**Iran arrests human rights lawyer Nasrin**

**Sotoudeh after she criticised judiciary**

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One of Iran’s most prominent human rights lawyers has been arrested after criticising the country’s judiciary, according to her family.

Nasrin Sotoudeh, 55, has been a well-known defender of Iranian dissidents, including some of the young women arrested recently for refusing to wear the hijab.

Her husband, Reza Khandan, said in Facebook post on Wednesday that police arrested her at home and took her to Tehran’s Evin prison. "Of all the functions that governments of the world are expected to do, the Iranian one is only good in arresting and imprisoning innocent people,” he wrote.

No official charges were announced but the arrest came shortly after Ms Sotoudeh spoke out against efforts by Iran’s judiciary to force its own candidates onto the board of Iranian Bar Association.

Ms Sotoudeh said the move would make it even more difficult for Iranian lawyers to defend dissidents.

"This action will erode the half-baked defence rights of those who have been accused of political and security offences and means a final farewell to the profession of independent attorney in Iran,” she said in an interview with the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran.

Ms Sotoudeh was previously arrested in 2010 and accused of spreading propaganda and endangering national security. Western governments protested her detention and she went on several hunger strikes in prison.

She was eventually released in 2013, shortly before Hassan Rouhani, Iran’s president, was due to speak at the UN.

Ms Sotoudeh came to prominence representing defendants sentenced to die for crimes committed when they were children, opposition politicians, and the Nobel Prize winning-Iranian dissident Shirin Ebadi.

She recently represented Vida Mohaved, a 31-year-old mother of one who was arrested in Tehran as she stood on top of a telecoms box hoisting a white hijab on a stick in protest at Iran’s compulsory veiling laws.

Ms Mohaved’s protest helped inspire dozens of other women and some men to mount similar protests.