

**Nazanin's Appeal Rejected and her 5 year sentence for 'national security charges' confirmed**

**Key Accusations in the courtroom are untrue: Nazanin never was Head of Recruitment for BBC Farsi, Nazanin is not married to a British Spy**

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**5 Year Sentence confirmed**

The Free Nazanin Campaign can confirm that Mr Mohsen Ejeyi, Deputy Head of the Judiciary and Spokesman announced today (22 January) at the judiciary's weekly press conference that the appeal court had upheld Nazanin's sentence of 5 years for national security related crimes, originally passed by the Revolutionary Court in September.

This has been reported by Fars News Agency and ISNA News Agency, and by various international media sources.

The family discovered this verdict via the media. In fact Nazanin's parents were visiting Nazanin in Evin prison at the time of the press conference. At this visit, Nazanin did not know anything about the judgement.

Nazanin's lawyer has since confirmed he has been informed the sentence was upheld. He was informed today. Over the phone her lawyer has told the family that her charges are "acting against national security." He will be meeting them later today in person to explain further.

As noted previously, the appeal was held in secret, in the presence of a large number of Revolutionary Guards and Judiciary. Neither Nazanin nor her lawyer had been allowed to tell the family what happened at her trial in the 18 days since January 4.

**New Accusations at Appeal Hearing**

The precise changes against Nazanin remain secret – with the continued vague formulation of 'security related charges'.

However, at Nazanin's appeal hearing, there were two new accusations raised against her, both from the Kerman branch of the Revolutionary Guard. Both are patently untrue. The charges have been kept secret to avoid them being exposed as untrue.

First, Nazanin was accused of being the Head of Recruitment for BBC Farsi at the time of its founding and in 2009.

At that time Nazanin worked for just over a year as a Project Assistant for BBC Media Action (the development charity of the BBC), on a training project for youth in Afghanistan and Iran some 7 years ago. (See attached statement from the Head of BBC Media Action). She has never worked for BBC Farsi. And she has been to Iran on holiday many times since she left that Project Assistant role without there ever being an issue.

Second, Nazanin was accused of knowingly being married to a British spy. To be clear, this is also untrue. Her husband is an accountant with a currently very understanding employer.

This accusation was largely based on the extensive media coverage of her case, and her husband's personal media profile through campaigning, and through having gathered such strong public and political support – including collecting over 200 MPs support for Nazanin's and other UK dual national cases.

At her first trial, the majority of the file against Nazanin (i.e. 150 pages) was the coverage by international media on her case – her family's protesting her innocence was used as an indication of her importance, and hence guilt. At the appeal stage this month, this had become a file of 500 pages – the vast majority of evidence against her was her family and others calling for her release. The self-serving circularity of this argument is reminiscent of the old ordeal by water.

The Judge rejected all aspects of Nazanin's defence. He did, however, rule that this was Nazanin's trial, and not her husband's, and so rejected her second crime of marriage to a spy on a technicality.

### **Prosecution of Nazanin's Lawyer**

Prior to the appeal coming to court, Nazanin's lawyer had been personally prosecuted for his role in defending Nazanin. Nazanin is not aware of this.

The appeal papers were originally filed on 14 September, and were based on Nazanin's testimony. They lay unread for over two months.

In the late Autumn, when they were read by the judiciary Nazanin's lawyer was personally prosecuted for the 'unprofessionalism' with which they were drafted, because they made reference in official court papers to the offer given by Nazanin's IRGC interrogators, Sayyid and Mr. Majidi, that her case would be dropped "if the British government made the agreement".

The Revolutionary Court prosecuted Nazanin's lawyer for including such stories in the appeal documents. At his court hearing, Nazanin's father had to testify that the appeal papers were based entirely on Nazanin's personal testimony, and reflected the truth of what was told to the family on 21 June and then 13 July.

Nazanin's appeal was presided over by 3 judges, led by Judge Babai in Revolutionary Court 54.

Her first trial on August 14 was heard by Judge Salavati in Revolutionary Court 15.

Nazanin had no access to a lawyer until day 130 of her detention – long after she had been indicted and only 3 days before her trial.

### **Government Visit**

The announcement of the sentence today comes on the back of last week's visit to Iran by Minister Tobias Ellwood, where he raised Nazanin's case and the cases of other UK dual nationals held in Iran, and where he met with Nazanin's father.

It also follows Nazanin's husband's appeal to President Rouhani last week asking for him to intervene in Nazanin's case and ensure that justice is served.

### **Family Pressures**

Nazanin's parents are in deep shock at the decision, and that this nightmare continues – despite the fact that all their daughter did was come on holiday with her baby, despite all the promises they have been told privately that this would be resolved.

The announcement has come on the back of continual attempts by the Revolutionary Guard in recent weeks to disrupt Nazanin's right to family visits, to prevent them from giving her messages, and to send back all the letters received at Evin prison for Nazanin from Amnesty groups.

The Revolutionary Guard are currently pressuring Nazanin to sign a document asking them to retain Gabriella's passport and hold it in their safekeeping. They have informed her that the British government will take her baby away from her and back to the UK if the passport is returned. Her husband has told her that this will not happen with discussing with her.

Today marks day 294 of Nazanin's ongoing ordeal at the hands of the Iranian authorities.

### **Quotations**

Richard says:

*"The lack of justice in Nazanin's case continues to be a stain on Iran. The continued attempt to frame Nazanin behind secrets and lies brings shame.*

*"It is a needless waste of a mother and child's life for their own political bargains and economic interests."*

*"I had high hopes for the Minister's visit to Iran last week, that it was a fresh chance for us, and that justice might be served."*

*"And yet this ordeal continues, with all its consequences for Nazanin and Gabriella, and for all of us watching on. It is no way to toy with people's lives. There is no way we will let it rest. Nazanin will not be forgotten."*