



Niloufar Hamedei and Elahe Mohammadi, journalists accused of reporting on Mahsa Amini

## Two Female Iranian Journalists Face 'Sham Trial', Watchdog Says

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Reporters Without Borders (RSF) condemned the trials of Niloufar Hamedei and Elahe Mohammadi who first reported the death in custody of Mahsa Amini in September.

Calling the trials "sham" **in a statement Tuesday**, RSF said the two journalists who have been in detention since a few days after Amini's death should be freed at once instead of facing possible death sentences.

The two journalists have been charged with propaganda against the regime and conspiracy to commit acts against national security, which could bear death sentences.

"The fact that Niloufar Hamedei and Elahe Mohammadi were unable to see their lawyers, even a few days before their trials, confirms that this is travesty of justice whose sole aim is to legitimise the persecution of these two journalists. We demand their immediate release," Jonathan Dagher, head of RSF's Middle East desk, said.

In a tweet Tuesday, RSF also said banning the lawyers of the two journalists from speaking at their hearings was "further proof of the judicial farce against the two journalists."

Hamedei, managed to visit Mahsa Amini in Tehran's Kasra hospital and broke the news of her grave condition after being taken into the custody of the morality police three days earlier for wearing her hijab "improperly". Amini was in a coma at the time.

Mohammadi, likewise, managed to travel to Amini's hometown of Saqqez in western Iran to report on her funeral, September 17, which thousands attended.

The lawyers for Niloufar Hamedei, a reporter of the reformist Shargh daily, and Elahe Mohammadi, of the reformist Ham-Mihan newspaper, were banned from speaking at the 1st hearings., **RSF tweeted Tuesday.**

**Imprisoned journalists Niloofar Hamedei and Elaheh Mohammadi pictured on the front page of the newspaper «Ham-Mihan» on October 30, 2022**

The first session of Mohammadi's trial presided by the notorious judge Abolghasem Salavati was held behind closed doors at Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran on Monday. Hamedei's hearing was held on Tuesday by the same judge and in the same manner. Lawyers of the two journalists were not allowed to speak.

Hamedei's husband, Mohammad-Hossein Ajorlou who is a sports journalist himself, in a series of tweets Tuesday confirmed that Hamedei's lawyer had not been given an opportunity to speak and said family members, including himself, were not allowed in the courtroom. According to Ajorlou's tweet the date for the next hearing has not been set.

The Telegram channel of the **ultrahardliner Raja News** claimed that "anti-Iranian media" are trying to "reduce" the arrest of the two journalists to their coverage of Mahsa Amini's death.

"But reliable information indicates that Niloofar Hamedei and Elaheh Mohammadi had participated in training courses of institutions that seek the overthrow [of the Islamic Republic] and had connections with foreign intelligence services," Raja News which is affiliated to the ultraconservative Paydari Front wrote.

In October, Iran's intelligence ministry and SAS, the intelligence organization of the Revolutionary Guards (IRGC) accused Mohammadi and Hamedei of being CIA agents. "Using the cover of a journalist, she was one of the first people who arrived at the hospital and provoked the relatives of the deceased and published targeted news," **they said in a joint statement**.

**Reformist politician Abbas Abdi**

Abbas Abdi, a reform bloke politician **said in a May 23 tweet** that the government twists charges against dissidents to avoid open trials and demanded that the two journalists be tried publicly according to article 165 of the Iranian Constitution.

The Iranian Constitution stipulates that trials of political prisoners and journalists should be public and with the presence of a jury.