

Iran Human Rights Documentation Center Urges Iran to Release Opposition Leaders

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NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT – The Iran Human Rights Documentation Center (IHRDC) is concerned about the safety of opposition leaders Mir Hussain Mousavi, his wife, Zahra Rahnavaard, Mehdi Karoubi, and his wife Fatima Karoubi who are detained in Iran. IHRDC calls on the government to release them, ensure their humane treatment, and allow them to communicate with their families in accordance with international human rights standards.

Mir Hussain Mousavi and Mehdi Karoubi were candidates in the 2009 Presidential election in which the incumbent President Ahmadinejad was officially declared the winner. They have since become the *de facto* leaders of the opposition “Green Movement.” Hardline clerics, military figures, and members of Parliament have repeatedly called for their executions, labeling them *Mohareb*, an offense punishable by death. The calls intensified after February 14, 2011 demonstrations in Iran in support of the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt. Members of Parliament shouted in unison, “Mousavi, Karoubi should be hanged!”

Mousavi and Karoubi have not been seen in public since. Yesterday, opposition websites reported they were detained in *Heshmatieh*, a military prison in Tehran. The semiofficial Fars news agency denied their arrests claiming they were still under house arrest. In any case, they have not been able to communicate with the outside world for some time.

“We are concerned because the Islamic Republic has a reprehensible record of mistreating political dissidents in prison,” said Renee Redman, the Executive Director of IHRDC. “The regime often holds political dissidents in unknown locations in order to force them to confess.” Iran regime must respect the rights of its citizens to freedom of assembly and expression.”

IHRDC is a non-profit organization based in New Haven, Connecticut. Its staff of human rights lawyers and researchers produce reports on the human rights situation in Iran. The Center’s goal is to encourage an informed dialogue among scholars and the general public in both Iran and abroad. The human rights reports and a database of documents relating to human rights in Iran are available to the public for research and educational purposes on the Center’s website. www.iranhrdc.org.