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First UA: 11/25 Index: ASA 11/8988/2025 Afghanistan of February 5, 2025

AFGHANISTAN

RELEASE JOURNALIST CONVICTED OF PROPAGANDA

Mahdi Ansari, a 27-year-old journalist with Afghan News Agency, was arrested on October 5, 2024, near his office by Taliban intelligence officers from District 40. On January 1, 2025, a court sentenced him to 18 months in prison without his family or lawyer present. He was accused of spreading propaganda against the Taliban through his reporting and Facebook posts.

While in detention, Mahdi has suffered ill-treatment, including solitary confinement. His mental health has worsened, and he has been denied regular visits with his family. His family was only allowed to see him once—after a month in detention—for just five minutes.

Mahdi Ansari is imprisoned solely for exercising his right to free expression.

Write to the Director of Intelligence urging the authorities to:

- Immediately and unconditionally release Mahdi Ansari;
- Ensure that, until his release, he is held in conditions meeting international standards and has regular access to adequate healthcare, legal representation, and family visits;
- 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

Mahdi Ansari, 27, was working with Afghan News Agency when he was arrested. He previously worked with several media outlets, including Panjara Daily, Hasht-e Sobh, and Jawan TV. For the past three

years, he has reported on Taliban-imposed restrictions and other developments, sharing his work through news platforms, Facebook, and YouTube—despite the Taliban's strict surveillance of journalists.

One of his most notable reports was published by AFKA in 2023, marking the first anniversary of a deadly suicide attack on Kabul's Shia minority. A year later, he commemorated the event with a Facebook post.

After his arrest, his family had no information about his whereabouts for two days. When they contacted the local police, authorities initially denied having him in custody. Later, Taliban intelligence (GDI) confirmed that he was under interrogation.

Media organizations worldwide have condemned Mahdi Ansari's arrest. [Reporters Without Borders](#) called for his immediate release and urged the Taliban to stop persecuting journalists. [The International Federation of Journalists and the Afghanistan Independent Journalists' Union](#) have also demanded his freedom. Additionally, the [Afghanistan Journalists' Support Organization](#) called his arrest unlawful and a violation of free expression, while the Afghanistan Journalists Center condemned his detention and called for his unconditional release.

Please take action as soon as possible until May 4, 2025! The UA will be duly updated should there be the need for further action.