

URGENT ACTION

FILMMAKER ARBITRARILY DETAINED

Sayed Rahim Saidi, a 57-year-old filmmaker, managing director, and producer of Anar Media, a YouTube-based broadcaster, was arrested by members of the Taliban General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI) District 40 on 14 July 2024 near his office. He has been sentenced to three years in prison and is currently serving his sentence in Pol-e-Charkhi prison. During his initial trial, on 18 December 2024, the court accused him of spreading propaganda against the Taliban de facto authorities. Saidi is severely ill, suffering from lumbar disc herniation and prostate issues, yet he does not have access to adequate healthcare, including required medication, and is kept in a cold prison cell. Between July and December, while he was held in GDI District 40, he was allegedly subjected to torture and other ill-treatment, including solitary confinement, and was denied access to the medicine sent by his family. Saidi must be immediately and unconditionally released.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

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

Dear Mr. Abdul Haq Wasiq,

I am writing to express my concern about the arbitrary arrest and detention of filmmaker Sayed Rahim Saidi.

On 14 July 2024, Sayed Rahim Saidi and his son were arbitrarily arrested by members of the Taliban's General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI) District 40 from Khoshal Khan Meena, District 5 of Kabul. At the time of arrest, four Taliban GDI soldiers with covered faces surrounded them. Without explanation or showing official arrest warrant, they covered Saidi's and his son's faces with black cloths and took them to GDI District 40. His son was released after an interrogation; however, Saidi was kept in GDI for further interrogation. He was then accused of spreading propaganda against the Taliban de facto authorities, a charge based on his past films as well as a new film he was planning to work on addressing the ban on girls' education by the Taliban. On 19 December 2024, the filmmaker was unfairly tried at the Taliban court in Kabul, without access to a defence lawyer. The Taliban judge accused him of propaganda against the Taliban de facto authorities and forced him to accept the charges or face a second trial where his imprisonment would very likely be prolonged. Deprived of a fair trial, in absence of defence lawyer and fear of extended imprisonment period, Saidi accepted the verdict. Since his arrest, Saidi has been seriously ill with lumbar disc herniation and prostate issues, without access to adequate healthcare or the medicine he needs. His family is extremely concerned about his health conditions.

Saidi's situation shows a clear violation of the rights to freedom of expression under Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and fair trial rights guaranteed in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Afghanistan is a state party.

I therefore urge you 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, and torture and other ill-treatment of people working to defend human rights including those peacefully promoting social change and non-discrimination.***

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Sayed Rahim Saidi, a 57-year-old filmmaker, is known for his documentaries and short films addressing social change and non-discrimination. He has worked for over two decades in Afghanistan National TV and other private televisions and is a member of the Afghanistan Film Association. Saidi has worked in media and production of media content, film, and cinema in Afghanistan. He has previously worked as a production manager and producer with [Ariana TV](#) since its establishment in Kabul in 2005. Before his arbitrary arrest, he was working with Anar Media, with 17,000 followers on YouTube, and had produced a variety of social, cultural, and religious programmes.

Saidi was arbitrarily arrested by the Taliban General Directorate of Intelligence District 40 on 14 July 2024 from Khushhal Khan Mena, District 5 of Kabul. Around 10 am in the morning, Saidi and his son suddenly found themselves surrounded by Taliban soldiers with covered faces. Without proper communication or presenting a written arrest warrant, the soldiers covered their faces with black cloths and took them to the GDI District 40. After a couple of hours of interrogation, his son was released; however, Saidi was kept for further interrogation. During this period, Saidi was kept in a solitary confinement for the first three months of the arrest, denied access to a lawyer as well as adequate healthcare and medication required for his illness. While his family was allowed to visit him a few times, the meetings would take place through a glass window via telephone in the presence of a Taliban soldier. While his family had tried to send him medicines, these medicines never reached him in GDI. Saidi has been seriously ill with lumbar disc herniation since his arrest, and his condition is continually worsening. He also suffers from prostate issues.

On 18 December 2024, Saidi was presented for the first trial to the judge in the first court in Kabul as a criminal; his hands and legs were chained, and he was not allowed to speak to his family. During this trial, Saidi was denied access to a defence lawyer to challenge the allegations of spreading propaganda against the Taliban de facto authorities and to assert his right to have access to adequate healthcare. He was warned by the judge that if he denies the first court judgement and appeal, his case and imprisonment period will be prolonged. He was forced to confess that he was responsible for spreading propaganda against the Taliban and was sentenced to three years imprisonment. He was sent to Pol-e-Charkhi prison immediately afterwards.

The Afghanistan Journalists Center ([AFJC](#)) has condemned Saidi's arbitrary arrest and called for his unconditional release, as well as an immediate end to arbitrary arrests and imprisonment of media workers and journalists simply for performing their duties.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English, Dari/Farsi/ Pashto
You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 24 April 2025

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Sayed Rahim Saidi [He/him]

ADDITIONAL TARGETS

Copies to:

De-facto Minister of Foreign Affairs
Amir Khan Mutaqi
Foreign Minister
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Ghazian Street Malek Asghar Square,
Kabul 1011, Afghanistan
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