

Treasury Sanctions Two Judges Who Penalize Iranians for Exercising Freedoms of Expression and Assembly

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Salavati and Moghisseh also issue cruel sentences against activists, journalists, and religious minorities

Washington – Today, the Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designated two judges presiding over branches of the Iranian regime’s Revolutionary Court who, for years, have punished Iranian citizens and dual-nationals for exercising their freedoms of expression or assembly. In many cases, these judges sentenced political prisoners to death. Through their respective branches of the Revolutionary Courts, Abolghassem Salavati and Mohammad Moghisseh, both designated today, oversaw the Iranian regime’s miscarriage of justice in show trials in which journalists, attorneys, political activists, and members of Iran’s ethnic and religious minority groups were penalized for exercising their freedom of expression and assembly and sentenced to lengthy prison terms, lashes, and even execution.

“The United States will not be a bystander to ongoing oppression and injustice in Iran. This Administration is targeting those in the regime who seek to censor protestors, persecute religious minorities, and silence the Iranian people,” said Secretary Steven T. Mnuchin. “The United States stands with those who participate in peaceful public dissent and protests.” Treasury’s actions were taken pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13846, which targets, among other things, censorship or other activities that prohibit, limit, or penalize the exercise of freedom of expression or assembly by citizens of Iran.

Both Salavati and Moghisseh have been sanctioned by the European Union for presiding over a series of show trials following the June 2009 Iranian presidential election, which imposed long prison sentences and several death sentences for political activists and journalists.

Abdolghassem Salavati

Salavati presides over Branch 15 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court, where he has prosecuted and delivered harsh sentences, including many death sentences, to scores of political prisoners, human rights activists, and peaceful demonstrators, earning him the moniker “the Judge of Death.”

Branch 15 is a main venue for the prosecution and harsh sentencing of journalists and internet users. Salavati alone has sentenced more than 100 political prisoners, human right activists, media workers and others seeking to exercise freedom of assembly to lengthy prison terms as well as several death sentences. For example, following a 2015 demonstration by teachers and their supporters, Salavati sentenced the secretary general of the Teachers Association of Iran to six years in prison for “propaganda against the state” and “collusion against national security.”

Judges on these Revolutionary Courts, including Salavati, have acted as both judge and prosecutor, deprived prisoners of access to lawyers, and intimidated defendants.

Mohammad Moghisseh

Moghisseh presides over Branch 28 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court, where he has overseen countless unfair trials, during which charges went unsubstantiated and evidence was disregarded.

He is notorious for sentencing scores of journalists and internet users to lengthy prison terms. In one case alone, he sentenced eight Iranian Facebook users to a cumulative total of 127 years in prison for charges including anti-regime publicity and insults to religion. Multiple artists, including filmmakers and poets, have also been tried in Moghisseh’s court under charges such as collusion against national security and propaganda against the state allegedly found in their artwork.

In addition to penalizing the exercise of freedom of expression or assembly, Moghisseh has also pressed questionable charges against several members of Iran’s Baha’i religious minority, prosecuting them for supposed participation in activities such as propaganda against the state and assembly and collusion against national security, after they reportedly held prayer and worship ceremonies with other members.

Abdolghassem Salavati and Mohammad Moghisseh are designated pursuant to E.O. 13846 for engaging in censorship and other activities with respect to Iran on or after July 12, 2009 that prohibit, limit, or penalize the exercise of freedom of expression or assembly by citizens of Iran.

Sanctions Implications

All property and interests in property of these persons designated today subject to U.S. jurisdiction are blocked, and U.S persons are generally prohibited from engaging in transactions with them. In addition, foreign financial institutions that knowingly facilitate significant transactions for, or persons that provide material or certain other support to, the individuals

designated today risk exposure to sanctions that could sever their access to the U.S. financial system or block their property and interests in property under U.S. jurisdiction.

[For identifying information on the entities designated today.](#)

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