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As media arrests mount, Iran solidifies a dishonor

New York, July 22, 2009--The Committee to Protect Journalists has confirmed the detentions of another four journalists in Iran. CPJ research shows the continuing arrests have solidified Iran's dishonorable standing as the world's leading jailer of journalists.

At least 41 journalists are now being held in Iranian prisons, 35 of whom were jailed in the aftermath of the disputed June 12 presidential election, CPJ research shows. Iran has supplanted [China \(http://cpj.org/reports/2008/12/cpjs-2008-prison-census-online-and-in-jail.php\)](http://cpj.org/reports/2008/12/cpjs-2008-prison-census-online-and-in-jail.php) as the world's worst jailer of journalists; CPJ's most recent survey found 28 journalists imprisoned in [China \(http://cpj.org/imprisoned/2008.php#china%20%E2%80%8E\)](http://cpj.org/imprisoned/2008.php#china%20%E2%80%8E).

The Iranian government has responded harshly to those who have challenged the presidential elections results, cracking down on protests, obstructing local media, and expelling and [vilifying \(http://cpj.org/2009/06/iran-releases-some-journalists-vilifies-foreign-pr.php\)](http://cpj.org/2009/06/iran-releases-some-journalists-vilifies-foreign-pr.php) foreign journalists. CPJ research shows that local newspapers are regularly [censored \(http://cpj.org/2009/07/in-iran-more-newspapers-censored-another-reporter.php\)](http://cpj.org/2009/07/in-iran-more-newspapers-censored-another-reporter.php).

Today, CPJ called on the government to immediately release all detained journalists and to halt the obstruction of free expression. Among those unjustly jailed is Majid Saeedi, a freelance photographer for Getty Images, who has worked in Iran for years. CPJ posted a [slideshow \(http://cpj.org/blog/2009/07/majid-saeedi-photos.php\)](http://cpj.org/blog/2009/07/majid-saeedi-photos.php) today showing the breadth and diversity of Saeedi's work.

"Iranian authorities continue to hold dozens of journalists behind bars, the vast majority of them without charge. The numbers speak for themselves--and the world is taking note. It's an embarrassment for Iran to be the world's worst jailer of journalists," said CPJ Middle East and North Africa Program Coordinator Mohamed Abdel Dayem. "The authorities must end their campaign against the media, and they should start by immediately releasing these unjustly detained journalists."

Here are capsule reports on the four journalists whose detentions have been newly verified by CPJ. Following that are capsule reports for the rest of those detained.

Shadi Sadr, *Women in Iran*

DETAINED: July 17, 2009

Sadr, prominent lawyer, women rights activist, and journalist, was arrested by plainclothes agents on her way to Friday sermon on July 17, according to the U.S.-backed Radio Farda. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, Sadr works as an editor for the Web site of [Women in Iran \(http://www.womeniniran.com/\)](http://www.womeniniran.com/), a local women's rights group. Hossein Nilchan, Sadr's husband, said witnesses saw her forcibly pushed into a car and taken to an unknown location, Radio Farda reported.

Korosh Javan, freelance photographer

DETAINED: July 9, 2009

Javan, a freelance photographer, was arrested on July 9, according to multiple local news reports. Additional details were not immediately available.

Marjan Abollahian , *Hamshahri*

DETAINED: July 9, 2009

Photo editor Abdelhayn was arrested on July 7, according to the BBC Persian service. She works with the Tehran-based *Hamshahri* newspaper, according to local news reports.

Satyar Emami, photographer

DETAINED: July 9, 2009

Emami, a photographer, was arrested on July 9, journalists told CPJ. The date and circumstances of his arrest is not available. His [Web site \(http://satyar.ir/weblog.php\)](http://satyar.ir/weblog.php) has not been updated since July 8.

Here are capsules reports on other journalists detained following the presidential election on June 12:

Saeed Matin-Pour, *Yar Pag* and *Mouj Bidari*

DETAINED: July 12, 2009

A revolutionary court in Tehran convicted Saeed Matin-Pour of having "relations with foreigners and propagating against the regime," according to local news reports, and sent him immediately to Evin Prison. Matin-Pour was initially arrested in May 2007 after he visited Turkey and was released on bail after nine months. The journalist worked for *Yar Pag* and *Mouj Bidari* newspapers in Azerbaijan province, western Iran, in addition to writing his own blog, according to [local \(http://www.mizanpress.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2814:2009-07-13-10-58-55&catid=6:2009-04-01-10-24-33&Itemid=66\)](http://www.mizanpress.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2814:2009-07-13-10-58-55&catid=6:2009-04-01-10-24-33&Itemid=66) news reports.

Majid Saeedi, freelance photographer for Getty Images

DETAINED: July 10, 2009

Security agents arrested Saeedi, a well-known [photographer \(http://majidsaeedi.com/\)](http://majidsaeedi.com/) with several reformist newspapers, at his home and took him to an unknown location, according to Getty Images. Jonathan Klein, the photo agency's CEO, describes Saeedi as a "dedicated photojournalist" who was simply trying to document events in Iran.

Tohid Begi, photographer

DETAINED: July 9, 2009

The photographer for *Mashrota News*, affiliated with the defeated presidential candidate Mehdi Karroubi, was arrested by security agents near Inqilab Square in Tehran on July 9, according to news reports.

Kave Muzzafari, blogger

DETAINED: July 9, 2009

Muzzafari, [blogger \(http://kavemozafari.blogfa.com/\)](http://kavemozafari.blogfa.com/) and women's rights activist, was arrested near his home in Tehran. He was a supporter of the campaign to collect "[One Million Signatures \(http://www.sign4change.info/english/spip.php?article551\)](http://www.sign4change.info/english/spip.php?article551)" urging the reform of Iranian laws that discriminate against women. His mother-in-law, who was with him at the time of his arrest, told the Tehran-based [Sign for Change \(http://www.sign4change.info/spip.php?article4307\)](http://www.sign4change.info/spip.php?article4307) Web site that plainclothes police officers arrested Muzaffari while they were on thier way home

from a hospital.

Muhammad-Reza Yazdanpana, freelance, blogger

DETAINED: July 7, 2009

Yazdanpana, freelance journalist and blogger for [Yazdanpana \(http://www.yazdanpanah.com/\)](http://www.yazdanpanah.com/), was arrested on the way home on July 7, according to local news reports. He has worked for several reformists affiliated newspapers such as *Sharq*, *Karguzaran*, and *Yas Nu*.

Massoud Bastani, Jomhoriyat

DETAINED: July 5, 2009

Bastani, husband of detained journalist Mehamsa Amrabadi, was arrested when he was went to a Tehran court seeking information about his wife's whereabouts, according to [multiple \(http://www.hammihannews.com/news/4944\)](http://www.hammihannews.com/news/4944) [local \(http://parlemannews.com/index.aspx?n=1603\)](http://parlemannews.com/index.aspx?n=1603) [news \(http://www.mirhusein.net/showthread.php?s=96c35d9282f87330a331d1011735c75c&p=2867#post2867\)](http://www.mirhusein.net/showthread.php?s=96c35d9282f87330a331d1011735c75c&p=2867#post2867) [reports \(http://www.ghatreh.com/news/3616076.html\)](http://www.ghatreh.com/news/3616076.html). He works for *Jomhoriyat*, a news Web site affiliated with the defeated reformist candidate Mir-Hossein Mousavi. His wife, Amrabadi, was arrested along with two other journalists on June 15. According to local and international rights groups Amrabadi, who is pregnant, is being held at Evin Prison.

Issa Sahar-Khiz, freelance

DETAINED: July 3, 2009

Sahar-Khiz, a freelance journalist and founding member of the Association of Iranian Journalists, was arrested while traveling in north of Iran, the Association [said \(http://rooznamenegar.ir/main.php?t=5&id=1075\)](http://rooznamenegar.ir/main.php?t=5&id=1075) in a statement. It also reported that the family has been informed of the arrest by phone. Sahar-Khiz is the former director of the press department at the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance and is a supporter of defeated candidate presidential Mehdi Karroubi, according to [news \(http://www.radiofarda.com/content/F7_Saharkhiz_Bastani_RSFI1770589.html\)](http://www.radiofarda.com/content/F7_Saharkhiz_Bastani_RSFI1770589.html) [reports \(http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,4456832,00.html\)](http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,4456832,00.html).

Hangameh Shahidi , blogger

DETAINED: June 30, 2009

Shahidi, a blogger and contributor to reformist newspapers, was arrested on June 30, according to local news reports. The details of her arrest are unknown.

Sumaia Nusrati, Tehran Emrouz

DETAINED: June 21, 2009

Nusrati, a journalist with *Tehran Emrouz* and *Hayat No*, has been detained since June 21, according to local news reports. The details of her arrest are unknown.

Abulfazi Abedini , freelance

DETAINED: June 30, 2009

Abidini, a freelance journalist and human right activist, was arrested in Ahwaz in southwest Iran on June 30, according to the U.S.-backed Radio Farda. Security agents searched his house before taking him, the radio station reported. Abidini was also arrested last year after he reported on a strike by workers at a factory in Ahwaz.

Kambiz Nouroozi, Association of Iranian Journalists

DETAINED: June 28, 2009

Uniformed officers arrested Nouroozi, director of legal affairs at the Association of Iranian Journalists, in Tehran, the Persian service of the BBC [reported \(http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/iran/2009/06/090629_nm_ir88_brief_norouzi.shtml\)](http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/iran/2009/06/090629_nm_ir88_brief_norouzi.shtml). He contacted family members to inform them that his case will be referred to the Revolutionary Court, the BBC [reported \(http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/iran/2009/06/090629_nm_ir88_brief_norouzi.shtml\)](http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/iran/2009/06/090629_nm_ir88_brief_norouzi.shtml).

Mujtaba Tehrani, *Etemad e Melli*

DETAINED: June 27, 2009

Tehrani, a reporter with *Etemad e Melli*, the newspaper owned by defeated presidential candidate Mehdi Karroubi, was arrested on his way home, according to *Saham News*, a news Web site affiliated with Karroubi. According to *Saham News*, Tehrani had informed his family that he was returning home from work, but never arrived. The following day police visited his home, searched it, and took his computer, the Web site reported.

Names unknown (3), *Kalameh Sabz*

DETAINED: June 22, 2009

Twenty-five staffers of *Kalameh Sabz*, a newspaper owned by defeated presidential contender Mir-Hossein Mousavi, were initially detained. *Ayande News*, a self-described independent news Web site, reported on June 29 that most were later released. Three unidentified staffers are believed to be still in custody.

Alireza Beheshti, *Kalameh Sabz*

DETAINED: June 22, 2009

Beheshti, editor-in-chief of *Kalameh Sabz*, was arrested on June 22 as he was leaving the newspaper, according to several local news reports. His arrest came hours after security agents detained about 25 of his staffers, local press reported.

Maziar Bahari, *Newsweek*

DETAINED: June 21, 2009

Security agents arrested *Newsweek's* Tehran correspondent, Maziar Bahari, the magazine [reported \(http://www.newsweek.com/id/203036\)](http://www.newsweek.com/id/203036). The officers, who did not identify themselves, took Bahari's laptop and several videotapes, according to *Newsweek*. On July 15, more than 100 prominent journalists from 47 countries sent a [petition \(http://cpj.org/2009/07/free-maziar-bahari-100-global-journalists-petition.php\)](http://cpj.org/2009/07/free-maziar-bahari-100-global-journalists-petition.php) to the Iranian government calling for his immediate release.

Zhila Bani-Yaghoub, *Iranian Women's Club*

Ahmadi Omavi, affiliation unknown

DETAINED: June 19, 2009

Bani-Yaghoub and Omavi, who are married, were arrested by security forces in Tehran, the U.S.-funded Radio Farda [reported \(http://www.radiofarda.com/content/F8_JILA_BAHMAN_ARREST/1759040.html\)](http://www.radiofarda.com/content/F8_JILA_BAHMAN_ARREST/1759040.html). Bani-Yaghoub is the editor-in-chief of the *Iranian Women's Club*, a news [Web site \(http://irwomen.net/\)](http://irwomen.net/) focusing on women's rights. Ishrat Awliai, Bani-Yaghoub's mother, told the *Iranian Women's Club* on July 1 that since her arrest Bani-Yaghoub has contacted her family just once from Evin Prison.

Rajab-Ali Mazroui, Association of Iranian Journalists

DETAINED: June 19, 2009

Mazroui, director of the Association of Iranian Journalists, was arrested on June 19, according to multiple local news reports. The details of his arrest in Tehran remain unknown.

Muhammad Ghouchani, *Etemad e Melli*

DETAINED: June 19, 2009

Ghouchani, editor-in-chief of *Etemad e Melli*, which is owned by defeated presidential candidate Mehdi Karroubi, was arrested on June 19 by Ettelaat intelligence agents, the BBC Persian service [reported \(http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/lg/iran/2009/06/090620_ba-ir88-ghouchani.shtml\)](http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/lg/iran/2009/06/090620_ba-ir88-ghouchani.shtml). On June 30, *Javan*, a newspaper aligned with President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad, published a "confession" allegedly given by Ghouchani, identifying him by his initials. The newspaper reported that Ghouchani confessed to having been trained in a Persian Gulf country in preparation for a revolution.

Saeed Laylaz, *Sarmaia*

DETAINED: June 17, 2009

Lilaz, a journalist for the daily business journal *Sarmaia* and a vocal critic of President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad's economic policy, was arrested in his home on June 17, his wife, Sepharnaz Panahi, told the [BBC Persian service \(http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/iran/2009/06/090617_op_ir88_arrests_continue.shtml\)](http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/iran/2009/06/090617_op_ir88_arrests_continue.shtml). She said that officers searched their home and confiscated videotapes, hard disks, and letters. The family doesn't know where Lilaz is being held, the BBC reported. *Sarmaia* also [reported \(http://www.sarmayeh.net/PDF/88-03-28/P2.pdf\)](http://www.sarmayeh.net/PDF/88-03-28/P2.pdf) the arrest.

Karim Arghandehpour, blogger

DETAINED: June 17, 2009

Arghandehpour, a journalist who blogs at [Futurama \(http://futurama.ir/\)](http://futurama.ir/), was arrested on June 17, according to news reports. Arghandehpour wrote for the now-defunct reformist newspapers *Salaam* and *Vaghaa-ye-Ettefaaghyeh*, according to the *Tehran Bureau*, a news Web site.

Mohammad Ali Abtahi, blogger

DETAINED: June 16, 2009

The well-known blogger [Abtahi \(http://www.webneveshtehe.com/\)](http://www.webneveshtehe.com/), an adviser to the defeated presidential candidate Mehdi Karroubi and vice president during Mohammad Khatami's presidency, was arrested on June 16, the BBC Persian service [reported \(http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/iran/2009/06/090616_he_ir88_abtahi-arrest.shtml\)](http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/iran/2009/06/090616_he_ir88_abtahi-arrest.shtml). A blog [entry \(http://www.webneveshtehe.com/en/\)](http://www.webneveshtehe.com/en/) on his site states that he will resume writing as soon as he is released. His wife, Fatima Abtahi, told the BBC that three men in plainclothes visited their home in Tehran and took him away.

Sumaia Tawhidlu, blogger

DETAINED: Mid-June

Tawhidlu, who blogs at [Sahel e Salamat \(http://www.smta.ir/\)](http://www.smta.ir/) and is a supporter of defeated reformist candidate Mir-Hossein Mousavi, was arrested in mid-June in Tehran, according to local news reports. The precise date of her arrest is unknown.

Ahmad Zaid-Abadi, *Roos Online*

DETAINED: Mid-June

Zaid-Abadi, a well-known journalist who writes a weekly column for *Roos Online*, a Farsi and English reformist news Web site, was arrested in mid-June in Tehran. Zaid-Abadi is also the director of the Organization of University Alumni of the Islamic Republic of Iran and a supporter of the defeated candidate Mehdi Karroubi. The details of his arrest remain unknown.

Mehamsa Amrabadi, *Etemad e Melli*

Behzad Bashbo, affiliation unknown

Khalil Mir-Ashrafi, affiliation unknown

DETAINED: June 15, 2009

Amrabadi, a reporter for *Etemad e Melli* newspaper, was arrested on June 15, her mother, Maryam Naqi, [told](http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/lq/iran/2009/06/090620_ba-ir88-ghouchani.shtml) (http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/lq/iran/2009/06/090620_ba-ir88-ghouchani.shtml) the BBC Persian service. Naqi told the BBC that the Ministry of Justice informed her on June 18 that her daughter was being held at Evin Prison. On June 17, *Ham Mihan*, a news Web site, reported that the cartoonist Bashbo and television producer Mir-Ashrafi were guests at Amrabadi's home in Tehran when all the three were detained.

Shiwa Nazar-Ahari, blogger

DETAINED: June 14, 2009

Nazar-Ahari, a [blogger](http://azadieznan.mihanblog.com/) (<http://azadieznan.mihanblog.com/>) and a member of the Committee of Human Rights Reporters, a local watchdog group, was arrested by Ettelaat intelligence agents in her Tehran office on June 14, the committee [reported](http://chrr.us/spip.php?article4306) (<http://chrr.us/spip.php?article4306>).

Kayvan Samimi , *Nama*

DETAINED: June 14, 2009

Samimi, manager of the now-defunct monthly magazine *Nama*, was arrested on June 14 in Tehran, according to multiple online articles.

Here are capsule reports on journalists who were imprisoned prior to the June 12 election:

Hossein Derakhshan, *blogger*

DETAINED: November, 2008

Derakhshan, an Iranian-Canadian who is widely credited for developing software that enabled Farsi speakers to blog in their native tongue, was arrested in November. The exact date of his arrest is unknown, but the news first appeared on November 17 on *Jahan News*, a news web site that is close to the Iranian intelligence apparatus. *Jahan News* reported that Derakhshan had confessed "spying for Israel" during the preliminary interrogation. The crime carries the death penalty. Ali Reza Jamshidi, spokesman for the Iranian judiciary, confirmed in a press conference on December 30 that Derakhshan had been arrested in connection with remarks he allegedly made about a top Shiite cleric, according to local and international news reports.

Mohammad Hossein Fallahiyazadeh, *Al-Alam*

DETAINED: November 1, 2006

Authorities arrested Fallahiyazadeh, 33, on November 1, 2006, and transferred him to Tehran's Evin Prison, according to the Iran-based human rights group Human Rights Activists in Iran . His detention stemmed from his reporting on the government's harsh treatment of Iranian-Arab protesters in the Khuzestan provincial capital, Ahwaz, the group said. A Revolutionary Court convicted him during closed proceedings and sentenced him to a three-year prison term for spreading propaganda against the Islamic regime and for communicating with opposition groups, according to Human Rights Activists in Iran and Amnesty International. Fallahiyazadeh, who belongs to Iran's Arab minority, was denied access to a lawyer, the groups said.

Adnan Hassanpour, *Aso*

DETAINED: January 25, 2007

Security agents seized Hassanpour, a journalist and former editor for the now-defunct Kurdish-Persian weekly *Aso*, in his

hometown of Marivan, in Kurdistan province, according to news reports. A Revolutionary Court convicted him in July 2007 of endangering national security and engaging in propaganda against the state, one of his attorneys, Sirvan Hosmandi, told CPJ. Hassanpour was sentenced to death. A court of appeals overturned the death sentence in September 2008 and ordered a new trial on charges of "working for outlawed parties" and espionage, according to the BBC and a CPJ source.

Mohammad Seddigh Kaboudvand, *Payam-e Mardom*

DETAINED: July 1, 2007

Plainclothes security officials arrested journalist and human rights activist Kaboudvand at his Tehran office, according to Amnesty International and CPJ sources. He was being held at Evin Prison in Tehran. Authorities accused Kaboudvand, head of the Human Rights Organization of Kurdistan and managing editor of the weekly *Payam-e Mardom*, of acting against national security and engaging in propaganda against the state, according to his organization's Web site. Tehran's Revolutionary Court sentenced him to 11 years in prison.

Massoud Kurdpour, freelance

DETAINED: August 9, 2008

Security forces arrested Kurdpour, a freelance journalist and human rights activist, at his home in Bokan, a Kurdish city in northwest Iran, his brother, Jaafar, told CPJ. He was charged with "propaganda against the regime" because of interviews he did with foreign media, including the BBC, Radio France Internationale, and the U.S.-government funded outlets Radio Farda and Voice of America (VOA). Defense attorney Abbas Jamali said Kurdpour was sentenced in October 2008, to one year in prison. Authorities did not single out specific interviews or topics, but Kurdpour often addressed the regime's harsh treatment of minorities.

Mojtaba Lotfi, freelance

DETAINED: October 8, 2008

A clergyman and a blogger, Lotfi was arrested by security forces on a warrant issued by the Clergy Court in Qom. Authorities accused him of publishing the views of Ayatollah Hossein-Ali Montazeri, who has criticized Ahmadinejad's positions. Authorities did not specify particular articles or publications in which the views were supposedly cited. A court in Qom convicted Lotfi of several charges, including the spread of antistate information, and sentenced him to four years in prison, according to news accounts published November 30.

July 22, 2009 4:15 PM ET | [Permalink \(http://cpj.org/2009/07/as-media-arrests-mount-iran-solidifies-a-dishonor.php\)](http://cpj.org/2009/07/as-media-arrests-mount-iran-solidifies-a-dishonor.php)