRIL 2011:** PEN American Center names Nasrin Sotoudeh the [recipient of its 2011 PEN/Barbara Goldsmith Freedom to Write Award](#). The award honours international literary figures persecuted or imprisoned for exercising or defending the right to freedom of expression.

Weeks later, in the same month, prison officials reportedly transfer Ms. Sotoudeh from ward 209 to the methadone ward of Evin Prison, the location of the other women political prisoners. The other women [were transferred](#) to the methadone ward in November 2010. The methadone ward is an enclosed hall approximately 30 X 35 meters. The ward is typically reserved for prisoners who are addicts, and methadone is used as treatment for the addiction. According to reports, prisoners in the methadone ward are only allowed access to fresh air less than one hour per day. Prisoners in this ward are banned from using facilities and utilities, like the library and telephone. Mr. Khandan reports that his wife is suffering from problems with her vision, however prison officials have not allowed her to see an optometrist.



OCTOBER 2011: Nasrin Sotoudeh is denied prison visits for refusing to wear a chador (long open garment worn by women over their hijab). In the same month she is announced the recipient of PEN Canada's Empty Chair Award for the 32nd International Festival of Authors. She also receives PEN Canada's One Humanity Award.

JULY 2012: IRI authorities ban Reza Khandan and 12-year-old daughter Mehraveh from travelling abroad. Mr. Khandan [tells the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran](#): "We hadn't planned any trips. I believe this was done with the

objective of destroying the psychological and mental balance of our family and to inflict shock on all the family members.”

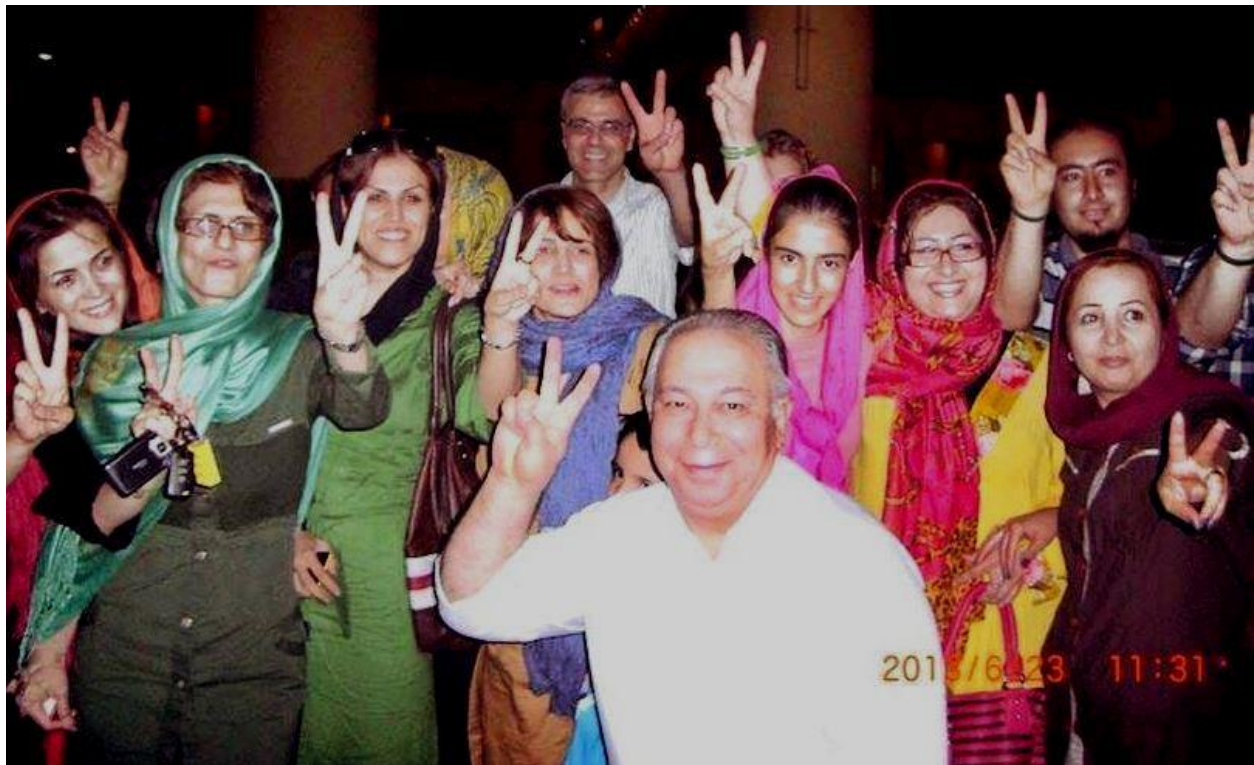
NOVEMBER 2012: Nasrin Sotoudeh begins a hunger strike to protest her daughter’s travel ban.

DECEMBER 2012: The European Parliament awards its prestigious Sakharov Prize to Nasrin Sotoudeh and Iranian filmmaker Jafar Panahi.

Ms. Sotoudeh [breaks her hunger strike](#) after seven weeks when her daughter’s travel ban is lifted. **JANUARY 2013:** Ms. Sotoudeh is granted a three-day furlough. It is her first prison leave since her arrest in September 2010.

MAY 30, 2013: Nasrin Sotoudeh spends her 50th birthday behind bars in Evin Prison.

JUNE 2013: Ms. Sotoudeh is granted a second furlough.



JULY 2013: Following 14 days of leave, Ms. Sotoudeh is returned to Evin Prison.