

46th session of the UN Human Rights Council

Oral Statement

ITEM 4: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Iran

I am delivering this statement on behalf of Reza Khandan, husband of Iranian human rights lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh, 2020 Right Livelihood Laureate.

Madam President,

I thank the Special Rapporteur for his report and for the attention brought to the repression of Iranian Human Rights Defenders, including my wife.

Nasrin was arrested and imprisoned on trumped-up political charges several times, but always maintained her commitment to the realisation of human rights for all Iranians. In March 2019, she was sentenced to 38 years and 148 lashes for having defended women's rights and being outspoken against the death penalty. In a continued pattern of harassment and reprisals against our family, the authorities froze our assets, arrested, and later released our daughter, and sentenced me to 6 years in prison and a 2-year travel ban.

Recently, following a hunger strike to protest prison conditions, Nasrin's health has severely deteriorated, and she was repeatedly denied adequate medical care. Last November she was finally granted a medical furlough but was suddenly brought back to Qarchak prison on December 2nd against medical advice.

Nasrin is now languishing in prison, away from me and our kids, together with many other political prisoners whose only crime is asking to live in peace, justice and freedom.

I call on the Council to stand up for Nasrin and urge Iran to release her and all those arbitrarily detained, immediately and unconditionally. Human rights defenders in Iran must be able to carry out their peaceful work without fear of reprisals, in accordance with Iran's international human rights obligations.

Thank you.