

URGENT ACTION

RELEASE JOURNALIST CONVICTED OF PROPAGANDA

Mahdi Ansari, 27, is a journalist who was working with Afghan News Agency. On October 5, 2024, he was arrested by members of the Taliban General Directorate of Intelligence District 40 near his office. He has been sentenced to one and a half years imprisonment. During his initial trial, on January 1, 2025, in absence of his family and defense lawyer, the court accused him of spreading propaganda against the Taliban de facto authorities due to his journalistic reports and Facebook posts. While in detention, Mahdi Ansari has faced ill-treatment, including solitary confinement, his mental health has deteriorated, and he has been denied regular family visits. His family was able to meet him after one month of his arbitrary detention and for five minutes only. He must be immediately and unconditionally released as he is detained solely for the peaceful exercise of his human rights.

TAKE ACTION:

- Write a letter to the government official(s) listed. Use the sample letter below as a guide or use your own words.
- [Click here](#) to report your action(s) on **UA 11.25**. We share this number with the officials we are trying to persuade.

Mr. Abdul Haq Wasiq
Director of Intelligence

Email of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: info@mfa.gov.af

No Domestic Postal Address

Twitter/X: [@MoFA_Afg](#)

Note: There are no postal addresses for this UA, so please take action through social media and email

Dear Mr. Abdul Haq Wasiq,

I am writing to express my concern about the arbitrary arrest and detention of journalist **Mahdi Ansari**.

On October 5, 2024, Mahdi Ansari was arbitrarily arrested by members of the Taliban's General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI) District 40 near his office in Dasht-e-Barchi area. During his interrogation and detention, he was subjected to ill-treatment including being kept in solitary confinement. His mental health has also severely deteriorated.

On January 1, 2025, Mahdi Ansari was unfairly tried at the Taliban court in Kabul, without access to a defense lawyer and in absence of his family. The Taliban judge accused him of propaganda against the Taliban de facto authorities, referring to his past reports and peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression. He was sentenced to one and half years in prison. Mahdi Ansari is still being held in the GDI 40, where his family are now allowed to visit him only once a week where they can talk only for five to six minutes via telephone through a glass window.

I urge you to immediately and unconditionally release Mahdi Ansari. Pending his release, ensure that he is held in conditions meeting international standards and has regular access to adequate healthcare, legal representation, and family visits. Finally, I urge you to 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

Mahdi Ansari is a 27-year-old journalist who had been working with Afghan News Agency at the time of arrest. Previously, he had worked with various media channels such as Panjara Daily, Hasht-e Sobh, and Jawan TV. For the past three years, his reporting covered ongoing developments and restrictions imposed by Taliban de facto authorities, published through his work and also through his personal Facebook and YouTube channel, amidst the Taliban's widespread restrictions and surveillance of journalists and media workers. Notably, Mahdi Ansari worked on a sensitive report published by AFKA on the first anniversary of a deadly suicide attack on Kabul's Shia minority in 2023. A year later, he commemorated the day with a Facebook post.

For the first two days of his detention, his family were unaware of his whereabouts. It was only after contacting the local police station that his arrest by the GDI was confirmed. The GDI initially denied his arrest and knowing of his whereabouts but eventually announced that he was under their interrogation.

[Reporters Without Borders](#) issued a statement condemning his arbitrary arrest, calling for his immediate release, and for the Taliban to end its persecution of journalists. [The International Federation of Journalists and the Afghanistan Independent Journalists' Union](#) have also demanded Mahdi Ansari's release. The Afghanistan Journalists' Support Organization has called Mahdi Ansari's arrest unlawful and in violation of freedom of expression. The [Afghanistan Journalists Center](#) has condemned Mahdi Ansari's arbitrary arrest and called for his unconditional release.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English, Dari, Farsi, Pashto, or your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: May 4, 2025

NAME AND PRONOUN: Mahdi Ansari [He/him]