



Organization: Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada
Item: Item 3: General Debate
Date: 16 March 2022
Speaker: Paria Saremi

Oral Statement to the 49th Session of the UN Human Rights Council from Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada (LRWC), International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI), and Lawyers for Lawyers (L4L), and Front Line Defenders, NGOs in special consultative status

Iran: Arbitrary detention and ill-treatment of human rights lawyers and defenders.

Mr. President,

This is a joint statement. Iran's pattern of arbitrary detention of human rights lawyers and defenders is of serious concern.¹ Iran regularly deploys judicial harassment of human rights advocates to obstruct remedies for rights violations, particularly rights of women and minorities. Numerous lawyers have been subjected to prolonged pre-trial detention, unfair trials based on vague and overbroad laws, lengthy prison sentences, and ill-treatment, merely for carrying out their duties as members of the legal profession or legitimate human rights advocacy.

Our organizations note numerous communications to Iran by Special Procedures mandate holders in 2021.² We also note their concerns about efforts to undermine the independence of Iran's Bar Associations.³

Iran also plans alarming internet legislation that is likely to further hamper human rights advocacy.⁴

We ask the Council to call on Iran to immediately:

- Halt all forms of harassment of lawyers and defenders, and abide by the UN *Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers*;⁵
- Drop the charges against lawyers Nasrin Sotoudeh,⁶ Amirsalar Davoudi, Hoda Amid, Mustafa Nili, Arash Keykhosravi, Mohammad Najafi,⁷ Payam Derafshan,⁸ and Farzaneh Zilabi,⁹ and release those lawyers still detained.
- Provide the Special Rapporteur on Iran with full access to the country and accept all outstanding invitations for country visits by Special Procedures.¹⁰

Thank you, Mr. President.

References

¹ Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada (LRWC), the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI), Lawyers for Lawyers (L4L), Front Line Defenders, and the Law Society of England and Wales, Iran: Arbitrary detention of lawyers and human rights defenders [**Amirsalar Davoudi**, **Nasrin Sotoudeh**, **Hoda Amid**, **Mustafa Nili** and **Arash Keykhosravi**], Joint letter, 18 January 2022, <https://www.lrwc.org/iran-a-pattern-of-arbitrary-detention-of-lawyers-and-human-rights-defenders-joint-letter/>; LRWC and L4L, Iran: Imprisonment of **Hoda Amid** and the Harassment of Lawyers, 16 March 2021, <https://www.lrwc.org/iran-imprisonment-of-hoda-amid-and-the-harassment-of-lawyers-joint-letter/>; IBAHRI et al, Iran: Arbitrary Imprisonment of Dr. **Reza Eslami** [legal scholar], Joint letter, 18 February 2021, <https://www.lrwc.org/iran-arbitrary-imprisonment-of-dr-reza-eslami/>

² Communications from several Items 3 and 4 Special Procedures in 2021: IRN 33/2021, 20 December 2021, <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=26897>; AL IRN 31/2021, 22 November 2021 (Mr. **Payam Derafshan**), <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=26790>; AL IRN 28/2021, 7 October 2021 (Ms. **Farzaneh Zilabi**), <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=26686>; AL IRN 16/2021, 10 June 2021 (Ms. **Nasrin Sotoudeh** and her husband Mr. **Reza Khandan**); AL IRN 27/2021, 5 Oct 2021 (Mr. **Arash Keykhosravi** and Mr. **Mostafa Nili**, Mr. Mehdi Mahmoudian), <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=26682>; AL IRN 22/2021, 17 Aug 2021 <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=26588>; AL IRN 14/2021, 27 May 2021; AL IRN 12/2021, 6 May 2021 18 human rights lawyers and defenders, including Ms. **Nasrin Sotoudeh**, Ms. **Hoda Amid**, Mr. **Amirsalar Davoudi** and Mr. **Mohammad Najafi**), <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=26375>.

³ Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers and the Special, Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, AL IRN 26/2021, 1 October 2021, <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=26681>.

⁴ UN human rights experts urge Iran to abandon restrictive internet bill, 1 March 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=28176&LangID=E>.

⁵ United Nations, *Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers*, 7 September 1990, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ddb9f034.html>.

⁶ *Supra* note 2.

⁷ **Lawyers for Lawyers, Free imprisoned human rights lawyer Mohammad Najafi in Iran, 3 March 2022, <https://lawyersforlawyers.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Joint-Statement-Free-Imprisoned-Human-Rights-Lawyer-Mohammad-Najafi-in-Iran-L4L-and-CHRI.pdf>.**

⁸ **Joint letter on the reported torture of Payam Derafshan, Lawyer for Lawyers and CCBE, 2 November 2022, <https://lawyersforlawyers.org/en/joint-letter-on-the-reported-torture-of-payam-derafshan/>; Iran: Account of Horrific Abuse of Prominent Lawyer: Mistreatment and Medical Neglect, Human Rights Watch, 20 October 2021, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/10/20/iran-account-horrific-abuse-prominent-lawyer>.**

⁹ **WHRD Farzaneh Zilabi sentenced to one year in prison and a two-year travel ban, Front Line Defenders, 17 September 2021, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/whrd-farzaneh-zilabi-sentenced-one-year-prison-and-two-year-travel-ban>.**

¹⁰ See the list of requests for country visits by numerous Item 3 Special Procedures at: <https://spinternet.ohchr.org/ViewCountryVisits.aspx?visitType=all&country=IRN&Lang=en>.