



# International Liberty Association Newsletter

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## EDITORIAL

This our last newsletter of 2020 comes with every good wish that you and your family are keeping well and that, despite any restrictions, the Christmas season will be a time of joy and happiness for you and the New Year bring many blessings.

Among these blessings, we have heard good news about a vaccine for the Covid-19 virus and trust 2021 will see lockdown changes such that everybody can soon be reunited with all their family and friends.

We are very glad that, in spite of this year's unprecedented events, we have been able to maintain our charitable commitments to the suffering people of Iran, both the prisoners of conscience, many held in the appalling conditions of Iran's prisons just for peaceful protest, and those of all ages and walks of life across the country whose dire human rights situation we are determined to expose.

While still missing hosting you in person at social events we are delighted that the weekly online meetings we substituted have gone from strength to strength. Unrestricted by location, many, including our speakers, have been able to join us from distant parts of this country and beyond, as we combine updates on our campaigns and recent events with music and entertainment, plus insights into the heritage and culture of the various regions of Iran. This weekly 'Hour with ILA' has proved a very powerful means of keeping our hearts close.

While preparing this bulletin we remember this time last year and the uprising of the Iranian people due ... continued on p.2

## UN SECRETARY-GENERAL DECRIES IRAN'S HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

In his annual report, UN Secretary-General, **Antonio Guterres**, described "repeated and serious violations" of human rights in Iran as a "grave concern."

The report published on Wednesday 14 October, was prepared for submission to the UN General Assembly (UNGA) two months ago.

Guterres' report, which covers the period from September 2018 to the summer of 2020, underlines "repeated serious violations" of human rights and "violent repression" of widespread protests in Iran.

One of the report's highlights is the "violent repression and use of force by security forces" in November 2019 when protests erupted in more than 190 cities in Iran and were met with a deadly government response.

"The health crisis has doubled the impact of the economic crisis



and sanctions on the human rights situation in Iran", added the UN Secretary General.

Guterres was referring to the initial outbreak of the corona virus pandemic, which involved Iran ahead of any other country in the Middle East and ranked it first in the region in terms of the COVID-19 death toll.

The new UN report also says implementing the death penalty, "particularly ... continued on p.2

## UNGA CONDEMNS IRAN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES



During the 75th session of the UNGA's Third Committee, which is focused on social and human rights issues, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran, **Javaid Rehman**, said that there is a "clear pattern" of Iranian authorities trying to "silence public dissent over the social, economic and political situation."

He mentioned that in the past few months, the government has handed down and carried out multiple death sentences for protesters, citing the

arbitrary execution of wrestler and political prisoner **Navid Afkari** in September as "emblematic".

"This grievous violation of the right to life is the latest execution in a series of protest-related death sentences, despite allegations of torture-induced forced confessions and other serious fair trial violations," he said.

Before Afkari's execution, political prisoner **Mostafa Salehi** was executed in August and his family has since had their home stolen by officials. There are dozens more political prisoners on death row, many under torture, and there is increased concern about the protesters arrested during the November 2019 protests. After all, the State Security Forces (SSF) shot 1,500 peaceful protesters dead in the street, so what would they do behind closed doors?



### UN Secretary-General decries Iran's Human Rights violations

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for juvenile delinquents," is still significant in Iran.

At least 90 juvenile offenders were on death row at the beginning of last summer, the report says, adding that carrying out the death penalty against these young offenders is a profound source of concern.

"The Secretary-General reiterates concerns expressed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on 22 April, 2020, at the execution of two child offenders in four days, as well as the beating to death of a third child offender by security and prison officials," the report says.

Furthermore, "The Secretary-General regrets that the Islamic Republic of Iran only partially accepted one of 23 recommendations on the death penalty for child offenders during its universal periodic review."

The UN report also mentions

dual-national and foreign prisoners, including Iranian-Swedish **Ahmad Reza Jalali**, Iranian-Austrians **Massoud Mosaheb**, and **Kamran Ghaderi** (Qaderi), Iranian-Americans **Morad Tahabaz**, **Siamak Namazi**, and his father, **Baquer Namazi**.

Guterres expressed grave concern about the grounds for detaining dual nationals in Iran and the intelligence-related charges against them.

The UN released its report on a day when more than 150 former UN staff members, UNICEF, academics, and civil society members, once again expressed concern over Baquer and Siamak Namazi's imprisonment in Iran on Tuesday, 13 October, and called for their immediate release.

In the last two months, specifically after the sudden execution of the young Iranian wrestling champion, **Navid Afkari**, Iran's human rights situation has received more attention across the globe. International bodies have repeatedly accused Iranian officials of violating citizens'

fundamental rights.

In September, 47 European countries including the United Kingdom, co-signed a statement in which they condemned the execution of Navid Afkari and demanded the release of **Nasrin Sotoudeh** and **Narges Mohammadi** and an end to the repeated gross violations of human rights in Iran.

While expressing "deep concern," the statement, read by the German representative to the UN Human Rights Council, referred to repeated human rights violations in Iran, including "arbitrary detentions, unfair trials, forced confessions" and "torturing" protesters detained in recent anti-government demonstrations in Iran.

International award-winning human rights activist, Narges Mohammadi, was subsequently released along with some other prisoners who had been detained unjustly for their human and civil rights activities.

## UN INVESTIGATOR: RIGHTS OF MINORITIES TO WORSHIP UNDERMINED

The UN special investigator on religious freedom urged countries to repeal laws undermining the right of minorities to worship and hold beliefs, pointing, as examples, to China's detention of Uighurs, 21 countries that criminalize apostasy, and sweeping surveillance of Christians in North Korea and Muslims in Thailand.

**Ahmed Shaheed** warned that "the failure to eliminate discrimination, combined with political marginalization and nationalist attacks on identities, can propel trajectories of violence and even atrocity crimes."

He called on governments to



"repeal all laws that undermine the exercise of the human rights to freedom of religion or belief," to adopt comprehensive anti-

discrimination legislation and act to empower minorities to claim all their rights to religion and beliefs.

The former foreign minister of the Maldives said in a recent report to the General Assembly that data suggests the prevalence of laws, policies and government actions that restrict freedom of religion or belief "increased from 2007 to 2017." In Iran, "unrecognized religious or belief groups, including the Baha'is, are unable to access employment, housing, university-level education, health care and social services, including pensions," Mr Shaheed said.

### Editorial *continued from p.1*

to the huge petrol price rise. Sadly, the Iranian regime responded to the peaceful demonstrations with bullets and mass arrests in which 1,500 were murdered, 4,000 wounded and 12,000 young people arrested and imprisoned under torture. This sparked a very big campaign for us, collecting information, holding meetings and rallies, reporting the crimes against humanity to human rights organisations and asking you, our supporters, to write to your MPs

and others about the plight of these peaceful protesters.

We thank everyone for their strenuous efforts which succeeded in sending a strong message to the Iranian regime that the world was watching and was not going to be silent.

We are delighted to have witnessed the mullah's regime backing off under the pressure of public opinion resulting in a stop to several planned executions and

helping save many young people's lives.

We look forward to 2021 strong in the knowledge that working together we can stop even more executions and the many violations of human rights the people of Iran are subject to.

So again we thank you for all your active support during the year, wish you a very happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year and hope for many more successes from our efforts in 2021.



## IRANIAN YOUTH MARK NOVEMBER 2019 UPRISING

Marking the first anniversary of Iran's nationwide November 2019 protests, that flared up in more than 190 cities throughout the entire country, Iranian youth in exile held an online conference on Tuesday 10 November 2020 vowing to continue the struggle on behalf of those who fell during those days.



Many of those killed during the November 2019 protests were women

Very soon after protests started on 15 November 2019, Iran's Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, issued a hostile command to his uniformed thugs to terminate the protests. The Revolutionary Guards opened fire on the crowds and killed more than 1,500 brave men and women. Over 4,000 were wounded and at least 12,000 were arrested.

Keynote speaker of the event on 10 November, **Maryam Rajavi**, president elect of the Iranian opposition for the transition period said: "The uprising in November 2019 was neither indiscriminate nor spontaneous... it had no ties with any of the regime's factions and no connections to any world power or government. On the contrary, the November uprising emanated from the Iranian people's independent and liberating resolve.

"In November 2019, the regime began killing protesters from the onset. The slaughter took on a much greater scale on 17 November, upon Khamenei's order. He told his suppressive agencies to 'fulfil their duties' with regard to the protesters. This was an order for a ruthless massacre."



**Mrs Ingrid Betancourt**, former Colombian senator, and presidential candidate said: "It is our duty to point

our fingers at the criminals who murdered protesters in Iran. World leaders must take action now. What happens in Iran has consequences in our daily lives. The religious terrorism that strikes our streets has been financed by Iran. This has been shown in numerous trials, including the one being held this month in Antwerp, Belgium.

"The social classes who are thought to be the legitimizing backbone of the regime were the ones who were chanting slogans against Khamenei and Rouhani in the streets and were shot to death by security forces."

**British MP Theresa Villiers** said: "The international community must now intervene to stop the culture of impunity in Iran in order to prevent another massacre of dissidents in regime's prisons. Silence is not an option and the international community and Western democracies must stand with the Iranian people and the organised resistance movement as they continue to challenge the regime to establish a free and democratic Iran."



**Mitchell Reiss**, Director of Policy Planning at the Department of State (2003–2005) said: "These protests took place because the Iranian

people only wish what people all over the world wish for – the basic human right to live in freedom, to raise your family without fear, to elect honest officials who will represent your best interests and not steal from you, and to live a life of dignity.

"You and your colleagues all over Iran have made it clear that you want a change from this illegitimate regime. Your courage and bravery in the face of the regime's violence and repression is inspiring."



**Princess Zamaswazi Dlamini-Mandela**, human rights activist and granddaughter of the late South African President Nelson Mandela said: "The Iranian people are in need of peace, justice, and political prosperity. The people of Iran reject tyranny and demand freedom.

The people of Iran have turned to the international community to boycott the regime.

"As a global village, we are each responsible to stand up and stand together with the people of Iran. As we honour the martyrs of November 2019, we must remember there is no easy path to freedom. Let us stand together in solidarity and compassion, and support Madam Rajavi's plan for the future of Iran."



## MOTHER OF A DEATH ROW PRISONER TO JAVAID REHMAN: "MY ONLY HOPE IS NOW YOU, TO BECOME MY SON AND MY VOICE"



The mother of a Kurdish prisoner who has been sentenced to death after 10 years of imprisonment wrote a letter to the UN Special Rapporteur on Iran, **Javaid Rehman**. The translation of her letter appears below:

I am **Khadija Azarbooya**, mother of the political and religious prisoner, **Khosro Besharat**, who recently, after 10 long years of imprisonment was sentenced to death the other day.

You have no idea how difficult were these 10 years for an old mother. Only a mother would understand what I endured last 10 years, day after day.

Countless nights I waited to see my son and countless

days I thought this is the last day and I'm going to see my son!

For 10 years, every day of my life was like that, I lived in hope that today might be the last day for my dear son to be in prison and today I'm going to see him at last.

For 10 years I sat by the phone so I would hear about my son's freedom.

Because we are very poor and my son's prison was so far from us, I only could see him for a few times and each time, after a long journey, only for a few minutes. I wish those few minutes of visiting my son would never end so I could be with him forever.

I don't even know what happiness and normal life is anymore. For 10 long years I slept with hope. The hope which hasn't become reality yet.

My dear son's only crime is that he is Kurdish and he loves freedom, that's all.

My only hope is now you, to become my son and my voice.



Top: Kurdish prisoner Khosro Besharat

Right: UN Special Rapporteur on Iran, Javaid Rehman

## LETTER FROM EVIN

My name is **Zahra Zehtabchi**, mother of 2 daughters. I am in prison since 7 years ago and my sentence is 10 years just for using the internet.

Of course my conviction is nothing new in this regime. Many many people are in prison for no reason under this regime and countless others have been executed for no reason; for example my own father and my husband's father.

My father **Mr Ali Asghar Zehtabchi**, was executed in Evin prison in 1981 accused of taking part in the peaceful demonstrations of 20 June 1981. The Islamic Republic arrested many people in those demonstrations and executed many of them by the same night. How could anyone in this world get arrested for taking part in a peaceful demonstration and then get sentence and be executed on the same night?! And my father wasn't even in that peaceful demo. He got arrested some 15 days before, in his shop in Tehran bazaar, but got executed with many others in August 1981 accused of taking part in that peaceful demonstration some 15 days after his arrest!!

One night when my siblings and I were sitting for dinner, we heard from TV that he was executed on that day; can you imagine the heartbreak.

I got married in 1988. My husband's father, with another woman and a four year old child, were on their way to escape across Iran's border when they were arrested and subsequently executed there and then. They never told us why they did that. They never showed us any graves or told us what happened to that innocent 4 year old child.



This is a little of what they did to me and my family during the 1980s and a very small fraction of the barbarity in this regime.

Zahra is a sociologist and mother of two daughters. She is spending a 10 year prison sentence in Evin for refusing to accept that her father was guilty when he was executed. The regime tried to force her to make false confessions on TV, but she refused. She was arrested on 16 October 2013 and spent her first 11 months in solitary confinement.



## FAMOUS IRANIAN SINGER, SHAJARIAN DIES AT 80

A most famous Iranian singer and master of traditional Persian music, **Mohammad Reza Shajarian** died in hospital in Tehran on 8 October 2020.

The news of his death sparked a mass rally in front of the hospital that continued for the next couple of days until after his body was hastily buried in Tus near the mausoleum of the famous Iranian poet Ferdowsi.

“Dictatorship is inherently hated in society, whatever form it takes”, said Shajarian in an interview.

“My music has been the cry of the people. If dictatorship stands against the people it stands against me and I stand against it.”

Shajarian developed traditional Persian music with innovations in the methods of presenting it and gave it new life.

He did not want to engage in politics but he could not tolerate the heinous crimes of the regime. In 1988 he was filmed shouting “Down with dictator” while driving in the streets of Tehran during the mass protests sparked by rigged elections.

The anti-art rule of the clergy could not tolerate Shajarian and he was continually put under pressure.

In an interview outside of Iran he said: “I live under a government that has banned me from singing for my people.

“When I see that a woman in my country is sitting on the side of the street selling cigarettes, this is something that I can’t tolerate watching.”

Mohammad Reza Shajarian was born on 23 September 1940 in Mash’had and started singing in childhood. He was trained by his father who was himself a master Quran reciter.

Shajarian joined the national radio at a very young age and became very popular in the early 1970’s. After the 1979 revolution he ended his work with state radio and TV telling friends that “their ideas and values do not conform to mine.”

In 1999 Shajarian was awarded the Picasso Medal by UNESCO for enrichment and development of music.

He has been labelled the Czar of Persian songs and, after a concert in Vancouver, Canada, in December 2012,



a Canadian journal called him ‘The Legend of Eastern Music’.

Shajarian was fighting cancer for many years and after his death was confirmed on Thursday 8 October, a massive crowd gathered in front of the hospital. Very quickly the gathering turned into an anti regime demonstration with slogans like ‘Down With Dictator’.

The cry of a nightingale turned into a roar that demanded the end of dictatorship. Can Khamenei and his regime destroy original Iranian art and artists? Never. They live in our memories for ever.

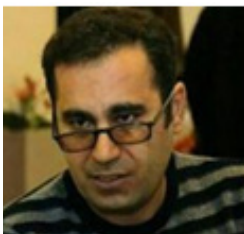
The regime tried to ban participation in his burial ceremony and, while thousands of people had gathered, the regime cut the internet and prevented people from entering the cemetery. So the crowd sang his famous song at the gate.



Gathering in Tus for Shajarian burial

## MANY PRISONERS RELEASED AFTER RELENTLESS CAMPAIGNING

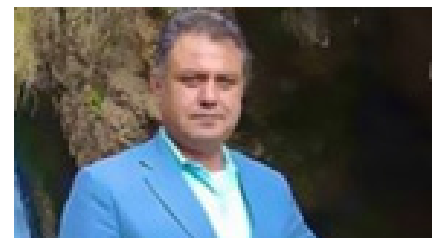
**Mohammad Hassan Habibi** was arrested by SSF (State Security Forces) on 10 May 2018, during



a teachers’ protest and taken to Greater Tehran Prison along with a number of other civil activists. He was subsequently sentenced to 7½ years of prison, accused of “propaganda against the regime”, and another 18 months plus 74 lashes and a 2 year ban from joining political parties and social associations for the charge of “disturbing public order”.



Reporter **Nada Sabouri** was arrested by SSF in a protest gathering of families of prisoners who were attacked and beaten up by prison guards in April 2014. She was eventually sentenced to 3½ years of prison for the charge of “assembly” and “collusion”. She started her prison sentence on 7 August 2020 in the women’s section of Evin prison.



**Vahid Khamoushi** was arrested in the early morning hours of 20 February 2018 along with hundreds of other Dervishes for the charge of “assembly” and “collusion” and sentenced to 3½ years of prison.

After relentless campaigning all 3 have been released along with a number of other prisoners upon a direct order from the judiciary.



# "I URGE YOU TO CONTINUE THAT CAMPAIGN"

'An Hour With ILA', every Saturday 5 to 6 pm, is a unique opportunity to be updated about the campaigns, recent events and to get to know Iran's heritage and culture.

On Saturday 31 October former MEP, **Struan Stevenson**, was the keynote speaker and he shed light on the significance of ILA's activities.



Excerpts of his remarks appear below.

*It's a great privilege for me to join my good friends in the ILA for this online meeting today. I only wish the Covid crisis would end so that I could once again be meeting with you all in person.*

*You know, the work that you do, supporting human rights in Iran and exposing the brutal repression of the Iranian regime, is really of great significance. But you also play an effective role in bringing the voice of the Iranian people to the international community, and saving the lives of prisoners in danger, especially in this period of the corona pandemic. So can I thank you sincerely for your great work?*

*I know, in particular, that you have been very active campaigning to stop the execution of young political prisoners in Iran, arrested during the nationwide uprising in 2018 and 2019, and I urge you to continue that campaign. Your work has saved lives, but we still need to do more.*

*This week I watched a horrific video of the police torturing a young man in public, on a street in the city of Mashhad, the second most populous city in Iran. Police had been called to the home of Mehrdad Sepehri following a domestic dispute; you know, they handcuffed the young man to a lamp-post and continued to beat and taser the helpless man and spray him with pepper spray in full view of the public. Men, women and children looked on in horror. Many people filmed the atrocity as it happened. Mr Sephari died on his way to hospital, in a police car. A doctor confirmed that he had been suffocated by pepper spray.*

*Sadly, as we all know, the death of Mehrdad Sephari is symptomatic of a regime for whom human rights is a joke.*



*Deploying the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, the IRGC, which is the regime's Gestapo, the mullahs have unleashed a homicidal blitz on their own population, crushing dissent during the nationwide uprisings in 2018 and 2019, wantonly murdering and maiming thousands of peaceful protesters. The mullahs even closed down the internet to try to hide their crimes and suppress the uprising.*

*But you know, the people have lost their fear. Now Iran's jails are bursting at the seams with political prisoners, many of them young students, male and female.*

*The inhumane treatment of prisoners in Iran is an international scandal. The misogynistic regime now holds pole position as the world's leading executioner. Under the so-called moderate presidency of Hassan Rouhani, over 4,300 people have been hanged, including 109 women.*

*Without the revealing activities of the ILA and other human rights organisations, the mullahs would have been able to prolong their abuse in a climate of silence and indifference from the international community, but the times are changing.*

*Organisations like the ILA have put pressure on governments around the world and have shone a spotlight on the theocratic regime in Iran. We must redouble our efforts and redouble the pressure.*

*It's time the international community took a stand against this evil regime and held its leaders to account.*

*I thank you all sincerely for your support. It's really much appreciated, what you have done and what you continue to do.*



The weekly zoom events are a fantastic place to liaise with supporters many of whom take part as performers. We urge you to take part in these events and let us know if you have a particular talent that you would like to share with our friends.





## NEWS IN BRIEF

### AFKARI BROTHERS REMAIN INCOMMUNICADO AFTER NAVID'S EXECUTION



Brothers of the wrestling champion **Navid Afkari**, **Habib** and **Vahid**, have been held in solitary confinement in Adelabad Prison since Navid was executed on 12 September, in order to stifle their voices. The authorities have also denied the Afkari brothers visits and phone calls with their family.

In October **Mr Hossein Afkari** and **Ms Bahieh Namjoo**, the parents of the Afkari Brothers, wrote a letter to the judge in charge of Adelabad Prison in Shiraz, asking for an explanation about the continued solitary confinement and torture of their children.

### CHRISTIAN CONVERT RECEIVES 80 LASHES FOR DRINKING HOLY WINE



The clerical regime lashed Iranian Christian convert **Mohammad Reza Omidi** 80 times for drinking communion wine. The sentence was carried out on Wednesday, 14 October 2020, at the Prosecutor's Office of Rasht.

Mohammad Reza (Yuhan) Omidi finished his 2-year sentence on 14 September after which he was sent to exile to Borazjan, in the southern province of Bushehr.

The authorities asked him to return to Rasht to receive his lashes which was carried out on 14 October.

### COVID 19 IS TAKING ITS TOLL IN IRAN

As of 17 November the actual number of deaths in Iran due to corona virus has passed 157,900. The authorities have officially acknowledged only one-third of this figure but various sources inside the regime have stated publicly that the actual number is indeed 3 to 4 times greater.



### YOUNESS CARRIES HEAVY LOAD WITHOUT LEGS



**Youness Feyzi** lost his legs as a young boy in a mine blast when he was playing with his older brother and sister in the fields. His siblings died and Youness lost both legs. He says he never extended his arms to beg for help from anyone. Carrying heavy loads is difficult even for men with legs but Youness says it is less difficult for him than begging.

His work is made even harder with the danger of being arrested or shot to death by the regime's guards. Yet he is the breadwinner and is determined to provide for his family of 4, his widowed mother and two younger siblings.



### FEMALE PHOTOGRAPHER AND DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKER ARRESTED

On the eve of the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists, a female photographer and documentary filmmaker was arrested in Iran.



Security forces arrested **Negar Massoudi** on 29 October 2020, in Tehran. They ransacked her house and transferred her to an unknown location.

Born in 1985, Negar Massoudi has a Bachelor's degree in photography and a Master's degree in Art Research. She has held several photo exhibitions. In addition, she has directed several short and long films.

This female photographer and documentary filmmaker has been active in Isfahan, central Iran, against attacks on women.

### MORE REPRESSION UNDER THE PRETEXT OF COVID

On 31 October Revolutionary Guards (IRGC) commander **Hossain Salami** ordered his troops to raid people's homes under the pretext of combating the corona virus.



"We will use 54,000 Basij [paramilitary forces] bases as protectors of health. We will search for sick people from house to house, and we will perform the process of separating ill people from others and referring them to treatment centres," the website quoted Salami.

The IRGC and its Basij subsidiary are the groups responsible for the assassination of 1,500 protesters during the nationwide November 2019 protests so it is understandably terrifying to have them go into houses and take people away.



## BACHELET CALLS ON IRAN TO RELEASE JAILED HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS



UN High Commissioner for Human Rights **Michelle Bachelet** on Tuesday 6 October expressed deep concern at the deteriorating situation of human rights defenders, lawyers and political prisoners held in Iran's prisons and called on the authorities to release them in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Iran is the country most affected by COVID-19 in the region. Its prison system suffers from chronic overcrowding and poor sanitary conditions that have worsened during the pandemic. Shortages of water, hygiene products and disinfectant, insufficient protective equipment and testing kits as well as a lack of isolation spaces and inadequate medical care have led to the spread of the virus among detainees and have reportedly resulted in a number of deaths.

"Under international human rights law, States are responsible for the well-being, as well as the physical and mental health, of everyone in their care, including everyone deprived of their liberty," Ms Bachelet said in her statement. "People detained solely for their political views or other forms of activism in support of human rights should not be imprisoned at all, and such prisoners should certainly not be treated more harshly or placed at greater risk", she continued.

"I am disturbed to see how measures designed to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 have been used in a discriminatory way against this specific group of prisoners," she added.

One of the most emblematic cases is that of prominent human rights lawyer and women's rights defender Nasrin Sotoudeh, who received a combined sentence of over 30 years in prison on charges related to her human rights work. In protest against the continued use of arbitrary detention, as well as inadequate medical care in prison, Sotoudeh began a second hunger strike in August, which ended after nearly 50 days due to her rapidly deteriorating

health. Her heart condition requires specialized treatment.

"I am very concerned that Nasrin Sotoudeh's life is at risk," the UN Human Rights Chief said. "Once again, I urge the authorities to immediately release her and grant her the possibility of recuperating at home before undergoing the medical treatment of her choice. Over the years, she has been a persistent and courageous advocate for the rights of her fellow Iranians, and it is time for the Government to cease violating her own rights because of the efforts she has made on behalf of others."

"It is disheartening to see the use of the criminal justice system as a tool to silence civil society. Expressing dissent is not a crime. It is a fundamental right that should be protected and upheld," Bachelet said.

"I urge the Iranian Government to review, in light of Iran's international legal obligations – including the right to a fair trial – all sentences of people detained without sufficient legal basis. And I call for the unconditional release of human rights defenders, lawyers, political prisoners, peaceful protesters and all other individuals deprived of their liberty for expressing their views or otherwise exercising their rights," the High Commissioner said. "It is particularly important to rectify such injustices at a time when COVID-19 is coursing through Iran's prisons."



**Join us for our Christmas Celebrations**

**Online with Zoom**

**5 to 6.30pm Wednesday 16**

**5 to 6pm Saturday 19 December**

**and 4 to 5.30pm on Christmas Eve, 24 December**

**Please send an email to [info@iliberty.org.uk](mailto:info@iliberty.org.uk)  
so that we can send you details for connection**