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Iran: Human right defenders Nazanin Salari, Mahmoud Taravat-Roy, and Massoud Ahmadian at imminent risk of arrest and detention after being sentenced to prison

On 4 July 2026, after appealing the sentence issued by Branch 1 of Shiraz Revolutionary Court, the case of human rights defenders and lawyers **Nazanin Salari, Mahmoud Taravat-Roy,** and **Massoud Ahmadian** was reassigned to Branch 37 of the Court of Appeals. Not only were the defenders not informed, ultimately undermining their due process of fair trial; but Branch 37 is also reportedly know for imposing severe measures on cases concerning human rights defenders or political prisoners, consequently, raising concerns around the implementation of the prison sentences and the imminent risk of arrest.

[Nazanin Salari](#) is a woman human rights defender, lawyer and former head of the Human Rights Commission at the Fars Bar Association in Shiraz, Iran. She has actively engaged in defending the rights of women and children via several capacity development workshops. Additionally, she has continued to represent protesters and advocate for the independence of the legal profession in Iran.

[Mahmoud Taravat-Roy](#), is a human rights defender, poet, lawyer and former President of Human rights Committee the Fars Bar Association in Shiraz, Iran. He is widely known for his long-standing commitment to defending children's rights via advocacy for new legislation. He is also renowned for his efforts in upholding the independence of the legal profession in Iran. The human rights defender has represented a broad range of clients, including women's rights defenders, student activists, political party members, religious minorities, and individuals targeted for their social and cultural activities.

[Massoud Ahmadian](#) is a human rights defender, lawyer, and a member of the Fars Bar Association in Shiraz, Iran. The defender has provided legal advice and represented various clients facing politically motivated charges, including those targeted for their peaceful activism or beliefs. He has advocated for due process and access to legal representation in sensitive cases. Additionally, he has acted as legal counsel for fellow lawyers at risk. His legal work has also focused on the defence of women's and children's rights through delivering several informative workshops.

On 4 July 2026, the sentence issued by Branch 1 of Shiraz Revolutionary Court concerning human rights defenders and lawyers Nazanin Salari, Mahmoud Taravat-Roy, and Massoud Ahmadian was moved to Branch 37 of the Court of Appeals without informing the defenders,. This raises concerns around their due process of fair trial and the subsequent implementation of the prison sentences and imminent risk of arrest.

On 8 June 2026, Branch 1 of the Revolutionary Court in Shiraz sentenced human rights defenders and lawyers Nazanin Salari, Mahmoud Taravat-Roy, and Massoud Ahmadian to a total of three years' imprisonment. The court sentenced each lawyer to two years' imprisonment on

the grounds of “assembly and collusion with the intent to commit crimes against national security” and one year of imprisonment for “propaganda against the state”. As a supplementary punishment, the court imposed a two-year prohibition on leaving the country and ordered the cancellation of their passports. The three human rights defenders were acquitted of the charge of “cooperation with a hostile state,” after demonstrating that participating in a workshop outside of Iran did not amount to the alleged charges. Ultimately, as provided for in article 134 of the Islamic Penal Code, only the most severe sentence may be imposed, in this instance it amounts to two years’ imprisonment for each lawyer. Thus, only the “assembly and collusion with the intent to commit crimes against national security” will be retained, resulting in a final two-year term of imprisonment for each lawyer.

On 12 April 2026, the woman human rights defender Nazanin Salari appeared before Branch 8 of Shiraz prosecutor’s office to defend herself against the charges of “propaganda against state” and “inciting public anxiety by spreading disinformation.” In this context, the human rights lawyer exposed an illegal fee, that Fars Judiciary system was charging to the jailed protesters for their prison terms, which could be changed into bail order to facilitate their release. Nazanin Salari was released the same day on surety bond until the completion of the investigation, her clients who were victims of this process provided her with the necessary evidence to make her case. Nazanin Salari was charged, in November 2023, with ‘encouraging people to engage in corruption and prostitution’ and ‘being present in public places without a religious veil’ before Branch 112 of the Criminal Court. This case was pardoned under the general amnesty announced on [February 2023](#).

After the 28 December 2025 protest erupted, Mahmoud Taravatroi announced that he would represent detained protesters on a pro-bono basis. On 1 January 2026, Nazanin Salari, member of the Disciplinary Court of the Fars Bar Association, resigned from her position, along with a group of lawyers in result of the Bar Association's inactivity and lack of support for the legal rights of protesters.

The judicial proceedings against the three lawyers, based on fabricated charges, were initiated in 2020 but remain dormant for several years. Following the protests of 28 December 2025, during which the lawyers expressed their support for the protesters, would have allegedly reactivate the proceedings. On 6 January 2026, along with several other human rights defenders, Nazanin Salari, Mahmoud Taravat-Roi, and Masoud Ahmadian were summoned to court. They appeared before Branch 1 of the Shiraz Revolutionary Court for ‘collaborating with hostile states,’ ‘gathering and collusion against national security,’ and ‘propagating against state,’ where they presented their defence.

The reopening of these earlier cases appears to be linked to developments in late 2025 and early 2026, thereby facilitating the authorities continued judicial pursuit of the defenders. Previous court summons, in early 2026, were conducted by the head of Branch 1 of the Revolutionary Court in Shiraz. During the final stage of the proceedings, the case was unexpectedly reassigned to another judge, which served as an advisor to the court, and reportedly proceeded with the final hearing, issuing the conviction despite concerns raised regarding procedural irregularities.

[Reports](#) indicate that the charges brought against Nazanin Salari, Mahmoud Taravat-Roy, and Massoud Ahmadian are a result of their human right works, such as their participation in seminars and meetings concerning women’s and children’s rights, their advocacy for legal reforms addressing domestic violence. Similarly, their engagement with parliamentary representatives, local council members, and electoral candidates regarding legislative change factored in supporting the Court’s allegations. Lastly, their participation in activities marking

the international “16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence” campaign, the distribution of materials opposing violence against women and child marriage, and interviews concerning violations of their clients’ rights and shortcomings in existing laws, also contributed to justify the Court’s claims.

The sentence against the human rights defenders raise concerns at the use of national security-related charges to criminalise peaceful advocacy and legal work.

Front Line Defenders believes that the prosecution and sentencing of Nazanin Salari, Mahmoud Taravat-Roy, and Massoud Ahmadian are in reprisal for their legitimate work as lawyers and human rights defenders. The timeline of the legal actions against human rights defenders and judicial harassment since 2020, raises concerns around retaliation against their human rights mobilisation in the context of [January 2026 protests in Iran](#) which led to the killing and arrest of tens thousands of protesters including human rights defenders.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Iran to:

1. Immediately drop all charges against Nazanin Salari, Mahmoud Taravat-Roy, and Massoud Ahmadian as it appears that they have been targeted solely due to their legitimate human rights work;
2. Release all detained human rights defenders under humanitarian grounds amid turbulent situation following the armed conflict;
3. Cease targeting human rights defenders, and guarantee that they are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisal and free of all restrictions, including judicial harassment.

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