

InterestPlus Online Savings Get paid. Twice. MEMBER FDIC

Superior rate
No fees
Easy online transfers

1.35% APY* + **10% bonus**
with a balance of \$1,000 on interest earned*

[Learn More](#)

washingtonpost.com > World > Middle East > Iran

Iran Shuts Down Rights Center

Police Close Offices of Group Led by Nobel Peace Laureate Hours Before Commemoration

By Thomas Erdbrink
Washington Post Foreign Service
Monday, December 22, 2008

TEHRAN, Dec. 21 -- Iranian authorities on Sunday closed the office of the country's main human rights organization, headed by Nobel Peace Prize winner Shirin Ebadi.

Dozens of plainclothes detectives and local police officers entered the Center for the Defense of Human Rights in Tehran and shut it down hours before a ceremony was to take place commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

According to members of the organization, which has been active since 2000, the police had been informed of the meeting, at which political activists were scheduled to speak.

"The general human rights activities of this nongovernmental organization are the reason for this illegal reaction," the center's leadership said in a statement. Center officials speculated that the closure was in part a response to a United Nations resolution issued Thursday that expressed "deep concern" about the human rights situation in [Iran](#).

Iran has been protesting for months against the resolution, which was put forward by Canada. In October, U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon issued a special human rights report that called on Iran to address concerns such as "amputations and corporal punishment."

Advertisement

Should you be buying stocks right now?

If you have a \$500,000 portfolio, you should download the latest report by *Forbes* columnist Ken Fisher. In it he tells you where he thinks the stock market is headed, and why. This must-read report includes his latest stock market prediction, plus research and analysis you can use in your portfolio right now. Don't miss it!

[Click Here to Download Your Report!](#)

FISHER INVESTMENTS™

Ebadi's organization assisted the United Nations in compiling the report. "Many international organizations quote our reports, including the report by the secretary-general, which resulted in a resolution against the government of the Islamic republic of Iran," the center's statement read.

An Interior Ministry commission that issues permits for political organizations said the center was carrying out illegal activities, such as publishing statements, writing letters to international organizations and holding

news conferences, the semiofficial Mehr News Agency reported.

The commission, according to the news agency, accused Ebadi's center of distributing propaganda against the state. The report also cited repeated warnings delivered to the

TOOLBOX

Resize Print E-mail

Yahoo! Buzz

COMMENT

19 Comments | [View All »](#)

COMMENTS ARE CLOSED

WHO'S BLOGGING powered by

» [Links to this article](#)

Sponsored Links

#1 Energy Pick of the Decade!
AEGY, the forefront of green, renewable energy. Explosive Gains!
www.EnergyStockReports.com

Hot Stock Pick - GSLO
All American Solar Energy Trading, Investment, Stocks.
www.GoSolarUSA.com

[Buy a link here](#)

Advertisement

A NATIONAL ENERGY TAX

ROB SIMMONS
SPONSORED THE LEGISLATION

Linda WILL FIGHT IT.

U.S. Senate 2010

PAID FOR BY LINDA MCMAHON FOR SENATE 2010

TOP JOBS

- Business Jobs
- Computer Jobs
- Construction Jobs
- Education Jobs
- Engineering Jobs
- Healthcare Jobs
- Legal Jobs
- Management Jobs
- Media Jobs
- Non-Profit Jobs
- Sales Jobs
- Science Jobs

Find Your Dream Job Now!

keywords location

Jobs by [SimplyHired](#)

FEATURED ADVERTISER LINKS

- Lawsuit: Cochlear Implants, Seroquel, Accutane, Yaz Gallbladder, Januvia, TVT Sling, Shoulder Pain Pumps
- Gulf Oil Spill, Class Action, Mesothelioma, Asbestos Cancer, Zimmer Lawsuit, Lung Cancer, Avandia
- Get peace of mind now with Equifax ID Patrol.
- Russia Now: In-Depth Coverage of Russia News, Business, and More.
- Responsibility Project by Liberty Mutual.
- TimeSpace: Navigate articles, photos, video and commentary from around the globe.
- Looking to buy a home? Visit TWP Real Estate section for the latest open houses.
- Make Your Vanguard Investing More Profitable - Free Research Report Reveals 5 Worst Funds for Your 401k

Slate HIGHLIGHTS



Pele and Maradona's Feud Over Who's the Greater Player

- Why Do So Many Conservatives Cling to a 19th-C...
- The Pentagon's Crafty but Inadequate Plan To C...
- Activist Judges Are Just Doing Their Jobs

center and said the building had been sealed on the order of Tehran's top prosecutor.

In a telephone interview, Ebadi called the closure of her organization's office "illegal" and "unacceptable." She vowed to reopen the center, saying that "the police actions are against the law."

Ebadi acknowledged that the human rights center did not have a permit to operate but said authorities had blocked its legalization.

Since its founding, the organization has taken on 5,000 pro bono cases defending politically active women, journalists and students, said spokeswoman Nargess Mohammadi.

On Sunday, guests were arriving for the ceremony when police officers escorted Ebadi and her colleagues from the building. They had refused to leave their offices for more than an hour.

"This was supposed to be one of the few happy events for activists in Iran," said Asieh Amini, a journalist who focuses on human rights issues and who was one of about 300 invited guests. Amini said plainclothes officers took video of the guests.

The human rights center was financed with the \$1.4 million Ebadi received when she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2003. After death threats were pinned to the door of her home in April, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, whose policies Ebadi opposes, promised to investigate. No findings were made public.

In addition to its human rights work, the center has a committee on fair elections. The office of Ebadi's other organization, which focuses on mine-clearing and is in the same building, was also closed Sunday.

Iran has a history of arresting and pressuring dissidents who question the country's record on human rights and democracy.

On Sunday a special prize for oppressed dissidents was supposed to be given to Taghi Rahmani, an opposition figure who had been arrested several times, on charges of committing crimes against national security. Rahmani was to be honored for his work promoting human rights in Iran.

15
Share

More ways to share this Article...

- [Reddit](#) [Twitter](#)
- [myspace](#) [del.icio.us](#)
- [NewsTrust](#) [Stumble It!](#)

From Our Partners



- [The World's Most Powerful Prisoners](#) - By Joshua E Keating
- [The New Lost Generation](#) - By Ron Capps
- [Why Did It Take So Long to Close Germany's 9/11 Mosque?](#) - By Ian Johnson

Most Viewed World Articles

- [Digest](#)
- [FBI will conduct autopsies on 6 American aid workers slain in Afghanistan](#)
- [Japan apologizes to SKorea for colonial rule](#)
- [Pakistan pushing for quick infusion of U.S. flood aid](#)

- » [Top 35 World Articles](#)
- » [Most Popular on washingtonpost.com](#)

More in World



Radiating Danger

An interactive special report tracking the spread of nuclear weapons.



PostGlobal

A discussion of global issues by leading thinkers from around the world.



Connect Online

Share and comment on Post world news on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

© 2008 The Washington Post Company

Sponsored Links

#1 Energy Pick of the Decade!

AEFY, the forefront of green, renewable energy. Explosive Gains!

Hot Stock Pick - GSLO

All American Solar Energy Trading, Investment, Stocks.

Health Net Medicare Plans

Free Info On Health Net Medicare. Compare Plans & Save. Enroll Today!

[Buy a link here](#)

Ways you can get us

- Mobile
- Newsletter & alerts
- RSS
- Facebook
- Twitter

- Podcasts
- Widgets
- Post Store
- Photo Store

Website

- About Us
- Work for us
- Site map
- Topics Index
- Search terms
- Make us your homepage
- Corrections

Newspaper

- About The Post
- Subscribe
- Home delivery service
- Topics Index
- e-Replica
- PostPoints

Company

- Post Company web sites
- Advertise
- In the newspaper
- On the web site
- Feedback
- Contact the Ombudsman

Partners