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# Iranian Opposition Offices Are Raided

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TORONTO — The Iranian authorities on Monday and Tuesday raided offices connected to two senior opposition leaders in Tehran, arresting their top aides and seizing documents, Iranian news agencies and the leaders' Web sites reported.

The two opposition leaders, Mehdi Karroubi and Mir Hussein Moussavi, ran against President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in the June 12 election, which they say was rigged by the government.

Mr. Karroubi, a former speaker of Parliament, has further charged that men and women detained in the crackdown after the election were tortured and raped while in custody.

Late Tuesday night, security forces arrested Alireza Hosseini-Beheshti, Mr. Moussavi's top aide, according to mowjcamp.com, a Web site linked to Mr. Moussavi.

Earlier on Tuesday, as Mr. Karroubi watched, the authorities sealed his office, which had led the effort to document the prison abuses, the semiofficial ILNA news agency reported. Mohammad Davari, the editor of Mr. Karroubi's Web site, was arrested during the raid, the BBC's Persian-language Web site reported, and another aide, Morteza Alviri, was arrested at his home.

Also on Tuesday, security forces emptied and sealed the office of the Association for the Defense of Prisoners' Rights, opposition Web sites reported. The office was founded by a reformist journalist, Emadedin Baghi.

On Monday, the authorities raided an office run by a Moussavi aide that recently said it had confirmed the deaths of 72 protesters. The government has maintained that only 30 people were killed, while some human rights organizations say hundreds may have died.

The disputed election and subsequent protests opened a breach in the government's leadership that has only widened over the summer. On Sunday, Mohammad Khatami, the former reformist president, gave a speech in which he criticized the government's "fascist and totalitarian methods" and urged his supporters to expand their protests.

In light of Mr. Khatami's speech, many in the opposition detected a broader purpose to the new raids than merely cutting off the prison-abuse investigations. They are widely seen as a possible prelude to the arrests of Mr. Karroubi and Mr. Moussavi — a

provocative step that hard-line clerics and military commanders have been calling for lately.

“In a more immediate sense, they are shutting sources of information about prison abuse,” said Payam Akhavan, a professor of international law at McGill University in Montreal, who is a former United Nations war crimes prosecutor and a founder of the Iran Human Rights Documentation Center. “But it is also a sign that they want to move to the next stage to solidify their power by arresting opposition leaders.”

The government may also be concerned about a fresh outburst of protests, with the opening of the country’s universities on Sept. 23 the next potential flash point. A senior commander of the Revolutionary Guards said recently that the security forces were preparing to deal with possible protests, the ISNA news agency reported Tuesday.

“We will have a meeting with university officials next week to coordinate how to confront possible incidents,” the commander, Ali Fazli, was quoted as saying.

The Revolutionary Guards are banned from entering university campuses, but not so the Basij paramilitaries, who have frequently attacked students.

According to government figures, about 140 political activists, journalists and former government officials who were rounded up after the protests exploded are still in jail. But an independent human rights group, the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran, said in a statement on Tuesday that the actual number was closer to 400.