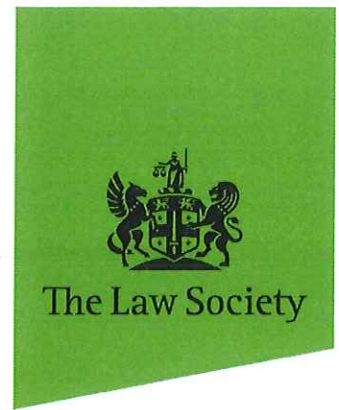


From the President

His Excellency
Hassan Rouhani
The Presidency
Palestine Avenue
Azerbaijan Intersection
Tehran
Islamic Republic of Iran



18 July 2016

Your Excellency

Abdolfattah Soltani – Lawyer at risk

The Law Society is a professional body representing more than 166,000 solicitors in England and Wales. Its aims include upholding the independence of the legal profession, the rule of law and human rights throughout the world.

The Law Society is concerned for Mr Abdolfattah Soltani, a human rights lawyer, founding member of Defenders of Human Rights Center, and a Nuremberg International Human Rights Award recipient. Mr. Soltani was arrested in September 2011 on charges that included spreading propaganda against the system, setting up an illegal opposition group, and gathering and colluding with intent to harm national security. We understand that he also faced charges of accepting an illegal prize and illegal earnings, relating to his acceptance of the Nuremberg International Human Rights Award in 2009.

In March 2012, Mr. Soltani was sentenced to 18 years in prison and a 20-year ban on practicing law. In June 2012, an appellate court reduced his prison term to 13 years. This is not the first time that Mr. Soltani has been imprisoned. He was previously arrested and incarcerated in 2005, but eventually acquitted of all charges. He was arrested and imprisoned again in 2009.

We are concerned that Mr Soltani is in urgent need of medical care in detention, which he has apparently not been given or only in inadequate measure. In 2013, he was hospitalised for 41 days for heart and digestive problems. On 17 January 2016, he was hospitalised again for 21 days. His family has reported that he continues to suffer from chest pains and that he was taken to the infirmary, but was brought back to his cell having not yet fully recovered. The Law Society previously expressed its concern regarding Mr. Soltani's treatment in detention and lack of access to medical care in our letter of 6 May 2014 (see attached).

Iran ratified the **UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights** on 24 June 1975:

Article 10.1: All persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person.

The Law Society also draws your attention the **UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners**, which provide that:

24.1 The provision of health care for prisoners is a State responsibility. Prisoners should enjoy the same standards of health care that are available in the community, and should have access to necessary health-care services free of charge without discrimination on the grounds of their legal status.

27.1 All prisons shall ensure prompt access to medical attention in urgent cases. Prisoners who require specialized treatment or surgery shall be transferred to specialized institutions or to civil hospitals.

In addition, the **Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment (1988)** states:

24. A proper medical examination shall be offered to a detained or imprisoned person as promptly as possible after his admission to the place of detention or imprisonment, and thereafter medical care and treatment shall be provided whenever necessary.

The **UN Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners (1990)** provides that:

9. Prisoners shall have access to the health services available in the country without discrimination on the grounds of their legal situation.

The Law Society also draws your attention to the **Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers** adopted by the United Nations in 1990:

16. Governments shall ensure that lawyers (a) are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference; (b) are able to travel and to consult with their clients freely both within their own country and abroad; and (c) shall not suffer, or be threatened with, prosecution or administrative, economic or other sanctions for any action taken in accordance with recognized professional duties, standards and ethics.

The Law Society respectfully urges Your Excellency to ensure that the relevant authorities:

- 1) Immediately transfer Mr Soltani to a hospital where he can receive specialist treatment;
- 2) Guarantee, in all circumstances, the physical and psychological integrity of Mr Soltani;
- 3) Comply with the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review of Iran in 2014 to ensure that conditions of detention are adequate and meet international standards.

The Law Society will continue to monitor the situation of Mr. Soltani, as well as the situation of other lawyers and human rights defenders who may be hindered in carrying out their professional duties.

Yours sincerely,



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President

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cc

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