

Montreal filmmaker to face trial in Iran

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[CBC News](#)

Montreal-based filmmaker Mehrnoushe Solouki will face a closed-door trial in Iran in November on charges of intending to spread propaganda, according to The Globe and Mail newspaper.

A Saturday article says the 38-year-old doctoral student with the University of Quebec in Montreal will be subjected to a trial on Nov. 17. The public is banned as well as Solouki's family.

After interviewing family members of an opposition group in Iran, the filmmaker was arrested in February and held in Iran's Evin prison for a month.

Solouki, who moved from France to Montreal in 2003 and became a landed immigrant, had obtained permission from Iranian authorities to produce a documentary film on the aftermath of the Iran-Iraq war.

She has not been allowed to leave the country since her release from prison. Iranian authorities confiscated her notes and film footage.

Solouki, who is also a French citizen, told the Globe she finds the charges "very bizarre" as the film has not been completed and no footage has been shown publicly.

Amnesty International and Reporters Without Borders, a Paris-based organization, have taken up her case, posting reports about her situation.

Reporters Without Borders says the filmmaker's family in France had to mortgage their home to pay bail back in March. Solouki was released after a month in solitary confinement in Tehran's notorious Evin prison after her family paid about \$116,000 Cdn in bail.

Under 'psychological stress'

In a report posted June 21 on the Reporters Without Borders website, Solouki said she was confused about her confinement in Iran:

"So why I am still being held in Iran? Am I guilty because I have French citizenship? Because I resided in Canada? Because I am an independent filmmaker?"

Denis McCready, a Montreal filmmaker who has organized a campaign to free Solouki, says his friend is frustrated and is "under tremendous psychological stress."

Iranian authorities have a history of cracking down on journalists.

Iranian-Canadian photojournalist Zahra Kazemi died in Iranian custody in 2003, three weeks after she was arrested for taking pictures outside Evin prison during a student protest.

Parnaz Azima, a journalist with Iranian and American dual nationality who works for Radio Free Europe in the Czech Republic, is also barred from leaving Iran.

She was accused of "propaganda against the Islamic Republic" after she travelled to Iran in January to see her ailing mother.