



Turkiye: Iranian Journalist Shilan Mirzaee Detained, Facing Threat of Execution if Deported

The Coalition For Women In Journalism denounces her arrest, calls on authorities to grant journalist asylum

Location: Turkiye, Izmir

Date: October 24, 2023



Shilan Mirzaee, an Iranian activist and journalist seeking asylum in Turkey since 2016, is at risk of imminent deportation to Iran. She was detained by Turkish officers and is now facing the possibility of torture, interrogation, and even the death penalty if sent back to Iran. She has faced continuous threats and harassment from Iranian authorities while in Turkiye, and her activism has drawn the attention of the Iranian embassy, which warned her to stop. The Coalition For Women In Journalism is deeply concerned for Mirzaee's welfare and urges Turkish authorities to halt her deportation and to grant her asylum.

"The police are waiting outside my house to take me away," says journalist and activist Shilan Mirzaee in a video she managed to record before being taken into custody by Turkish police. "I don't know why, but whatever the reason for the arrest and any danger that may come, I will be there. My voice can be my voice."

On October 24, according to Mirzaee's husband, Vahid Salim Danae, three Turkish police officers detained his wife, dragging her out of her Izmir home in front of her crying young son. Mirzaee was transferred to the Bandirma deportation center in northern Turkiye.

While her lawyer anticipates the formal charges, her husband says authorities told the journalist she would be handed over to Iran. Mirzaee has been an outspoken critic of human rights violations in Iran, advocating for Iranian political refugees and supporting marginalized groups within Iran. The journalist was questioned about her activism by Turkish officers in the detention center and refused to sign deportation documents.

In an audio message released on October 26, Mirzaee shed light on her situation, emphasizing the severe consequences she would endure if sent back to Iran.

Turkish authorities have yet to provide an explanation for her detention.

This incident is part of a concerning trend where the situation for Iranian political and civil refugees living in Turkiye has deteriorated in recent years. Mirzaee herself has been the target of threats from people associated with the Iranian Embassy, including alleged attempts to kidnap her and menacing threats against her son in front of his school.

The situation is further exacerbated by reports of physical and mental torture within detention centers. Iran International previously reported on the dire conditions in the Aydin Removal Center, where an Iranian refugee faced severe abuse by the camp director. Asylum seekers have been subjected to extreme conditions, including exposure to the scorching sun, to coerce them into signing deportation papers to Iran.

Deportation to Iran for dissidents or journalists will have dire consequences. Since the tragic death of Mahsa Amini in 2022 and the subsequent protests, the Islamic State has severely cracked down on journalists and activists. CFWIJ has documented a total of 30 women journalists behind bars in Iran, making it the top jailer of women journalists globally.

The Coalition For Women In Journalism denounces the arrest of Shilan Mirzaee and calls for her immediate release. We also urge Turkish authorities to uphold principles of press freedom and the rights of political refugees, ensuring the safety and



The Coalition For Women In Journalism is a global organization of support for women journalists. The CFWIJ pioneered mentorship for mid-career women journalists across several countries around the world and is the first organization to focus on the status of free press for women journalists. We thoroughly document cases of any form of abuse against women in any part of the globe. Our system of individuals and organizations brings together the experience and mentorship necessary to help female career journalists navigate the industry. Our goal is to help develop a strong mechanism where women journalists can work safely and thrive.

If you have been harassed or abused in any way, and please report the incident by using the following form.

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