



CONSENT CALENDAR
June 29, 2021

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Councilmember Taplin
Subject: Resolution Supporting Freedom for Nasrin Sotoudeh

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution in Support of Freedom for Nasrin Sotoudeh and All Other Political Prisoners and Prisoners of Conscience in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

According to the Iran Prisoners Atlas, there are currently 586 political prisoners detained in the Islamic Republic of Iran.¹ Feminist and human rights attorney Nasrin Sotoudeh has been imprisoned since 2018, and despite being told she was taken to the hospital, was moved to the Qarchak Women's Prison in October 2020—an overcrowded prison with 1,400 female inmates that has been described as “hell on earth,”² with no proper sewage, where she contracted COVID-19.³

According to Amnesty International, the government of Iran has suppressed information on the COVID-19 pandemic, while regularly inflicting torture on political prisoners and restricting inmates' access to adequate healthcare and due process.⁴

BACKGROUND

Sotoudeh was granted a brief medical leave in January 2020, but it was abruptly ended on January 19, 2020, when the government of Iran also froze her family's bank accounts.⁵ Known as “Iran's Nelson Mandela,” a documentary about Sotoudeh's activism and imprisonment, *Nasrin*, was released in 2020.

¹ <https://ipa.united4iran.org/en/prisoner/>

² <https://msmagazine.com/2021/01/22/feminist-lawyer-nasrin-sotoudeh-returned-iran-qarchak-prison/>

³ <https://msmagazine.com/2021/05/10/unbearable-reza-khandan-husband-of-nasrin-sotoudeh-on-the-ground-in-irans-qarchak-prison/>

⁴ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/middle-east-and-north-africa/iran/report-iran/>

⁵ Kaufman, J. (2021, Jan. 26). Opinion: ‘Iran's Nelson Mandela’ is back in prison. Biden must push for her freedom. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/01/26/nasrin-sotoudeh-iran-prison-biden/>

[Title of Report]

CONSENT CALENDAR
June 15, 2021

The Alameda County Democratic Party Central Committee approved a similar resolution on May 5, 2021, sponsored by Berkeley resident Igor Tregub. The European Parliament issued a resolution in support of Sotoudeh in December of 2018.⁶

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

None.

CONTACT PERSON

Councilmember Terry Taplin, District 2, 510-981-7120

Attachments:

1: Resolution

⁶ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2018-0525_EN.html

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF FREEDOM FOR NASRIN SOTOUDEH AND ALL
OTHER POLITICAL PRISONERS AND PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE IN THE
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

WHEREAS Nasrin Sotoudeh, widely recognized as Iran's Mandela, is currently imprisoned in Qarchak Women's Prison. A distinguished lawyer and human rights activist, Sotoudeh has become a symbol of the Iranian people's nonviolent struggle for justice, dignity and equality; and

WHEREAS women in Iran are systematically subject to an apartheid state with much harsher restrictions than men; and

WHEREAS many individuals have been imprisoned, tortured and executed for being defenders of human rights by the Islamic Republic of Iran;

BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Berkeley supports the immediate release of Nasrin Sotoudeh and all other political prisoners and prisoners of conscience in the Islamic Republic of Iran; and

Be It Further Resolved, that the City Council of the City of Berkeley affirms its support of human rights in Iran, including equal rights for women and minorities and the end of apartheid against women and targeted religious, nonreligious and cultural minorities.

