

Doc\_Number: EU000249



## Ahmadinejad aide explains Abtahi's weight loss

Sat, 22 Aug 2009 18:30:30 GMT

Amid concerns over health conditions and treatment of Iran's post-vote detainees, an aide to the Iranian president moves to defuse the controversy by saying that serving time in prison helps you understand the importance of keeping your weight under control.

Ali-Akbar Javanfekr, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's advisor for press affairs, addressed concerns over health conditions of jailed Reformist figure Mohammed-Ali Abtahi.

Former Vice President Mohammad Ali Abtahi, a Reformist cleric, appeared in one of Iran's mass post-election trials saying that the three opposition leaders - Mir-Hossein Mousavi, Mehdi Karroubi and Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani formed an alliance in which they "promised to always back each other up" in their efforts to rob the presidency from its 'legitimate winner.'

Following the televised trial, photos of Abtahi circulated the media with human rights activists and opposition figures questioning the credibility of the confessions made by Abtahi who had lost visible weight.

In an interview on Saturday, President Ahmadinejad's advisor explained why the Reformist figure looked so frail during his appearance at court in Tehran.

"It is only natural for a person who has gained an excessive amount of weight to come to his senses in prison that being overweight is not good for your mental or physical health," Javanfekr reasoned.

"Maybe Mr. Abtahi has seized this opportunity and made an effort to lose weight," he was quoted as saying by *Tabnak*.

The jailed cleric was an advisor to defeated presidential candidate Mehdi Karroubi and is accused of provoking and taking part in protests in the capital, Tehran.

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