

Doc\_Number: GDE00092



## Iran: Leading editor jailed

April 14, 2000

His Excellency Sayed Ayatollah Ali Khamenei  
Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran  
c/o Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations  
622 3rd Ave, 34th Floor  
New York, NY 10017

VIA FACSIMILE: 212.867.7086

Your Excellency:

The Committee to Protect Journalists is writing to protest the jailing of Iranian journalist Mashallah Shamsolvaezin, editor of the daily *Asr-e-Azadegan*.

On Monday, April 10, an appellate court sentenced Shamsolvaezin to thirty months in prison for allegedly insulting Islamic principles in a 1999 article that criticized capital punishment in Iran. Shamsolvaezin was taken to Tehran's Evin Prison shortly after the verdict.

The article was published in the now-defunct daily *Neshat*, which Shamsolvaezin edited until judicial authorities closed the paper in September of last year. On November 27, 1999, a Tehran court sentenced Shamsolvaezin to three years in prison (Monday's court ruling reduced the sentence). Until Monday, he had remained free on bail pending the outcome of his appeal.

Shamsolvaezin's jailing follows those of his colleagues Mohsen Kadivar and Abdullah Nouri, who are both serving lengthy prison terms as a result of their journalistic work. On April 21, 1999, Iran's Special Court for Clergy sentenced Kadivar, a reformist cleric and academic, to 18 months in prison for "disseminating lies" and "misleading public opinion."

The charges stemmed from articles, interviews, and public lectures in which Kadivar criticized Iran's clerical elite. In one article, published in the now-defunct daily *Khordad*, he compared Iran's ruling clerics to the authoritarian regime of Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi. Kadivar has been in jail since February 27, 1999, when he was first arrested.

Nouri, the former publisher of *Khordad* and a former interior minister and vice president, was convicted on November 27, 1999, of defaming "the system," disseminating false information and propaganda against the state, and insulting religious leaders. The charges were based on news articles published in *Khordad*. Nouri was sentenced to five years in prison and barred from practicing journalism for five years. *Khordad* was ordered to close.

In the past week alone, at least four other journalists have been summoned for investigation or charged in connection with their published work. CPJ urges Your Excellency to ensure that all possible legal options are examined so that Mashallah Shamsolvaezin, Mohsen Kadivar and Abdullah Nouri are freed from prison immediately. We also urge you to take the appropriate measures to guarantee that judicial authorities cease their legal harassment of journalists in response to their professional activities.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. We look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,

Ann K. Cooper  
Executive Director

April 14, 2000 12:00 AM ET | [Permalink \(http://cpj.org/2000/04/iran-leading-editor-jailed.php\)](http://cpj.org/2000/04/iran-leading-editor-jailed.php)