

# Iran: Canadian-Iranian professor Homa Hoodfar arrested by Revolutionary Guards

Thursday 9 June 2016, by [#FreeHomaHoodfar](#), [CTVNews.ca](#), [KAMALI DEGHAN Saeed](#), [KASSAM Ashifa](#), [ORMISTON Susan](#) (Date first published: 9 June 2016).

**Homa Hoodfar, a Concordia University professor known for her research on women in Islamic societies, is being detained in Iran's notorious Evin prison, the same facility where Montreal photojournalist Zahra Kazemi was detained. Kazemi died in 2003 after being raped and tortured by Iranian officials. Homa Hoodfar was arrested after nearly three months of repeated questioning. Iran does not recognise dual nationality, and treats detainees only as Iranian, depriving them of consular access.**

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CANADIAN-IRANIAN PROFESSOR ARRESTED IN TEHRAN BY REVOLUTIONARY GUARDS

Thursday 9 June 2016, by siawi3

Source: [https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/freehomahoodfar?hc\\_location=ufi](https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/freehomahoodfar?hc_location=ufi)

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[#FreeHomaHoodfar](#)

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## Canadian-Iranian professor arrested in Tehran by Revolutionary Guards

**Homa Hoodfar, 65, detained after passports and belongings confiscated  
Case is latest to involve dual nationals in Iran**

**Homa Hoodfar was arrested after nearly three months of repeated questioning. Iran does not recognise dual nationality, and treats detainees only as Iranian, depriving them of consular access.**

Iranian authorities have arrested a Canadian-Iranian professor of social anthropology, the latest in a string of cases involving dual nationals which has prompted concern over the country's political

atmosphere.

Homa Hoodfar was arrested earlier this week after nearly three months of repeated questioning by the Iranian intelligence service, her sister told the *Guardian* on Wednesday.

Hoodfar is the latest in the ever-expanding list of dual nationals targeted in recent months. Several Iranian dual nationals from the US, the UK, Canada and France are currently behind bars or facing regular questioning, often accused of espionage or collaborating with a hostile government.

The 65-year-old scholar travelled to her home country in February, principally for personal reasons, but she also continued her academic research while in the country, her family said. Her trip coincided with parliamentary elections during which a record number of women were elected as MPs, mostly allied with the moderate administration of Hassan Rouhani.

In March, members of Iran's powerful Revolutionary Guards raided Hoodfar's flat a day before she was due to fly to London, where she planned to join her family for the Persian new year and the 70<sup>th</sup> birthday of her brother. The authorities confiscated her belongings and her three passports, and summoned Hoodfar for regular questioning.

Hoodfar's family had chosen not to go public until now because they believed the interrogations were the result of a misunderstanding and would soon end, according to her sister, Katayoon Hoodfar. "[Homa] was summoned to Evin prison on Monday where she was told she would face yet another session of questioning but instead she was detained," she said.

"We are extremely worried for her health," Hoodfar's sister said. "She suffers from a rare neurological illness; she often has very bad headaches." Hoodfar does not have any immediate family in Iran and the Canadian embassy remains closed. Hoodfar's lawyer and cousin have been denied a family visit, Katayoon Hoodfar said, and were told that she is banned from having any visitors.

Iran does not recognise dual nationality, and treats detainees only as Iranian, depriving them of consular access.

Hoodfar has repeatedly travelled to Iran in the past but the illness of her husband, who died last year, prevented her from travelling there more recently. Hoodfar's family believe that she has been arrested by the Revolutionary Guards, which act independently of Rouhani's government and has sought to undermine his administration on various occasions.

Canada, under the previous Conservative government, abruptly closed its embassy in Tehran and expelled Iranian diplomats from Canada in September 2012. Relations between Canada and Iran had been strained for years, much of the tension stemming from the torture and death of Iranian-Canadian photographer Zahra Kazemi in 2003.

The country's prime minister, Justin Trudeau, has said his government intends to reopen the embassy in Tehran, but analysts say it could years before the two countries accredit ambassadors.

In February, the Canadian government lifted virtually all sanctions against Iran. In announcing the change, Stéphane Dion, Canada's foreign affairs minister said, "Canada will lift its sanctions but will maintain a level of mistrust for a regime that must not have nuclear weapons, a regime that is a danger to human rights and is not a friend to our allies, including Israel," Dion said. "We will do this with our eyes wide open."

Global Affairs Canada, the country's diplomatic apparatus, said it was aware of Hoodfar's arrest. "Consular officials and Minister Dion have met with Dr Hoodfar's family, and remain in close contact

with them," a spokesperson said. "We are working closely with our likeminded allies in order to best assist Dr Hoodfar." The department said it could not comment further due to privacy considerations.

Hadi Ghaemi from the New York-based international campaign for human rights in Iran (ICHRI) said Hoodfar's arrest was "another sign of intolerance and suspicion towards dual nationals who travel to Iran and just want to contribute to their homeland by academic work".

"These arrests are politically motivated to undermine the opening of the country which is Rouhani's stated policy," he told the Guardian. "Ms Hoodfar is a very respected academic who has hugely contributed to the Iranian civil society by her research and trainings."

"[The arrest] reflects a security and intelligence apparatus out of control in Iran. They are snatching and detaining people without cause and with total impunity, creating a virtual quarantine of Iranian society so that they may more firmly hold it in their grip."

Other dual nationals arrested in recent months include the British-Iranian Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, who works for the Thomson Reuters Foundation as a project manager, and British-Iranian businessman Kamal Foroughi.

American-Iranian businessman Siamak Namazi, was also jailed with no explanation in October after visiting his family. His 80-year-old father, Baquer Namazi, a former Unicef official, has also been arrested and denied access to lawyers. A French-Iranian, Nazak Afshar, who is former employee of the French embassy in Tehran, was sentenced to six years in April.

### **Saeed Kamali Dehghan in London and Ashifa Kassam in Toronto**

*Wednesday 8 June 2016 23.18 BST*

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<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jun/08/canadian-iranian-professor-arrested-iran-homa-hoodfar>

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## **Concordia University professor Homa Hoodfar has been detained in Iran.** **(Concordia University)**



*Concordia Homa Hoodfar*

Hoodfar, who has citizenship with Canada, Ireland and Iran, is considered an international expert on the status of women in Islam. Her research has examined campaigns to stop the stoning of women.

She was reportedly arrested by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, a group tasked with

protecting Iran's Islamic system, and has not had access to speak with her lawyer or her family living in Iran.

Hoodfar's niece described her aunt's academic research as "even-handed" and said her detainment must be a "misunderstanding."

"She works on feminist issues, but she also works on just improving the daily lives of women in different contexts, not just Iran. So I'm really confused as to what in her work is causing them to detain her," said Hoodfar's niece, Amanda Ghahremani, who also works as an international human rights lawyer.

"Whenever she has dealt with topics related to Iran, she has given credit to the government, the regime, when they have done things that have had positive impacts on Iranian women ... She's not someone who has worked in extremes at all. She's very balanced in that way."

Hoodfar's family also says Iranian authorities have denied her access to medication for a neurological illness brought on by a stroke last year that causes chronic tension headaches.

"I'm very concerned about her health," Ghahremani said.

Hoodfar was previously held by Iranian authorities in March and released on bail. Since then, she has been questioned several times without her lawyer and was reportedly blocked from returning to Canada.

The Canadian government is actively engaged and is working closely with allies to assist Hoodfar.

But Ghahremani says it's been difficult to get much information from the federal government.

"Unfortunately it appears there are some limitations given we don't have an embassy there and they don't have an embassy here," she said. "I just wish they would also be much more transparent about what steps and measures they're taking."

Consular officials as well as Stephane Dion, the minister of foreign affairs, have been in touch with Hoodfar's family.

Hoodfar travelled to Iran to visit family members after the recent death of her husband, Ghahremani said. She also spent time doing research in Iran's parliamentary library archives.

"Her goal was to go and visit her family and be able to reconnect there, to see the country, to travel, to have some time getting over the grief of the loss of her husband," Ghahremani said.

Ghahremani held back tears as she described her aunt as "brilliant" and "strong."

"She is stubborn in the best way possible. She's got such a strong character and in these moments in the last few months, the only thing that has kept our family going is knowing she's such a strong person," she said.

Concordia professor Margie Mendell, a colleague and close friend of Hoodfar's, described Hoodfar as a "pillar of strength" and "an extraordinary scholar." She said she's had trouble sleeping since learning of her friend's imprisonment.

"I keep rubbing my eyes thinking this is just a bad dream and this will go away," Mendell said.

*With files from the Canadian Press and CTV Montreal Bureau Chief Genevieve Beauchemin*

**CTVNews.ca Staff**

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<http://www.ctvnews.ca/world/concordia-university-professor-detained-in-iran-1.2937210>

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## **Concordia University prof jailed in Iran's Evin prison, family says**

**Relatives and lawyer have been unable to see Homa Hoodfar since her Monday arrest**

**Susan Ormiston**

Senior correspondent

Video by Susan Ormiston

A Canadian academic visiting Iran has been arrested and is being held in Tehran's infamous Evin prison, her family says.

Iran accuses Concordia University professor Homa Hoodfar, 65, of "co-operating with a foreign state against the Islamic Republic of Iran."

It's not yet clear whether she's been charged with espionage, sedition or propaganda against the state.

Hoodfar, who holds both Canadian and Iranian passports, is an anthropologist and teaches at the Montreal university. She's a world expert on sexuality and gender in Islam and has written books and papers.

Hoodfar's niece, Amanda Ghahremani, told CBC News the family has been trying since March 10 to get her out of Iran.

Ghahremani, an articling fellow at the Canadian Centre for International Justice, said she's frustrated, upset and doesn't understand why this is happening. The extended family has no access to Hoodfar, and there's worry about her health and well-being, Ghahremani said.

Hoodfar was first arrested in March — shortly before she was to leave the country — by the counter-intelligence unit of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards who searched her Tehran residence and seized her personal computers, cellphone, and passport. They told her she could not leave Iran to return to Canada.

Over the next two months, relatives say she was interrogated without a lawyer and then summoned to the prosecutor's office at Evin prison where she was allowed to post bond and was released on bail.

But over the weekend Hoodfar was arrested again and taken away.

Her family has been in contact with Canada's Department of Global Affairs and say they were advised not to go public with news of her arrest. They were told Canada would work "back channels" to try and seek her release. However, after two months and now her arrest, the family is worried

quiet diplomatic pressure is not working and made the decision to make her case public.

A spokesperson for Foreign Affairs Minister Stéphane Dion said Tuesday the government considers her case "a priority."

"We are working closely with our like-minded allies in order to best assist Dr. Hoodfar," the spokesperson said.

Dion has met with Hoodfar's family, and a parliamentary secretary as well as consular officials are in close contact with them, the foreign affairs minister's office said in an email to CBC News Wednesday. Privacy considerations prevent officials from discussing the government's involvement in detail, the office said.

Ghahremani said she wishes the government would be more open about actions taken.

A news release issued by a family member says Hoodfar "was in Iran conducting historical and ethnographic research on women's public role. Her visit coincided with the elections in Iran, during which many new women candidates were elected to the parliament."

Family members have not been allowed to see her and are highly concerned about her fragile health.

The news release said Hoodfar requires prescription medication for a rare neurological illness (myasthenia gravis).

A spokeswoman for Concordia said the university is aware of the situation.

"We heard the news and are concerned, but have not received confirmation," Christine Mota told CBC News in an email.

"Should the news be accurate, we will lend our support to the Canadian authorities in any way needed."

Susan Ormiston, CBC News

Posted: Jun 08, 2016 4:54 PM ET Last Updated: Jun 09, 2016 12:19 AM ET

Concordia professor jailed in Iran's notorious Evin prison 2:34

Source:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/concordia-university-prof-jailed-in-iran-s-evin-prison-family-says-1.3622606>

#### *Clarifications*

An earlier version of this story said Amanda Ghahremani was a lawyer and Homa Hoodfar's cousin. In fact, she's an articling fellow and Hoodfar's niece.

Jun 08, 2016 5:51 PM ET

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