

Doc Number: EU000331
Khadjedpour Released From Iranian Jail

October 1, 2009

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Iranian businessman Bijan Khadjedpour was one of the people arrested after Iran's disputed presidential election. His name came up last week when Steve Inskeep asked President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad why people were put in jail for opposing the results of the election. Ahmadinejad said no one was put into prison for opposing him and he said he would look into the case. The president's office said the case did get looked into, and Khadjedpour was released on bail Wednesday.

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STEVE INSKEEP, host:

And we have a footnote to that disputed election and the many arrests that followed. We spoke last week with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, and I asked him why people were in prison for disagreeing with him.

President MAHMOUD AHMADINEJAD (Iran): (Through translator) In Iran, no one is in prison because of opposing Ahmadinejad. But I'll be glad to follow through with the judicial system if you give me the names of the people you speak of.

INSKEEP: I will give you one name as an example.

I could have given several names, but I chose one: Bijan Khadjedpour, a businessman I'd interviewed in Tehran, one of a hundred people put on trial at once after the election. Since that interview, the president's office says he did look into the case, and yesterday Bijan Khadjedpour was suddenly released on bail. He woke up with his family this morning.

He's one of at least two defendants released this week. His family is grateful for the president's dramatic intervention, although it does leave you wondering about the other defendants and about Iranians who consider the process arbitrary at best.

If I'd named some other defendant, would Bijan still be in prison - and would that man be free?

(Soundbite of music)

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Josh Jimenez (Agapito) wrote:

Huh. So, what? Just 98 more interviews to go? Roughly?

Thursday, October 01, 2009 10:29:54 AM

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