



UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL AND SECURITY STUDIES AT
MARYLAND (CISSM), SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY

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Dear Ms. Sima Alinejad,

On February 3, BBC Persia reporter Hadi Nili attended a public event hosted by the Wilson Center for International Scholars and the University of Maryland's Center for International and Security Studies (CISSM), which is based at the university's School of Public Policy. The topic of the event was the findings of a new CISSM public opinion study, "Iranian Attitudes in Advance of Parliamentary Elections." Mr. Nili's subsequent reporting on the event (http://www.bbc.com/persian/iran/2016/02/160204_u08_poll_rouhani_approval) includes two substantive falsehoods that put into question his journalistic ethics and the commitment of BBC Persia to accurate reporting.

1.) After the event, Mr. Nili approached CISSM Research Scholar Ebrahim Mohseni, one of the authors of the study and the main presenter at the event, and asked him to sit for an interview. Mr. Nili identified himself as a reporter for BBC Persia at which point Dr. Mohseni politely but definitively explained that he was not interested in participating in an interview with Mr. Hadi. Mr. Hadi then asked Dr. Mohseni if he would be willing to answer a question that he would ask as a private citizen. Dr. Mohseni consented.

Dr. Mohseni was thus very upset when he read Mr. Nili's reporting and discovered he wrote that Dr. Mohseni had participated in an interview with the BBC Persia. Dr. Mohseni could not have been more clear with Mr. Hadi about his desire not to participate in an interview with BBC Persia. Mr. Hadi was welcome to quote any of Dr. Mohseni's remarks from the event itself. But it was categorically false to suggest that Dr. Mohseni had conducted an interview with BBC Persia or that Mr. Hadi had obtained remarks from Dr. Mohseni after the event for publication in BBC Persia.

2.) Mr. Nili's reporting from the event also claimed that Dr. Mohseni has in the past accepted invitations to speak and financial reward/support from Student Basij Organization and other entities associated with the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). This is also a categorically false statement. Dr. Mohseni has never accepted any invitation nor received funding from or benefited from the budget of the Student Basij Organization or any entity linked to the IRGC.

I respectfully ask that you discuss both of these matters with Mr. Nili and also prepare corrections for publication for as many editorial platforms as this reporting appeared on.

Best regards,

Nancy W. Gallagher

Nancy Gallagher
Interim Director
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