

Iran slams Nobel Peace Prize for imprisoned women's rights activist

Foreign ministry calls award for Narges Mohammadi 'biased and political,' Iranian media accuses her of collaborating with 'terrorist groups'

By **AFP**
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Iranian opposition human rights activist Narges Mohammadi at the Defenders of Human Rights Center in Tehran, June 25, 2007. (Behrouz Mehri/AFP)

Iranian officials and media on Friday lambasted jailed rights campaigner Narges Mohammadi after she won the 2023 Nobel Peace Prize, saying she had “collaborated with terrorist groups” and committed “anti-Iranian activities.”

The 51-year-old journalist and activist has spent much of the past two decades imprisoned on multiple charges, including allegedly spreading anti-state propaganda and committing acts against national security.

Most recently, she has been incarcerated since November 2021.

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Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Nasser Kanani called the move to award Mohammadi the Peace Prize “biased and political.”

“We note that the Nobel Peace Committee awarded the Peace Prize to a person who was convicted of repeated violations of laws and criminal acts,” Kanani said in a statement. “We condemn this biased and political move.”

Iranian media also lashed out at both her and the award.

The official state IRNA news agency criticized the Nobel Committee for awarding “a woman who collaborated with terrorist groups” and who is “unknown in her own country, particularly among Iranian women.”



Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanani holds a press conference in Tehran on July 13, 2022. (Atta Kenare/AFP)

IRNA said awarding Mohammadi the Peace Prize was an “interventionist act” meant to “politicize the concept of human rights.”

Iran's Tasnim news agency called her a “security convict” who committed “subversive” activities, and said the Nobel Peace Prize had a history of being handed to “criminals.”

The Mehr news outlet published a column by ultraconservative analyst Mohammad Imani lambasting the award.

Western governments “pay one person the equivalent of a million euros and set a trap for thousands of mercenaries ready to betray their country,” Imani said.

Mohammadi had expressed support for the protest movement which rocked Iran following the September 16, 2022, death in police custody of Mahsa Amini.

Amini, a 22-year-old Iranian Kurd, had been arrested for allegedly violating the Islamic republic's strict dress code for women.

Her death triggered months-long demonstrations which the authorities in Iran labeled as “riots” fomented by foreign governments.



File: Narges Mohammadi, the Iranian women's rights campaigner imprisoned by Iran who won the Nobel Peace Prize on October 6, 2023. (AFP/Narges Mohammadi Foundation)

Reformist media outlets published the news about Mohammadi being awarded the prize without passing comment.

Several Iranian actresses detained in 2022 for supporting the protest movement congratulated Mohammadi.

Katayoun Riahi, who was arrested last November and released after more than a week, on Instagram welcomed the Nobel Prize awarded to “our honor who is in prison.”

Also on Instagram, prominent actress Taraneh Alidoosti, who was arrested in January before her release three weeks later, posted: “Freedom will come with you, dear Narges, because a woman like you has no place in prison.”