

## ← THE 100 MOST INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE OF 2023

## Niloofer Hamed and Elaheh Mohammadi



Christina Assi—AFP/Getty Images

BY JASON REZAIAN  
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Mahsa Amini—arrested in Tehran and charged with not covering her hair properly—left the police station barely alive. This kind of brutality happens in Iran, but we rarely hear the details. Victims and their families suffer in silence for fear of inviting even more abuse.

This time was different. A reporter named Niloofer Hamed broke the story, publishing photographs of Amini lying brain-dead in the hospital, and devastated family members embracing in the hall. Elaheh Mohammadi covered the funeral, which doubled as a protest that soon spread across Iran. It was the kind of journalism that earns accolades in any normal society.

Hamed and Mohammadi have instead been rewarded with excruciating limbo. They were arrested and remain in Evin Prison. The charges—conspiring with the intelligence agencies of foreign powers to undermine Iran's national security—are as farcical as they are severe.

Journalism has been dying a slow death in Iran. Brave domestic reporters are the lone reason its light still flickers. The arrests of Hamed and Mohammadi—and of nearly 100 other journalists since the protests started—show how far the regime will go to extinguish it.

*Rezaian is a Washington Post writer who was imprisoned by Iran for 544 days*

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