



**“If I am arrested, make as much noise as possible!” ~ Mehran Raoof, political prisoner**

- member of the teachers union in Iran, a labor rights
- arrested in October 2020 during a wave of arbitrary detentions ahead of anniversary of 2019 uprising, after allegedly meeting with other workers
- Held in solitary confinement and interrogated almost daily, without any contact with a lawyer or close family member for five months.
- Sentenced to 10+ years for “membership in an illegal group” and “propaganda against the regime
- **Over 100 Trade Unions, Workers' Organizations, HR Groups Around World Call for Mehran's Release**

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***Statement by Satar Rahmani, Spokesperson for Mehran Raoof***

## **The British Government Must Secure the Freedom of All Imprisoned UK-Iranian Dual Nationals**

*The following statement was issued by Satar Rahmani, the official representative and spokesperson for imprisoned Iranian-British dual national citizen Mehran Raoof, with support from the [International Emergency Campaign to Free Iran's Political Prisoners Now](#) (IEC).*

### **Satar Rahmani:**

It is a wonderful and extremely important development that UK-Iranian dual nationals **Anoosheh Ashoori** and **Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe** have been released from prison in Iran and are now free.

However, it is a travesty and outrage that three British citizens – **Mehran Raoof**, **Morad Tahbaz**, and **Shahram Shirkhani** – remain imprisoned in Iran, conspicuously left out, so far, of the agreement struck between the British and Iranian governments that led to Nazanin's and Anoosheh's release.

The British government initially claimed that Morad, who has cancer, would be freed as part of the deal. Yet he was rearrested and imprisoned, and went on hunger strike (now ended) in protest.

In Mehran's case, Britain's Minister for the Middle East and North Africa, James Cleverly, [claimed to a member of Parliament](#) that Mehran Raoof had not requested consular assistance. In response to questioning about Mehran's case, Foreign Minister Liz Truss implied he had requested that his case not be made public: “I must respect the individual's request of whether their case should be raised in public. That is why we mention publicly only those individuals who have asked to be named.” (See [Guardian](#) and [IranWire](#) coverage.)

**As Mehran's official representative, I can state unequivocally that neither of these statements is accurate. Mehran's family and friends properly informed the Foreign Office that it should raise Mehran's case with the Iranian authorities in order to secure his release. They did not state that his case should not be made public. And they named me as their representative. Since then, I (as well as Amnesty International) have been in contact with the Foreign Office pressing them to do everything possible to secure Mehran's release.**

(I would also ask FM Truss why she says Mehran did not want his case made public? Mehran was held in solitary confinement for months following his October 2020 arrest and denied independent legal counsel. Did any British official visit Mehran to ascertain his wishes?)

Amnesty International has stated there has not been any action by the UK government on Mehran's behalf in Iran – despite the Foreign Office's claim after his arrest that: “We continue to do all we can to support Mehran and his family, and continue to raise his case at the most senior levels.”

The cases of these five UK-Iranian nationals may not have been identical, but all were illegitimately arrested and imprisoned without due process, and none was given anything resembling a fair and open trial. All have been subjected to brutal, inhuman treatment, including instances of the torture of solitary confinement. One only need to read the *Guardian's* recent accounts of the imprisonment of [Anoosheh Ashoori](#) and British-Australian academic [Kylie Moore-Gilbert](#) to get a vivid sense of the intolerable injustices now being carried out against imprisoned dual nationals and political prisoners in Iran.

**The treatment of 65-year-old Mehran Raoof has been particularly egregious. Amnesty International has designated him a prisoner of conscience, arbitrarily detained in Tehran's Evin prison since 16 October 2020, solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression and association, including to support workers' rights. Amnesty demanded he be immediately and unconditionally released.**

The organization's [5 November 2021 Urgent Action bulletin](#) found, among other abuses, that Mehran was:

- held in prolonged solitary confinement;
- subjected to torture and other ill-treatment including threatening to harm him if he did not cooperate and holding him in a room with the lights on 24 hours a day, which caused him mental distress;
- sentenced after a grossly unfair trial, where he and his co-defendants were denied their right to an adequate defense and to communicate with their lawyer prior to the first trial session on 28 April. He was barred from meeting his lawyer throughout the trial and only met him during hearings.

Mehran's situation, including his ability to communicate with the outside world, has been made even more difficult by the fact that he has no immediate family in Iran, that his Iranian lawyer was arrested and imprisoned (he's since been released), and that the Islamic Republic has imposed a climate of terror throughout society threatening anyone who dares to convey the voices of Iran's prisoners and the truth about their conditions to the outside world. I ask the British government and the foreign ministry: why wouldn't you do everything in your power to free a citizen you're responsible for from such unconscionable, illegal and barbaric treatment, especially now that the financial dispute between Britain and Iran has been resolved?

#### **Over 100 Trade Unions, Workers' Organizations, HR Groups Around World Call for Mehran's Release**

In contrast to the silence of the British government, well over 100 different trade unions, workers' organizations, and human rights groups from around the world have called for Mehran's release. Concerned family members, individuals and organizations, again globally, have protested Iran's treatment of prisoners. In September 2020, for instance, prominent academics published an "[Open Letter on the Continued Detention of Iranian Dual-Nationals](#)," calling on Iran "to release all innocent dual nationals who are arbitrarily detained in Iran and end the injustice against them and their families."

In the Spring of 2021, an Emergency Appeal "[The Lives of Iran's Political Prisoners Hang in the Balance – We Must ACT NOW!](#)" demanded freedom for all Iran's political prisoners, including "dual nationals from Europe, Australia and the U.S. ... being held in the 'political ward' of the notorious Evin prison in Tehran," citing **Mehran Raoof** as one example. The Appeal has been endorsed by nearly 3,500 people from 40 countries (among them Germany, France and the UK), including former political prisoners, Nobel Laureates **Shirin Ebadi** and **Jody Williams**, and prominent voices of conscience including **Cornel West**, **Noam Chomsky**, **Gloria Steinem**, **Daniel Ellsberg**, **Ariel Dorfman**, and **Raymond Lotta**, and published as a full-page ad on the back cover of the Summer 2021 issue of the prestigious New York Review of Books. Other signers include Anoosheh Ashoori's wife **Sherry Izadi**, daughter **Elika**, and son **Aryan**; **Mariam Claren**, the daughter of imprisoned German-Iranian national **Nahid Taghavi**; as well as the European prisoner support movement [Burn the Cage/Free the Birds](#).

**I salute these and other such efforts and again, on behalf of Mehran Raoof, I again demand: the British government and the Foreign Office take immediate steps to provide Mehran Raoof with full consular assistance and demand the Islamic Republic of Iran release him immediately.**

I also urge all justice-loving people to contact the British government and demand it do everything in its power to free imprisoned British citizens **Mehran Raoof**, **Morad Tahbaz**, and **Shahram Shirkhani**.

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