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Iran arrests two more critical journalists

New York, July 22, 2010—The Committee to Protect Journalists has learned that Iran is continuing to arrest journalists, with two more detained in June. CPJ calls on the authorities to release all imprisoned journalists, and to allow reporters to conduct their work unimpeded.

Abdolreza Tajik, who writes for reformist newspapers in Iran including *Fath*, *Bonyan*, *Bahar*, and *Shargh*, was arrested on June 12, according to local [news reports \(http://www.kaleme.com/1389/03/22/klm-22546\)](http://www.kaleme.com/1389/03/22/klm-22546). Tajik's sister told U.S. government-backed Farsi-language Radio Farda that her brother was arrested after being summoned to Tehran's Intelligence Ministry. After a month of not knowing his whereabouts, his family finally confirmed on July 15 that he is being held in Tehran's Evin Prison, according to [news reports \(http://www.radiofarda.com/archive/news/20100715/143/143.html?id=2101035\)](http://www.radiofarda.com/archive/news/20100715/143/143.html?id=2101035).

Tajik is being held for the third time since the disputed June 2009 elections. He was [arrested \(http://cpj.org/2009/12/top-iranian-journalists-jailed-in-wake-of-ashura-p.php\)](http://cpj.org/2009/12/top-iranian-journalists-jailed-in-wake-of-ashura-p.php) shortly after the election and released after 46 days in Evin. He was rearrested on December 29 and released after two months, on February 28, according to [news reports \(http://www.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/meast/03/01/iran.journalists.released/index.html\)](http://www.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/meast/03/01/iran.journalists.released/index.html). Currently, he is being charged with "propagation against the regime" in connection with his membership in the Human Rights Defenders Center, which is led by Nobel Prize laureate Shirin Ebadi, according to [news reports \(http://www.radiofarda.com/archive/news/20100715/143/143.html?id=2101035\)](http://www.radiofarda.com/archive/news/20100715/143/143.html?id=2101035). Recently, the center's members have been facing increasing pressure from the government as they report human rights violations in Iran, [according \(http://www.iranhumanrights.org/2010/06/silence-tajik-mohammadi-arrests/\)](http://www.iranhumanrights.org/2010/06/silence-tajik-mohammadi-arrests/) to International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran, a U.S.-based nongovernmental organization.

Also in June, Hamed Saber, a freelance photographer, was arrested after posting [photographs \(http://www.flickr.com/photos/hamed/sets/72157619809375336/\)](http://www.flickr.com/photos/hamed/sets/72157619809375336/) he took of Tehran street protests on photo-sharing websites like [Flickr \(http://www.flickr.com/photos/hamed/sets/72157619809375336/\)](http://www.flickr.com/photos/hamed/sets/72157619809375336/) and [Picasa \(http://picasaweb.google.com/hsaber/25KhordadAzadi\)](http://picasaweb.google.com/hsaber/25KhordadAzadi). His pictures were published by a number of different publications worldwide; one was used as a [cover \(http://farm3.static.flickr.com/2545/3740530868_29d5abaccb_o.jpg\)](http://farm3.static.flickr.com/2545/3740530868_29d5abaccb_o.jpg) of *Der Spiegel*. He was arrested on June 21, according to the [Human Rights House of Iran \(http://www.rhairan.us/en/?p=5597\)](http://www.rhairan.us/en/?p=5597), formerly known as the Reporters and Human Rights Activists in Iran (RAHANA), a local press freedom and human rights group. News of Saber's detention took weeks to independently confirm.

"We call on Tehran to bring to an end its persecution of critical journalists," said Mohamed Abdel Dayem, Middle East and North Africa Coordinator. "Journalists who have been arrested only for doing their job are enduring horrific conditions and treatment in jail. It is time for the authorities to release all the journalists in its custody."

Last week, Mohammad Seddigh Kaboudvand, the head of the Human Rights Organization of Kurdistan and managing editor of the weekly *Payam-e Mardom*, suffered his third heart attack in Evin Prison, according to his lawyer, Nasrin Sotoudeh. Kaboudvand was [arrested \(http://cpj.org/2010/06/iran-press-crackdown-continues-a-year-after-disput.php\)](http://cpj.org/2010/06/iran-press-crackdown-continues-a-year-after-disput.php) in 2007 and accused of acting against national security and engaging against the state. [His lawyer told \(http://www.iranhumanrights.org/2010/07/head-of-judiciary-responsible-for-my-clients-life-says-kaboudvands-lawyer/\)](http://www.iranhumanrights.org/2010/07/head-of-judiciary-responsible-for-my-clients-life-says-kaboudvands-lawyer/) the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran that Kaboudvand's life

is in danger and that he is not able to speak clearly or to see. "I would like to state that the prison authorities and Head of the Judiciary are responsible for Mr. Kaboudvand's life," his lawyer said.

At least 37 journalists were behind bars in Iran as of June 1, according to CPJ's last [census \(http://cpj.org/2010/06/iran-press-crackdown-continues-a-year-after-disput.php\)](http://cpj.org/2010/06/iran-press-crackdown-continues-a-year-after-disput.php) of imprisoned journalists.

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