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Journalism is not a crime: AIPS demands fair trial and immediate release of Iranian colleagues Elaheh Mohammadi and Niloofar Hamed and joins the protest of IFJ



L-R: Niloofar Hamed and Elaheh Mohammadi were among the first journalists to cover the death of Mahsa Amini. (Photo credit: sharghdaily.com)

Gianni Merlo - AIPS President (/index.html?page=thumb&q=AUTHOR='Gianni Merlo - AIPS President'&m=LK&path='Gianni Merlo - AIPS President'&p=1)

(mailto:?subject=Journalism is not a crime: AIPS demands fair trial and immediate release of Iranian colleagues Elaheh Mohammadi and Niloofar Hamed and joins the protest of IFJ)

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LUSANNE, May 27, 2023 - Journalism is not a crime, for this reason we are repeating what we have told in the past months: immediate freedom for Niloofar Hamed and Elaheh Mohammadi, the two Iranian colleagues who have been in jail since last September. We also join the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) to strongly demand the fair trial and release of our Iranian colleagues. We will continue to raise our voices for the immediate release of these two courageous women journalists. We have to intensify our fight against oppression of the press and protect our freedom, principles and

May 30, 2023



the line for the truth. Mohammadi and Hamedi have been suffering in prison for eight months in Iran for reporting what happened and telling the truth. This is unacceptable. The Iranian authorities must release them immediately and unconditionally.

According to local reports, the trials of these two women journalists, Mohammadi and Hamedi, have been scheduled for the 29th and 30th of May, 2023. They were among the first journalists to cover the death of Mahsa Amini in police custody, and have been in detention since September 2022.

JOURNALISM IS NOT A CRIME IFJ president Dominique Pradalié said in a statement on May 26, “We strongly warn the Iranian authorities about giving massive court judgments to journalists Hamedi and Mohammadi, who have been “unfairly detained...for simply doing their job.”

“The imprisonment of journalists sends an alarming sign at the international level,” he added. “We once again condemn the unfounded accusations against our colleagues and urge the authorities to drop all charges against them. Journalism is not a crime and the Islamic Republic must release all imprisoned journalists and media workers in the country.”

OPEN COURT HEARING AIPS has joined the IFJ in unequivocally supporting the official request by the Committee for Monitoring the Status of Detained Journalists of the Tehran Province Journalists Association (TPJA) for an open court hearing for Elaheh Mohammadi and Niloofar Hamedi, with the presence of their chosen lawyer. An important demand for the court proceedings to be open and accessible to the public and the media.

TPJA STATEMENT The TPJA’s statement reads: “Unfortunately, in recent years, the existing procedure has been such that these types of trials have been held in private and without the presence of media. A method that prevents the public from being informed about the hearing’s details and the truth of the matter.”

“Conforming to the law of criminal procedure, the creation of sufficient facilities for the presence of a chosen lawyer, and the defence is the basic right of the defendants. Therefore, the TPJA’s committee that monitors the situation of detained journalists in Iran expects the rights of Hamedi and Mohammadi to be respected in the hearings. Because one of the necessary conditions for a fair trial is [for it] to be public and [for it to] allow the presence of a chosen lawyer.”

NILOOFAR HAMEDI She works for the reformist daily newspaper Shargh Daily and broke the news of the custodial death of Mahsa Amini after managing to enter Kasra hospital on 16 September, in Tehran, where the 22-year-old Amini was being treated following her detention by the morality police for allegedly wearing her hijab inappropriately.

The police version was that the young girl had a sudden heart problem, but that report was disputed by Amini’s parents. Only a few hours later Mahsa would die. Niloofar Hamedi had tweeted a photo of Amini’s parents crying in the hospital. And it was the spread of this image that triggered protests across the nation.

On 22 September Niloofar Hamedi was arrested. As her lawyer Mohammad Ali Kamfirouzi explained, security officers broke into her home, arrested her, ransacked her home and confiscated her belongings. Not only that, her Twitter account was suspended without explanation.

ELAHEH MOHAMMADI She reports on society and women's issues for the daily HamMihan newspaper. In the past, she worked with state-controlled media outlets such as Shahrvand, Khabar

