Watchdog Denounces Growing 'Persecution' Of Journalists In Iran

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<https://www.rferl.org/a/30827709.html>

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) is urging the UN Human Rights Council to take measures to defend Iranian journalists and citizen journalists who are being "censored, threatened, detained arbitrarily, mistreated and sometimes tortured" for their journalistic activities.

In a [statement on September 8](https://rsf.org/en/news/iran-cracks-down-journalists-again-response-un-report), the Paris-based media freedom watchdog said at least five journalists have been targeted in the latest crackdown on the media in Iran, weeks after the Human Rights Council published a damning report on the situation of human rights, including the freedom to inform, in the country.

"The increase in protests against the Iranian government has resulted in an increase in the persecution of journalists," said Reza Moini, the head of RSF's Iran-Afghanistan desk.

The latest victims of the authorities' crackdown on the media include Mohammad Mosaed, a freelance economic reporter who was sentenced last month to four years and nine months in prison for "distorting reality," among other charges. Mosaed was also banned from conducting journalism activities and from using all communications devices for two years.

He was first detained in November 2019 in connection with messages he had posted on social media during an Internet shutdown implemented by the government amid widespread protests over high gas prices.

RSF also cited the case of Kosar Karimi, a reporter for the semiofficial Mehr news agency who was arrested in August for covering a protest in a village near the southern city of Ahvaz, according to RSF.

Karimi was released on bail, but, according to RSF, the vice president of the Islamic Development Organization, which runs Mehr, said that "an official threatened to have the news agency’s director summoned to get this journalist to stop covering these events."

It said freelance journalist Babak Tahmasebi was meanwhile notified that a court in Ahvaz had confirmed his sentence of two years in prison and 74 lashes for publishing "false news" and "defamation."

The case was the result of a lawsuit by the National Iranian Drilling Company (NIDC) related to an article about worsening conditions for its workers.

Amirreza Amir Taimouri, a reporter for the popular Tabnak news website, was summoned for questioning by the FATA cyberpolice in the southeastern city of Kerman following a complaint by a local parliamentarian accusing him of "publishing false information with the aim of upsetting public opinion," RSF said, adding that he was released on bail pending trial.

And in the northeastern province of Golestan, a court sentenced freelance journalist Aman Mohammad Khojamli to pay a fine for "publishing false information." He said he had been convicted for articles about the country's economic crisis.

The arrests and sentencings came after the UN special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran, Javaid Rehman, said in a [July report](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cbluaa%5CDownloads%5CA_75_213-EN.pdf) that the country's authorities "continued to target journalists for critical and independent reporting, with a detrimental effect on access to information."

Iran is ranked 173rd out of 180 countries in RSF's 2020 World Press Freedom Index.