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Jailed Iranian Auteur Jafar Panahi May Be Out on Bail Soon

By: [Gautaman Bhaskaran](#) Edited By: [Bohni Bandyopadhyay](#) [News18.com](#) Last Updated: JANUARY 22, 2023, 14:10 IST Iran



Jafar Panahi was jailed for six years for being a vociferous critic of the Iranian administration. He was arrested on July 11, 2022.

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Judicial officials will make a decision about Jafar Panahi by the end of the week, his lawyer said.

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Despite all that one may think and say, some degree of rule of law still prevails in Iran. The jailed legendary Iranian auteur, Jafar Panahi, could be out on bail soon.

The country’s judiciary will rule whether to free Panahi after his conviction was quashed by the highest court, Supreme Court. He was jailed for six years for being a vociferous critic of the Iranian administration. He was arrested on July 11 2022.

Earlier, he was barred from leaving Iran and kept under house arrest.

His latest prison term followed his “support for mass protests in 2009 against the disputed results of that year’s presidential election, in which the populist leader Mahmoud Ahmadinejad won a second term.”

“Early this morning, judicial officials told me that they will make a decision about Panahi by the end of the week,” his lawyer, Saleh Nikbakht, said on Saturday.

“Panahi’s case had remained blocked in the courts since mid-October, but it was finally sent to the court of appeal on Monday to launch the legal proceedings. By law, he should immediately be released on bail and his case reviewed again.”

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During the house arrest, he could not be deterred from making movies secretly. In fact, he smuggled one of them inside a cake and sent it to the Cannes Film Festival.

Panahi has won several glories on the international arena. He won a Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival in 2000 for his film, The Circle. In 2015, he won the Golden Bear at Berlin for Taxi and in 2018 won the best screenplay prize at Cannes for Three Faces.

His latest, No Bears, was screened at last year’s Venice.

No Bears is set in a village, where the people live in mortal fear of imaginary bears, and they are pushed into believing that the animals are roaming about. They are not, and Panahi makes a veiled comment here about how Iranians are fed fear – about their morality police. The movie underlines the anguish in the country and people’s frustration at being prevented to lead lives of freedom and joy. Invariably, women suffer most.

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Panahi himself plays “Jafar Panahi” who is banned from making films or leaving his country. So, he moves close to the Turkish border into a village, where an Iranian couple, Bakhtiar (Bakhtiar Panjei) and Zara (Mina Khosravani), are trying to run away from Iran in search of a better life. Pretending to photograph local customs, including a coming wedding, he secures the consent of the villagers.

But a misunderstanding escalates, and village elders confront Panahi and demand he hand over all that he had photographed, especially that which they feel is scandalous. He is absolutely sure he had committed no such offence.

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About the Author

GAUTAMAN BHASKARAN *Gautaman Bhaskaran is a movie critic, commentator and an author, who penned the first ever biography of Adoor Gopalakrishnan, and has been covering ma...* [Read More](#)

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