



Nobel Peace Prize laureate Narges Mohammadi

Iranian Nobel Laureate's Chat With Angelina Jolie Divides Dissidents

15 hours ago

Iran International Newsroom

[Human Rights - Women's Rights](#) [Iran Protests](#) [Politics](#)

Iranian Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Narges Mohammadi's prison call with Hollywood star-turned-activist Angelina Jolie has caused controversy among Iranians.

In spite of the horrific conditions of Iran's prisons, Fars news agency, a mouthpiece of Iran's Revolutionary Guards and hardliners, ran a report saying that Mohammadi's interview with Jolie has "busted the lies about the poor conditions of political prisoners," claiming that it was the reason behind online criticism of the interview.

It has also raised questions as to how Mohammadi is allowed what are seen as special privileges when so many suffer abhorrent conditions including torture such as amputation and stoning, as documented by [Amnesty International](#), and denial of legal counsel inside Iran's jails. [Human Rights Watch](#) has also documented the widespread abuses and primitive conditions endured in Iran's jails.

One of the notable people who criticized Mohammadi was Yasmine Pahlavi, the wife of the exiled prince of Iran who has become a leading opposition figure during the Women, Life, Freedom protests – ignited by the death in custody of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini in September 2022. In an online post, she said, "How can a political prisoner obtain permission to speak with Angelina Jolie but is unable to get permission to talk to their own son? This is a challenging puzzle for many of us."



Taghi Ramahi, husband of Narges Mohammadi, a jailed Iranian women's rights advocate, who won the 2023 Nobel Peace Prize, poses with an undated photo of himself and his wife, during an interview at his home in Paris, France, October 6, 2023.

She referred to an interview with Mohammadi's son Ali and husband Taghi Rahmani, in which they say Mohammadi has not spoken to her son for nearly two years. Following the rebuke, Rahmani – himself a frequently jailed activist who fled Iran in 2012 and has close ties to Iran's reformists – explained that his wife is only allowed to call a limited number of people from the prison and their children are not on the list. He claimed that they sought to arrange for his son to talk to Mohammadi via a third party, but the intermediary was threatened by the authorities to be removed from the list of permitted individuals.

According to the accounts of former prisoners, Mohammadi – and other prisoners – can make a phone call from the prison's landline to one of the people allowed by prison authorities. Their confidants then can make a phone call to whomever they want by another device. With both phones on loudspeakers, they can then talk to each other. It was apparently the case with the interview with Angelina Jolie, who according to [her article published by Time last week](#) talked to Mohammadi for a brief time before the call was disconnected, forcing her to finish the interview with written questions.

However, critics argue that if such a method is possible, how can Mohammadi did not apply it to talk to her children. Another point raised by the critics is how Mohammadi's actions do not lead to any consequences similar to other prisoners. Earlier in the month, Mahvash Sabet, a former member of the Baha'i community's leadership group [wrote a letter from Tehran's Evin Prison](#), bemoaning the persecution of the minority groups by the Islamic Republic. Iran International learned earlier this week that Sabet has since been banned from contacting her family because of her letter under the orders of the Intelligence Ministry.

Criticizing the jailed activist, Mojtaba Vahedi, a former reformist politician who has become a dissident foreign-based journalist, said, "Here in America, when an American sees Narges Mohammadi's interview with Angelina Jolie, they conclude that we are lying about problems of Iran's prisons."

On the other hand, supporters of Mohammadi are of the opinion that activists in Iran, especially the jailed ones, should take every opportunity to make the voices of dissent heard to the international community.

Mohammadi was arrested on November 16, 2021, and one year after being released, was detained again. Currently, she is serving a total sentence of 9 years and 8 months, along with 154 lashes and additional penalties in Evin Prison. Charges include spreading propaganda against the state. Mohammadi has been imprisoned several times over the past two decades for her work fighting for human rights. She is the deputy head of the Defenders of Human Rights Center, a non-governmental organization led by Shirin Ebadi, the 2003 Nobel Peace Prize laureate. Immediately after she won the Nobel Prize, she became the target of a barrage of **criticism by ultra-hardline media in Iran**.

The controversy is proof that the Islamic Republic effectively employs tactics to create discord among its opposition. Iran arrests activists vocally critical of its conduct and sentences them on trumped up charges. Subsequently, it selectively eases restrictions on some, allowing them to communicate with the world or granting them furloughs. Observing this discriminatory behavior, Iranians become suspicious about why they were singled out as the pawns of the Islamic Republic's propaganda. In the end, the imprisoned activists either become less outspoken, serving the Islamic Republic's agenda, or more publicly visible, only helping the regime further promote its propaganda campaign.

More News

Violence Against Women 'Systematic' In Islamic Republic, Activists Say

Iranian Regime Blocks Page Of Actress, Wife Of Football Player

Execution Threat For Kurdish Sunni Prisoners In Iran

Cellmate Demands Probe Into Iranian Rapper's Mock Execution