Question for written answer E-004915/2020
to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Rule 138
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Subject: Call for the release of Iranian human rights lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh

Iranian human rights lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh, who was awarded the Sakharov Prize in 2012, was sentenced to 33 years in prison and 148 lashes for several charges, including conspiracy against national security, spreading lies and disturbing public opinion. She has been detained since June 2018.

On 10 August 2020, she began a hunger strike in protest against the continued imprisonment of human rights defenders in Iran despite the pandemic and the inaction by the authorities in response to it.

On 17 August, security forces arrested her twenty-one-year-old daughter, Mehraveh Khandan, on spurious charges of ‘insult and assault’, and subsequently released her on bail in order to force her mother to end her hunger strike.

Since the beginning of the pandemic there have been confirmed cases of COVID-19 in prisons across Iran. Prisoners have pleaded with officials to address overcrowded and unsanitary conditions, and denounced the lack of basic rights such as the right to choose their own lawyers and to a fair trial.

In light of the recent developments, is the Vice-President / High Representative planning to take concrete action, and reiterate the call to immediately release Nasrin Sotoudeh and put an end to judicial and legal harassment of Nasrin Sotoudeh and her family?