



Head of the Judiciary  
H.E. Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani  
c/o Public Relations Office  
Number 4, Deadend of 1 Azizi  
Above Pasteur Intersection Vali Asr Street  
Tehran  
Iran

27 June 2019

Your Excellency,

**Mr Amirsalar Davoudi – Lawyer convicted and sentenced to 30 years imprisonment and 111 lashes**

The Law Society of England & Wales is the professional body representing more than 180,000 solicitors in England and Wales. It aims to promote and support solicitors while upholding the rule of law, legal independence, ethical values, and the principle of justice for all around the world. The Law Society holds Special Consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council since 2014.

We are deeply concerned by the recent conviction and sentencing of Mr Amirsalar Davoudi to 30 years imprisonment and 111 lashes. Mr Davoudi is a lawyer who represents political prisoners, as well as members of ethnic and religious minorities. He was convicted on charges including “insulting officials”, “propaganda against the state”; and “forming a group with the purpose of disrupting national security” by the 15<sup>th</sup> Revolutionary Court in Tehran. Under Iranian regulations, he will be required to serve 15 years of his sentence. It is believed that Mr Davoudi was convicted for speaking out on social and political matters through “Without Retouch”, a messaging channel that he set up.

On 20 November 2018, Mr Davoudi was arrested in his office by intelligence officers, his office and home were searched without a warrant, and some of his documents were confiscated. After his arrest, he was held in solitary confinement for 190 days and is now being held in Evin Prison in Tehran. Mr Davoudi has very limited access to his family and lawyers, as well as medical care in prison. We are concerned that Mr. Davoudi may have been subjected to ill-treatment while in prison.

Iran is bound by the international legal obligations set out in the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights**, which it ratified on 24 June 1975:

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## Article 7

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. In particular, no one shall be subjected without his free consent to medical or scientific experimentation.

## Article 9(1)

Everyone has the right to liberty and security of person. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention. No one shall be deprived of his liberty except on such grounds and in accordance with such procedure as are established by law.

## Article 10 (i)

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

Article 14. 1. All persons shall be equal before the courts and tribunals. In the determination of any criminal charge against him, or of his rights and obligations in a suit at law, everyone shall be entitled to a fair and public hearing by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal established by law. [...]

3. In the determination of any criminal charge against him, everyone shall be entitled to the following minimum guarantees, in full equality: [...] (b) To have adequate time and facilities for the preparation of his defence and to communicate with counsel of his own choosing; [...] (d) To be tried in his presence, and to defend himself in person or through legal assistance of his own choosing.

The **United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers**, endorsed by the UN General Assembly, provide guidance to States on their obligation to promote the role of lawyers and ensure that they are free to carry out their professional duties:

1. All persons are entitled to call upon the assistance of a lawyer of their choice to protect and establish their rights and to defend them in all stages of criminal proceedings.

16. Governments shall ensure that lawyers (a) are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference (...) 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.

23. Lawyers like other citizens are entitled to freedom of expression, belief, association and assembly. In particular, they shall have the right to take part in public discussion of matters concerning the law, the administration of justice and the promotion and protection of human rights and to join or form local, national or international organizations and attend their meetings, without suffering professional restrictions by reason of their lawful action or their membership in a lawful organization. In exercising these rights, lawyers shall always conduct themselves in accordance with the law and the recognized standards and ethics of the legal profession.

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We respectfully urge that the relevant authorities in Iran take the following actions:

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Mr Davoudi, withdraw all charges against him, vacate any convictions and sentences imposed on him, and put an end to all acts of harassment against him;
2. Ensure the psychological and physical integrity of Mr Davoudi and comply with all international standards regarding conditions of detention; and
3. Comply with Iran's international obligations to ensure that members of the legal profession and human rights defenders can carry out their professional functions without harassment and improper interference, including judicial harassment.

We will continue to monitor the situation of Mr Davoudi, as well as the situation of other lawyers and human rights defenders in Iran.

Yours sincerely,



Christina Blacklaws

President

The Law Society of England & Wales

cc.

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