

Homa Hoodfar: Canadian-Iranian professor released after being detained since March

Friday 30 September 2016, by [Associated Press](#) (Date first published: 26 September 2016).

Homa Hoodfar, who was among a string of dual nationals arrested in Iran in recent months, has returned to Canada on 'humanitarian grounds'

A Canadian-Iranian retired professor has been released from prison on "humanitarian grounds" and flown out of Iran, state media reported, ending her months of detention alongside other dual nationals swept up by hardliners in the security services.

Homa Hoodfar returned to Canada via Oman, a brief report on the state-run IRNA news agency said on Monday. The Canadian prime minister, Justin Trudeau, hailed her release in a statement, thanking Italy, Switzerland and Oman for their help in the matter.

Kaveh Ehsani, a friend of Hoodfar's in Chicago, declined to comment when reached by the Associated Press. Other family members did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Hoodfar, 65, was questioned and barred from leaving Iran in March after traveling to the country to visit family following the death of her husband. Her family said she has been held in Tehran's Evin prison since June. Hoodfar until recently taught anthropology and sociology at Montreal's Concordia University.

In July, Iran announced indictments for Hoodfar and three others, without providing any details about the accusations. In recent weeks, Hoodfar's supporters described her health as deteriorating while she was in solitary confinement, saying she was "barely able to walk or talk".

Hoodfar's supporters had pressed diplomats to discuss her case during the recent United Nations general assembly in New York. The Canadian foreign minister, Stéphane Dion, met his Iranian counterpart, Mohammad Javad Zarif, on the sidelines of the meeting on Wednesday, state television reported.

Iran's UN mission did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Canada has not had an embassy in Iran since 2012, when its then Conservative-led government cut diplomatic ties over Tehran's contested nuclear program and other issues.

Trudeau said Canadians are "relieved that Dr Hoodfar has been released from jail and will soon be reunited with her family, friends and colleagues".

"I would also like to recognize the cooperation of those Iranian authorities who facilitated her release and repatriation. They understand that cases like these impede more productive relations," he added.

Iran does not recognize dual nationalities, meaning those detained cannot receive consular

assistance. A string of dual nationals have been arrested in recent months. Analysts have suggested Iranian hardliners hope to use them as bargaining chips with the west.

Associated Press in Tehran

P.S.

* The Guardian. Monday 26 September 2016 16.30 BST Last modified on Monday 26 September 2016 18.57 BST:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/sep/26/homa-hoodfar-canadian-iranian-professor-released>