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## Iranian newspaper raided, employees detained

New York, June 23, 2009--Iranian security agents arrested about 25 employees of *Kalameh Sabz*, the reformist newspaper owned by presidential candidate Mir-Hossein Mousavi, after raiding the paper's offices on Monday evening, according to local and international news reports.

Alireza Beheshti, the paper's editor-in-chief, [told \(http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,4418086,00.html\)](http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,4418086,00.html) the Farsi-language service of Deutsche-Welle that the agents, in plain clothes but armed, rounded up employees and confiscated computers at newspaper's offices in Haft Tir Square, Tehran. He said the agents claimed to have a judge's warrant but did not produce it.

The government has blocked *Kalameh Sabz* from publishing since June 14, CPJ research [shows \(http://cpj.org/2009/06/iranian-authorities-crack-down-on-media-in-electio.php\)](http://cpj.org/2009/06/iranian-authorities-crack-down-on-media-in-electio.php). The employees were believed to have been at the offices on Monday evening to pick up their pay, according to local news reports.

Beheshti, who was not detained in the initial round-up, told Deutsche-Welle he did not know where the employees had been taken. Soon after the interview, Beheshti and his son, Sadra, were themselves arrested as they were leaving the offices of *Kalameh Sabz*, according to [several \(http://parlemannews.com/?n=1266\)](http://parlemannews.com/?n=1266) [local \(http://fararu.com/vdcccopqi.2bqmx8l1aa2.html\)](http://fararu.com/vdcccopqi.2bqmx8l1aa2.html) [news \(http://picks.kodoom.com/408280\)](http://picks.kodoom.com/408280) [reports \(http://zamaaneh.com/news/2009/06/post\\_9457.html\)](http://zamaaneh.com/news/2009/06/post_9457.html). The story was reported locally by the online Farsi-language news sites *Parlemannews*, *Fararu*, *Kodoom*, and *Zamaaneh*.

Initial reports did not specify the employees' jobs. Those arrested constituted a portion of the overall staff.

About 40 journalists and media workers have been detained since the disputed June 12 presidential election and are still in government custody as of late today, according to CPJ research. (Before the current crackdown, at least six journalists were already jailed in Iran.)

"The government intended this crackdown to prevent the people of Iran and the world from witnessing the news as it took place. That may work to a degree--but the price to Iran has been very high. Iran now appears to be jailing more journalists than any other country in the world," said CPJ Middle East and North Africa Program Coordinator Mohamed Abdel Dayem. In CPJ's most recent census, in December 2008, China was the leading jailer with 28 journalists in prison.

Word of several additional arrests in Iran emerged today. They included:

**Iason Athanasiadis**, a Greek freelance journalist working for *The Washington Times*, [was arrested \(http://www.reuters.com/article/domesticNews/idUSTRE55M2BX20090623\)](http://www.reuters.com/article/domesticNews/idUSTRE55M2BX20090623) in Tehran. Athanasiadis had been covering the elections and their aftermath for the newspaper.

*Life.com* said in a statement that it believes photographer **Amir Sadeghi** was taken into government custody over the weekend. Sadeghi had contributed photos to the Web site. "We ask the Iranian government to afford him all rights under Iranian law," Time Inc. Editor-in-Chief John Huey said.

**Mustafa Qwanlu Ghajar**, a journalist with the monthly magazine *Sepideh Danaei* who also blogs at [Ghajar](http://www.ghajar.ir/) (<http://www.ghajar.ir/>), was arrested on Monday, according to local news reports. The details of his arrest were unclear.

**Karim Arghandehpour**, a journalist who also blogs at [Futurama](http://futurama.ir/) (<http://futurama.ir/>) was arrested on June 17, according to news reports. Arghandehpour wrote for the now-defunct reformist newspapers *Salaam* and *Vaghaa-ye-Ettefaaghyeh*, according to the *Tehran Bureau*, a news Web site.

**Ahmad Zaid-Abadi**, a well-known journalist who writes a weekly column for the Farsi and English editions of *Roost Online*, a reformist news Web site, was arrested last week. Zaid-Abadi is also the director of the Organization of University Alumni of the Islamic Republic of Iran and a supporter of defeated presidential candidate Mehdi Karroubi.

CPJ reported details on the arrests of 13 journalists on [Monday](http://cpj.org/2009/06/in-iran-massive-media-crackdown-enters-second-week.php) (<http://cpj.org/2009/06/in-iran-massive-media-crackdown-enters-second-week.php>) and [Friday](http://cpj.org/2009/06/in-iran-journalists-arrested-khamenei-calls-media.php) (<http://cpj.org/2009/06/in-iran-journalists-arrested-khamenei-calls-media.php>).

*Editor's note: The original version of this alert, posted at 1:06 EDT, was updated to include additional developments.*

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