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Iran Raids, Closes Offices Of Opposition Candidate

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Washington Post Foreign Service
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TEHRAN, Sept. 8 -- Iranian officials closed the offices of defeated opposition candidate Mehdi Karroubi on Tuesday, confiscating evidence his supporters had collected that they say proves protesters were tortured, raped and killed in prison, aides said. Several key supporters were arrested.

The closure followed a similar raid Monday in which officials impounded what the opposition says is proof of abuse by security forces.

"They are going after everyone who is related to following up the cases of people who have been hurt during the post-election violence," said Esmail Gerami Moghadam, a spokesperson for Karroubi's party. The government responded by saying the opposition was making false claims to gain support.

Last week a parliamentary investigative committee dismissed evidence gathered by Karroubi and fellow defeated candidate Mir Hossein Mousavi that suggested that 69 people were killed in post-election violence. Authorities said they think 41 people, including security personnel, were killed during a crackdown on demonstrations against President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's disputed June 12 election victory.

Morteza Alviri and Ali Reza Behesti, who together presented the opposition's evidence before the committee, were both arrested Tuesday. "I can't speak. They are here," Alviri's wife said over the phone as agents searched the house. Three journalists working for Karroubi's Web site, which is partially censored in [Iran](#), were also arrested. Iranian Web sites reported the raids and arrests, only to delete the news later.

Authorities have acknowledged some misconduct by security personnel. On Sunday, state television aired a program featuring Kahrizak prison, which was closed in August on the order of Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, after three detained protesters died there.

According to police, they died of diseases, but relatives said they were tortured. The television program focused on the health problems of prisoners in the facility but ignored the torture claims. The judiciary said court cases for security personnel suspected of misconduct would be held "soon," the semiofficial Mehr News Agency reported Tuesday.

The opposition says the government is using the Kahrizak prison cases to overshadow other claims of torture, rapes and deaths.

"They just want to wipe it away, close it and finish it. There is no real will among the authorities for following up these cases," Behesti said hours before his arrest.

Ahmadinejad's supporters among Revolutionary Guard Corps commanders, prayer leaders and lawmakers have accused Karroubi and Mousavi of sedition.

Special correspondent Kay Armin Serjoie contributed to this report.

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