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Iran: Unconditionally Release Nobel Laureate Narges Mohammadi

Release All other Arbitrarily Detained Rights Activists



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Nobel Peace Prize winner and human rights defender Narges Mohammadi, Tehran, Iran, April 2, 2021. © 2021 Reihane Taravati/Middle East Images/AFP via Getty Images

(Beirut) – [Iranian](#) authorities are threatening to return the human rights defender and Nobel Peace Laureate Narges Mohammadi to prison to serve the remainder of her unjust sentence as a means to pressure her to cease her rights advocacy, Human Rights Watch said today. The authorities should immediately end their ongoing harassment and unconditionally release her and everyone else arbitrarily detained for their human rights activism.

Narges Mohammadi is serving a 13-year and nine-month sentence on charges that stem from her human rights work. She was released from Evin prison on December 4, 2024, after authorities suspended her prison sentence for 21 days. She is currently undergoing medical treatment for various health conditions and her temporary release came after months of denial of medical care. In November 2024, the authorities, contrary to medical advice, had returned Mohammadi to prison following surgery to remove a bone lesion from her leg that was suspected of being cancerous.

“Narges Mohammadi has used this brief respite from prison to continue her activism and shed light on the dire human rights situation in Iran. Iranian authorities’ threat to return her to prison is a stark reminder of their zero tolerance for dissent,” said [Federico Borello](#), interim executive director at Human Rights Watch. “Iran’s authorities have a legal obligation to unconditionally release Nobel Laureate Narges Mohammadi and all others arbitrarily detained and to ensure that everyone in their custody has access to timely and adequate medical care.”

Earlier in March 2025, Mohammadi met virtually with Borello, interim executive director at Human Rights Watch, to discuss the human rights situation in Iran. She drew attention to the human rights crisis in the country, in particular the shocking escalation of authorities' use of the death penalty and the continued repression of human rights defenders. She described the treatment of political prisoners, including the authorities' practice of denying them medical care, and torture and ill-treatment, including prolonged solitary confinement to extract forced confessions. She highlighted the importance of maintaining international scrutiny on the authorities' dismal rights record.

For months prior to her temporary release, Mohammadi had been suffering from various health conditions, including heart disease, acute back and knee pain, and a herniated spinal disk. The authorities denied her adequate medical care despite repeated [calls](#).

Mohammadi refused to return to Evin prison on December 25, 2024, when the temporary suspension ended. On December 28, her lawyer submitted a request to the Legal Medicine Organization, under Iran's judiciary, to extend the suspension, in line with medical advice. According to information received by Human Rights Watch, the Legal Medicine Organization has approved her request, but the authorities have nonetheless pressured her to return to prison. Mohammadi's doctors have said she needs at least six months outside prison to ensure she has access to thorough and regular medical examinations and care.

The Iranian authorities have a long-standing [policy](#) of denying prisoners, in particular those arbitrarily detained on politically motivated national security charges, adequate and timely access to medical care, in an attempt to punish and silence them. [Scores of political prisoners](#) continue to be denied timely and adequate medical care, such as specialized treatment in hospitals. They include [Zeynab Jalalian](#), a Kurdish political prisoner [sentenced](#) to life in prison; [Fateme Sepehri](#), an outspoken critic of the supreme leader sentenced to 18 years in prison; [Raheleh Rahemi-Pour](#), a 72-year-old civil rights activist; [Warisha Moradi](#), a Kurdish activist sentenced to death; and [Motaleb Ahmadian](#), a Kurdish political prisoner. [Mahvash Sabet](#), a former member of the leadership of the Baha'i community in Iran, who is currently on medical leave, was long denied medical care and remains at risk of being returned to prison.

Under the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, sick prisoners who require specialist treatment should be transferred to specialized institutions or to civil hospitals. Denial of medical care to those detained may amount to torture and other ill-treatment, which is absolutely prohibited under international law. As [documented](#) by Amnesty International, in some cases, prisoners denied needed medical care have died in custody, which constitute arbitrary deprivation of life.

"Iranian authorities' abhorrent policy of denying medical care to detainees and prisoners can have lethal consequences," Borello said. "The international community needs to hold them to account for their blatant disregard not just for the right to liberty but also the right to life of people in their custody."