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IRAN

An unprecedented number of
FEMALE JOURNALISTS
in the largest prison for reporters

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Next week, the Iranian people's nationwide uprising will enter its sixth month. During the past five months, the mullahs' regime has been trying to prevent the dissemination of news and information about the extent of the suppression of protests and the dimensions of its crimes by arresting journalists and cutting off the Internet.

Due to the lack of transparency of the Iranian regime, the number of journalists and photographers arrested since the beginning of the uprising varies between 70 and 100.

The [International Federation of Journalists](#) (IFJ) has estimated the number of journalists arrested since the beginning of the protests on September 16, 2022, to be 71 people, some of whom have been temporarily released on bail, and 28 people, including 14 women, are still in jail.

In its annual report, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) described the detention of reporters and journalists during the uprising as a sign of massive repression. Reporters Without Borders noted that an [unprecedented number](#) of female journalists have been [arrested and imprisoned in Iran](#).

Reporters Without Borders has placed Iran in 178th place among 180 countries in the World Press Freedom index in 2022, after China, Myanmar, and Turkmenistan. Only Eritrea and North Korea are behind Iran.

The [Committee to Protect Journalists](#) announced Iran as the top jailer of journalists in 2022. China, Myanmar, Turkey, and Belarus lag Iran in the CPJ index.

According to the CPJ, Iranian authorities have imprisoned a record number of female journalists, a reflection of the prominent role they have played in covering this women-led uprising.



Female journalists detained in Iran – Clockwise from top center, Nilufar Hamedei, Elaheh Mohammadi, Vida Rabbani, Mandana Sadeghi, Farzaneh Yahya Abadi, Farkhondeh Ashoori and Nasrin Hassani

Female journalists detained in Iran jails

Following is the list of female journalists who are still in prison. Some of them have been arrested very recently:

1. [Nilufar Hamedji](#), a journalist and reporter at Sharq newspaper, was arrested on September 22, 2022, in Tehran.
2. [Elaheh Mohammadi](#), a journalist and reporter at Ham Mihan newspaper, was arrested in Tehran on September 23, 2022.
3. Vida Rabbani, a freelance journalist at Sharq newspaper, was arrested in Tehran on September 23, 2022, and was sentenced to 7 years and three months in prison on December 31.
4. Nasrin Hassani, a journalist at Etefaghieh magazine, was arrested on September 30, 2022, at her workplace in Bojnourd.
5. Farkhondeh Ashoori, a freelance journalist and former reporter at Fars news agency, was arrested in Shiraz on October 17, 2022.
6. Farzaneh Yahya Abadi, a local journalist, was arrested in Abadan on October 19, 2022.
7. Mandana Sadeghi, a journalist, was arrested on October 19, 2022, with her husband at their home in Abadan.



Female journalists detained in Iran – Clockwise from top left, Maral Dar Afarin, Maliheh Daraki, Mehrnoush Zarei, Saeedeh Shafiei, Melika Hashemi, Nasim Sultan Beigi, Fahimeh Nazari, and Ziba Omidifar.

8. Maliheh Daraki, a freelance photojournalist in Shiraz, was arrested on October 26, 2022, while covering a protest in Abadan.
9. Maral Dar Afarin, a local journalist and a women’s rights activist in Gilan Province, was arrested in Lahijan on November 1, 2022.
10. Fahimeh Nazari, a journalist at Entekhab news website, was arrested on November 13, 2022, at her workplace in Tehran.
11. Ziba Omidifar, a journalist at Kurdpress, was arrested in Qorveh on December 8, 2022. She was subjected to severe torture and harassment in the detention center of the IRGC Intelligence Organization. Hence, they transferred her to Kowsar Hospital in Sanandaj after a week.
12. Nasim Sultan Beigi, a freelance journalist, was arrested by IRGC intelligence on January 11, 2023, at a Tehran international airport and taken to solitary confinement in Evin.

13. Melika Hashemi, a freelance journalist, was arrested on January 21, 2023, after being summoned to Evin Prosecutor's Office in Tehran.

14. Mehrnoush Zarei Hanzaki, a freelance journalist for ILNA, ISCA, and ANA news agencies, was arrested in Tehran on January 22, 2023.

15. Saeedeh Shafiei, a freelance journalist, was arrested at her home in Tehran on January 22, 2023.

Names of female journalists temporarily released on bail

Some of the female journalists who were temporarily released on bail until the end of their legal proceedings are as follows:



Yalda Moayeri and her award-winning photo

1. [Yalda Moayeri](#), a freelance news photographer and award-winning photographer, was arrested in Tehran on September 21 and was released on bail on December 20, 2022.
2. [Batool Balali](#), a local journalist in Kerman province, was arrested in Sirjan on September 22. She was released on bail on October 1, 2022.
3. Fatemeh Rajabi, a journalist for Haft-e Sobh newspaper and Bourseon.com, was arrested on September 22, 2022, in Tehran. She was released on bail on October 19, 2022.
4. [Samira Alinejad](#), a local journalist in Kerman, was arrested in Sirjan on September 22, 2022, and released on bail on October 12, 2022.
5. Bahar Aslani, a freelance photographer and women's rights activist, was arrested in Tehran on September 26, 2022, and released on bail on October 6, 2022.
6. [Mehrnoush Tafian](#), a local freelance journalist in Khuzestan, was arrested in Ahvaz on September 28, 2022, and released on January 12, 2023, after the end of her sentence.
7. Safieh Qarebaghi, a freelance journalist, was arrested in Zanjan on October 1, 2022, and released on October 8, after posting bail.
8. Maryam Mazrouii, a freelance photojournalist, was arrested in Tehran on October 5, 2022, and released on October 24, 2022.
9. Somayyeh Masrouf, a reporter for the ILNA news agency, was arrested in Isfahan on October 8, 2022, and released after a few days.



Female journalists released on bail – Clockwise from top left, Mehrnoush Tafian, Bahar Aslani, Fatemeh Rajabi, Safieh Qarebaghi, Saeedeh Fathi, Maryam Mazrouii, Batool Balali, Samira Alizadeh, and Somayyeh Masrour.

10. Saeedeh Fathi, a sports journalist, was arrested at her home in Tehran on October 16, 2022, after the fire in Evin prison. She was temporarily released on bail on December 9, 2022, until the end of her legal proceedings.
11. [Nazila Maroufian](#), a journalist at Iran Dideban and Rouydad24, was arrested on October 30, 2022, at a friend's house in Tehran and was released on bail on January 9, 2023.
12. Negar Massoudi, a photographer and documentary maker, was arrested on October 30, 2022, and was temporarily released from Evin prison on January 10, 2023, on a bail of 2.5 billion tomans until the end of her legal proceedings.



Female journalists released on bail – Clockwise from top left, Maryam Qanad, Maryam Vahidian, Nazila Maroufian, Marzieh Amiri, Negar Massoudi, Narges Behyari, and Nastaran Farokheh.

13. [Marzieh Amiri](#), an economic journalist at Sharq newspaper, was arrested on October 31, 2022, and released on bail on December 17, 2022. She was deprived of making phone calls for 16 days and was under interrogation despite her epilepsy.
14. Nastaran Farokheh, a journalist at Sharq newspaper, was arrested on November 27, 2022, and released on bail on December 5, 2022.
15. Maryam Vahidian, a journalist reporting on workers' issues for the ILNA news agency, was arrested in Tehran on November 27, and released from Evin prison on December 28, 2022.
16. Narges Behyari, a photographer and videographer, was arrested for the second time in late November in connection with nationwide protests in Tehran. On November 9, she was arrested by security agents and transferred to Ward 209 of Evin Prison for preventing the beating of a young girl during public protests. She was injured in the left arm during the conflict with security forces, and after three weeks and the end of the interrogation process, she was released from Evin prison without prior notice.
17. Maryam Qanad, a journalist and reporter at IRNA news agency, was arrested in Tehran on December 11, 2022, and released on bail on January 12, 2023.
18. Hoda and Zahra Towhidi, two journalists, were temporarily released on bail after 87 days of detention on December 17, 2022, until the end of the proceedings.



Two sisters, both journalists, Hoda (left) and Zahra Towhidi

Jailed for reporting the truth

As the Iranian regime continues its crackdown on the protests initiated on September 16, 2022, by Mahsa Amini's death, almost half of all newly arrested journalists are women, including two who are facing the death penalty.

The Canadian Association of Journalists for Freedom of Expression (CJFE) will present the 2023 [International Award](#) on February 15 to Nilufar Hamidi and Elahe Mohammadi, two female journalists imprisoned in Iran.

"CJFE is awarding its International Press Freedom Award to [Niloofer Hamedi and Elahe Mohammadi](#) for risking their freedom and lives in order to expose Iran's violent treatment of women," said Carol Off, CJFE Gala Chair. "Without the courage of these journalists we might never have known the true story of Mahsa Amini's death. Niloofer and Elahe have paid a huge price for telling the truth and we are truly grateful."

[Nilufar Hamed](#), a reporter at Sharq newspaper, was reporting from the hospital where Mahsa Amini was in a coma. She was arrested on September 22. [Elaheh Mohammadi](#), a reporter for Ham Mihan newspaper, traveled to Saqqez to report on Mahsa Amini's funeral, which turned into a significant anti-regime protest. Elaheh Mohammadi was arrested on September 23, 2022.

In this regard, Nazila Maroufian, another female journalist who has been released for the time being, was also arrested on October 30, 2022, and taken to Evin prison for recording an interview with Mahsa Amini's father, who denied the regime's claims about his daughter's illness.

In a joint statement on October 28, 2022, the Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) and the Ministry of Intelligence (MOIS) accused Sharq and Ham Mihan newspapers of disseminating "directed news regarding the death of Mahsa Amini." They accused the two female journalists in these newspapers of disseminating the first photo of Mahsa Amini on the hospital bed and "directed news" on the funeral, burial, and early gatherings. The activities mentioned by the two intelligence agencies are among journalists' most essential and obvious tasks.

In response to this announcement, the managing editor of Ham Mihan newspaper said: "They went and prepared a report for the newspaper, and a similar report has been prepared in Fars news agency and other news agencies in more detail."

He said that Elaheh Mohammadi, a reporter at Ham Mihan, had gone to Kurdistan to cover the funeral of Mahsa Amini in coordination with the officials of this media.

The managing editor of Sharq newspaper also emphasized that the journalist of this media, Nilufar Hamed, was in harmony with him in all the stages of covering the death of Mahsa Amini and fulfilled her journalistic mission. He denied the accusation of "training the Sharq reporter abroad to publish the photo and report on Mahsa Amini's death."

In its statement, the Tehran Journalists Guild said that the accusations are "an insult to the intelligence of the audience and the journalistic community, namely two journalists who are among the most professional journalists in the country."

Many journalists have received sentences in excess of the regime's legal maximums, including extra prison time, flogging, bans on working or leaving the country, or mandatory community service. The bail bonds set for journalists are excessively high.

By issuing heavy sentences against journalists, in some cases in excess of what the law allows, authorities are showing the lengths they are willing to go to silence the press.

The incarcerations indicate the Iranian authorities' desire to systematically reduce women to silence. These journalists risk paying a very high price, including the death penalty, for having had the courage to reveal a truth that the Iranian authorities seek to stifle. They must be released immediately and unconditionally.