**GCHR and ICSFT welcome release of HR activist Lawyer Nisrin Sotoudeh**



**The Gulf Center for Human Rights (GCHR) and  the International Council Supporting Fair Trial & Human Rights (ICSFT) welcome the news that human rights lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh has been released on 18 September 2013 after being imprisoned since 4 September 2010. Sotoudeh had been sentenced to 11 years in prison, which was later reduced to 6 years during an appeal as a result of her human rights work as a lawyer. She was also barred from practicing law and a travel ban was issued against her for 20 years.**

**The GCHR and ICSFT hope that the release of human rights lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh will also include the dropping of the travel ban, and allow Sotoudeh to practice her profession free of harassment and intimidation.**

**Both the GCHR and ICSFT believe that Mrs. Sotoudeh was targeted and imprisoned solely due to her human rights work as a lawyer; which included representing other human rights defenders and working with young prisoners sentenced to death. Iran must guarantee that all human rights defenders be able to carry out their work free from targeting, harassment and imprisonment.**

**Both GCHR and ICSFT call the authorities in Iran to execute the following:**

1. **Grant Mrs. Nasrin Sotoudeh an immediate and unfettered access to her office, in addition to  allowing her to travel abroad if she wishes to do so;**
2. **Immediately and unconditionally release all unjustly detained human rights defenders in Iran and drop all charges against them;**
3. **Guarantee in all circumstances that human rights defenders in Iran are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.**

**Both The GCHR and ICSFT respectfully remind all that the United Nations Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, adopted by consensus by the UN General Assembly on 9 December 1998, recognizes the legitimacy of the activities of human rights defenders, their right to freedom of association and to carry out their activities without fear of reprisals.
We would particularly draw your attention to:
 Article 11: *“Everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to the lawful exercise of his or her occupation or profession*(...),” and to
Article 12 (2): “*The State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually and in association with others, against any violence, threat, retaliation, de facto or de jure adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the present Declaration*.”**

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