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In Iran, six journalists arrested, one sentenced to jail

New York, July 13, 2009--The Iranian authorities have arrested six more journalists--cementing the country's position as the world's worst jailer of journalists--and sentenced another on Sunday to eight years in prison, the Committee to Protect Journalists said today.

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 and released on bail after nine months. The journalist worked for *Yar Pag* and *Mouj Bidari* newspapers in Azaerbaijan province, western Iran, in addition to writing his own blog, according to local [news](#) (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) reports.

"We condemn the harsh sentence given to Saeed Matin-Pour on vague accusations and call on the court of appeal to overturn it," said CPJ Middle East and North Africa Program Coordinator Mohamed Abdel Dayem. "We call on the Iranian authorities to halt their campaign against journalists and free those who remain behind bars."

At least 31 journalists, including those below, have been imprisoned since Iran held its June 12 presidential elections. At least [six](#) (<http://cpj.org/imprisoned/2008.php#iran>) other journalists were [in detention](#) (<http://cpj.org/2009/04/iranian-blogger-detained.php>) prior to the disputed elections. Of the journalists currently behind bars, 16 work primarily for print publications, four for online publications, two for television stations, eight are primarily bloggers, and an additional seven are freelancers or with unknown affiliations.

Among those detained is a freelance photographer for Getty Images, Majid Saeedi. "We at Getty Images are working toward his safe and quick release," said the photo agency's co-founder and CEO, Jonathan Klein, in a statement.

Since President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad won a disputed election, authorities have arrested thousands of protesters and dozens of journalists. Most of the detained journalists work for the local media, although one of them, [Maziar Bahari](#) (<http://cpj.org/2009/06/in-iran-massive-media-crackdown-enters-second-week.php>), is a reporter *Newsweek*, according to CPJ research.

Below is a list of journalists whose detention has been independently verified by CPJ since its [last published count on July 7](#) (<http://cpj.org/2009/07/iran-is-worlds-top-jailer-of-journalists.php>).

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 Muzaffari, *blogger*

DETAINED: July 9, 2009

Muzaffari, [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 their 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 reformist affiliated newspapers such as *Sharq*, *Karguzaran*, and *Yas Nu*.

Majid Saeedi, *freelance photographer for Getty Images*

DETAINED: July 10, 2009

Security agents arrested Saeedi, a well-known photographer with several reformist newspapers, at his home and took him to an unknown location, according to Getty Images.

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 remain unknown.

Editor's note: The original version of this alert has been modified in the 4th paragraph to correct the number of journalists in detention after the June 12 election.

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