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CEO RESPONDS TO LATEST NEWS THAT NAZANIN ZAGHARI-RATCLIFFE HAS BEEN FREED BUT FACES A NEW COURT DATE

This Sunday, March 7, our colleague Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe should be flying home to be reunited with her family following her unlawful and inhumane five-year prison sentence.

Whilst all at the Thomson Reuters Foundation are delighted that her jail term has ended and that she will no longer be forced to wear an ankle tag, we stand in solidarity with all those around the world who wait anxiously to understand the outcome of this new court case – currently scheduled for March 14.

For five long years, Nazanin has suffered beyond anyone's imagination.

An innocent victim of an international dispute, Nazanin has been a pawn in the hands of a regime who are deaf to the facts and blind to her plight. It is unforgivable that her slow torture be allowed to continue.

Jailed in Iran in April 2016 on fictional charges, she has endured the terror and loneliness of being separated from her young daughter and husband. She has been mentally traumatised and physically broken by solitary confinement and the horrific living conditions of Evin Prison in Tehran.

Yet throughout her ordeal, Nazanin has remained dignified; struggling to maintain hope when it was repeatedly offered and then cruelly crushed. She has been powerless to do anything but count down the days until her release.

Having spoken with her today, she told me she was 'ecstatic' to be able to sit in a café and have a coffee. Nazanin should be allowed her permanent liberty and to walk away from this appalling affront to justice; instead, for all intents and purposes, she is still held hostage.

The new charge against her remains, as ever, hidden. We urge the British Embassy in Tehran to formally accompany her to court next Sunday and to visit her at home, given the diplomatic protection she has been granted by the UK Government.

Nazanin must be given her freedom, as was promised. Five years were stolen from her. Now she must be allowed her life back and to return to her loved ones.

The world is watching – and waiting.

Antonio Zappulla, Thomson Reuters Foundation CEO



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