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3.1.4. Journalists and other media workers (perceived as) critical of the Iranian authorities

COMMON ANALYSIS
Last update: January 2025

This sub-profile refers to journalists and other media workers perceived by the Iranian authorities as dealing with anti-regime topics as well as those dealing with other sensitive topics while respecting the foundations of the Islamic Republic.

A journalist is a professional who is involved in the process of gathering, assessing, creating, and broadcasting news and information in newspapers, magazines, on the internet, on the radio, or television. Other media workers include a wide range of roles such as producers, directors, technicians, and many others who are involved in the creation and dissemination of media content.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: Country Focus 2024, 4.4. Country Guidance should not be referred to as source of COI.

The Iranian Constitution guarantees the freedom of press if it does not violate the fundamental principles of Islam or the rights of the public. However, censorship is imposed on newspapers, magazines, and online platforms and Iran is regarded as one of the world's most repressive countries for journalists. The situation deteriorated notably after the 2022 protests.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Some acts to which journalists and other media workers, seen by the Iranian authorities as critical of them, could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, prominent dissident journalists have been executed. Other journalists critical of the authorities have faced arbitrary arrests, imprisonment, and unfair trials conducted by Revolutionary Courts. A number of foreign-based journalists and media-activists have been convicted *in absentia.*

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts that journalists and other media workers could be subjected to, and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures, should be also taken into account. Journalists and other media workers have been subjected to surveillance, intimidation and interrogations. Anti-defamation crimes included in the Penal Code are often

used to threaten them. The Iranian authorities impose tight control over newspapers, magazines, and online platforms. A considerable number of Iranian journalists have faced legal proceedings, some sentenced to travel bans and suspension of work permits. Self-censorship is widely spread in Iran.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

Journalists generally rely on their visibility and accountability to ensure their credibility. Their visibility is even more important because of digital media. Journalists who engage in critical reporting on controversial political matters questioning the foundations of the regime or other sensitive topics (especially regarding the Mahsa Amini protests, women's rights, and corruption) are particularly targeted in Iran.

Therefore, **for journalists and other media workers dealing with anti-regime topics or perceived as such by the Iranian authorities, well-founded fear of persecution would in general be substantiated**.

For journalists and media workers (perceived as) critical of the Iranian authorities while respecting the foundations of the Islamic Republic, the individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood to face persecution should take into account risk-impacting circumstances, such as:

- **Visibility, including being known to the authorities**: visibility to the authorities is a critical factor impacting the risk of persecution. Due to their activities, some media workers are more visible than others. For example, a cameraman is more visible than a person working in post-production.

- **Links with Western countries**: individuals who have links with Western countries, such as those media workers operating in Western countries or working for media companies based in Western countries, and those perceived as such by the Iranian authorities have a higher risk. Also, foreign based outlets in Persian may face increased scrutiny for alleged propaganda against the Iranian authorities.

- **Ethnic and/or religious background**: due to their ethnic and/or religious background, some media workers may be at higher risk. Please refer to Ethnic minorities and Religious minorities.

- **Gender**: in regard of the general situation of women in Iran, female media workers are at higher risk than their male counterparts. Please refer to Women and girls.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant falling under this profile, this is highly likely to be for (imputed) political opinion, since such journalists or other

media workers would be seen as critical of the authorities as they have been accused of spreading false information and propaganda against the State, including collaborating with foreign governments.

See other contents related to Political dissent and opposition:

- 3.1.1. Members and sympathisers of opposition parties and movements (perceived as) critical of the Iranian authorities
- 3.1.2. Protesters
- 3.1.3. Human rights defenders, activists, and lawyers
- *3.1.4. Journalists and other media workers (perceived as) critical of the Iranian authorities*

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