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First UA: 7/25 Index: ASA 11/8970/2025 Afghanistan of January 24, 2025

AFGHANISTAN

FILMMAKER TORTURED AND DENIED CARE IN TALIBAN PRISON

Sayed Rahim Saidi, a 57-year-old filmmaker and managing director of Anar Media, was arrested near his office on July 14, 2024, by members of the Taliban's General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI) District 40. Accused of spreading propaganda against the Taliban, he was sentenced to three years in prison on December 18, 2024. He is now serving his sentence in Pol-e-Charkhi prison.

Saidi suffers from severe health issues, including lumbar disc herniation and prostate problems. Despite his condition, he is denied proper healthcare and access to necessary medication. He is kept in a cold prison cell, exacerbating his suffering.

From July to December, while detained at GDI District 40, Saidi was allegedly subjected to torture, solitary confinement, and other ill-treatment. During this time, he was also denied access to medicine sent by his family.

Write to the Director of Intelligence urging him to:

- Immediately and unconditionally release Sayed Rahim Saidi.
- Pending his release, he must be granted immediate access to lawyers and adequate healthcare, and he must be held in conditions that meet international standards for the treatment of prisoners and protected from torture and other ill-treatment.
- Stop the practices of arbitrary detention, torture and other ill-treatment of people working to defend human rights including those peacefully promoting social change and non-discrimination.

Write to:

Mr. Abdul Haq Wasiq
Director of Intelligence
General Directorate of Intelligence
Chaharahi Zanbaq
Kabul, Afghanistan
Salutation: Dear Mr. Abdul Haq Wasiq,

And copy

Amir Khan Mutaqi
Foreign Minister
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Ghazian Street Malek Asghar Square,
Kabul 1011, Afghanistan
Email: info@mfa.gov.af

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Sayed Rahim Saidi, a 57-year-old filmmaker, is renowned for his documentaries and short films promoting social change and non-discrimination. With over two decades of experience, he worked with Afghanistan National TV and various private television networks. A member of the Afghanistan Film Association, Saidi also served as a production manager and producer for Ariana TV starting in 2005.

Before his arrest, Saidi worked with Anar Media, a YouTube-based broadcaster with 17,000 followers. He produced diverse social, cultural, and religious programs, using media to address critical societal issues.

On July 14, 2024, Taliban soldiers from the General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI) District 40 arrested Saidi in Khushhal Khan Mena, District 5 of Kabul. Around 10 a.m., masked soldiers surrounded Saidi and his son, providing no explanation or arrest warrant. The soldiers covered their faces with black cloths and took both men to GDI District 40.

After a brief interrogation, Saidi's son was released, but Saidi was held for further questioning. He spent the first three months of his detention in solitary confinement, denied access to a lawyer, healthcare, or the medication he urgently needed for his lumbar disc herniation and prostate issues. Although his family sent medicines, the GDI did not allow them to reach him. Family visits were rare and took place through a glass window, with conversations monitored by a Taliban soldier.

On December 18, 2024, Saidi was presented for trial in Kabul's first court. Chained at the hands and feet, he was not allowed to speak to his family or access legal counsel. Accused of spreading propaganda against the Taliban, he was denied the opportunity to defend himself or challenge the charges.

The judge warned Saidi that appealing the verdict would lead to a longer imprisonment period. Under duress, Saidi confessed to the charges and was sentenced to three years in prison. He was immediately transferred to Pol-e-Charkhi prison, where his health continues to deteriorate.

The Afghanistan Journalists Center (AFJC) has condemned Saidi's arbitrary arrest and detention. They have called for his immediate and unconditional release and an end to the persecution of media workers and journalists for carrying out their professional duties.

Please take action as soon as possible until April 24, 2025! The UA will be duly updated should there be the need for further action.