Reports: Iran Arrests Three Female Journalists Amid Protests

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By AFP

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Iranian authorities have arrested three female journalists in the past two days, local media said Monday, amid months of protests triggered by the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini while she was in police custody.

Iran has been gripped by protests since the September 16 death of Amini, an Iranian Kurd who had been arrested by morality police for allegedly breaching the country's strict dress code for women.

Authorities say hundreds of people, including members of the security forces, have been killed and thousands arrested during what they labeled "riots" incited by "enemies" of the Islamic republic.

"In the past 48 hours, at least three female journalists, namely Melika Hashemi, Saideh Shafiei and Mehrnoush Zarei, have been arrested in Tehran," reformist newspaper *Etemad* quoted the Tehran journalists' union as saying.

The paper said the three women had been transferred to Evin Prison, where many of those arrested in connection with the protests are being held.

It estimated that about 80 journalists have been arrested since the start of the unrest in the country four months ago.

No details were given on the reasons for the latest arrests.

Shafiei is a freelance journalist and novelist, while Zarei writes for various reformist publications. Hashemi works for an outlet named Shahr, according to local media.

In late October, more than 300 Iranian journalists signed a statement criticizing authorities for "arresting colleagues and stripping them of their civil rights," local media said at the time.