



## **Iranian political prisoner**

**Nasrin Sotoudeh**

**Born May 30, 1963 in Tehran, Iran**

A lawyer, women's right's activist, and mother of two, Nasrin Sotoudeh is an avid defender of juveniles facing capital charges, abused children, and has represented human rights activists in Iran.

After the fraudulent June 2009 Iranian presidential elections, Nasrin took on hundreds of cases of those who had been arrested for their involvement in the subsequent protests.

A colleague of Nobel Laureate and Iranian women's rights activist Shirin Ebadi, Nasrin has been held in Iran's notorious Evin prison since September 4, 2010. She was arrested after defying threats by the Iranian authorities to stop representing her clients, including Shirin Ebadi. Nasrin was offered a swift release if she made a televised confession. She refused.

Nasrin was placed in solitary confinement and has been interrogated under duress. She has only been allowed to see her two young children three times since her arrest in September 2010 very briefly, and has been banned from visits and phone calls on numerous occasions. To protest her mistreatment, Nasrin has been on hunger strike three times, totaling more than 60 days. Her courage to protest her treatment has increasingly diminished her health, and her family fears that her condition continues to deteriorate.

On January 9, 2011, the 26th branch of the Revolutionary Court presided by Judge Pirabbasi handed Nasrin an unjust sentence: 11 years in prison, and a 20 year ban from practicing law and from leaving Iran after the end of sentence. The punishment is a gross violation of Nasrin's human rights and international human rights standards. Her 11-year sentence included five years for charges of "acting against national security," another five years for her membership in Shirin Ebadi's organization, the Defenders of Human Rights Center, and one more year for "propaganda against the regime."

Before her arrest, Nasrin was continuously threatened by the regime to stop defending Shirin Ebadi and other Iranian human rights advocates. Nasrin's steadfast defense of her clients' rights has been a feature of her career. Early on in her legal career, Nasrin joined human rights organizations to give *pro bono* representation to women who were being harassed by the regime and to minors on death row.

Since Nasrin's arrest, her husband, Reza Khandan, has been pressured, threatened, and detained by the Iranian authorities for advocating for his wife's rights and conducting interviews with the media on his wife's deplorable conditions and treatment in prison. On January 16, 2011 Reza was summoned to the security branch of the Revolutionary Court in Evin prison. After interrogating him, Reza was detained and later released on bail.

Nasrin's lawyer, Nasim Ghanavi, has also been summoned and interrogated before the court.

On April 30, 2011, it was reported that Nasrin was transferred from Ward 209 to the methadone ward in Evin prison. This is a small, enclosed hall and prisoners are only allowed access outside for less than one hour daily. Usage of the phone or library is banned, and face-to-face meetings are prohibited. Since her incarceration, Nasrin has lost over 30 pounds.