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The Lede

The New York Times News Blog



August 5, 2009, 7:14 am

Latest Updates on Iran's Post-Election Crisis

By [Robert Mackey](#)

After Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was sworn in today for a second term as Iran's president, reports of protests outside Iran's Parliament building appeared online. The Lede is tracking news of the protests on the Web to supplement the reporting of our colleagues Robert Worth and Alan Cowell who are writing [today's main news article](#) on Mr. Ahmadinejad's inauguration. Readers who are in Iran, or are following events there, are invited to submit first-hand accounts of today's events, or draw our attention to accounts, photographs or video posted online, by using [the comments box](#) below this post.

Update | 6:27 p.m. Two quick notes before we wrap up for today.

First, as a reader reminded us, [we reported last Thursday](#) that the Iranian filmmaker Jafar Panahi had been arrested during the mourning ceremony in Tehran, but did not publish any more information about what happened to him. According to a report from Iran's state-supported satellite channel Press TV, Mr. Panahi was subsequently released. Last Friday, [Press TV reported](#) that a police official told an Iranian state news agency: "Panahi was detained as a result of a misunderstanding and he was released shortly after his arrest."

Second, as another reader pointed out, Iran's opposition supporters have not forgiven the phone company Nokia for selling the Iranian authorities equipment that can be used to monitor private communications. The reader pointed us to [this post](#), which shows a photograph of a Nokia billboard above a highway in Shiraz, defaced with green paint. What seems to be the same billboard was filmed in [this video](#) uploaded to YouTube today.

The Lede is signing off for the evening, but we will continue to track developments in Iran tomorrow. Thanks for all your comments and links.

Update | 6:01 p.m. Earlier today The Guardian published [a translation](#) of [a Farsi text](#) the Iranian blogger Mehdi Saharkhiz says is an eyewitness account of how today's protest near Iran's Parliament was broken up by the security forces. The Guardian's translation reads, in part:

I was sitting in the Metro. While approaching Imam Khomeini Square, the driver said very politely: "We have to follow police orders, so we can't stop at Baharestan and Mellat." People started whispering.

When I emerged from the Metro the streets were full of military forces. Some had masks. Imam Square was full of special forces. Civil police were in the other streets, especially outside the mosques. They had closed Ekbatan Street.

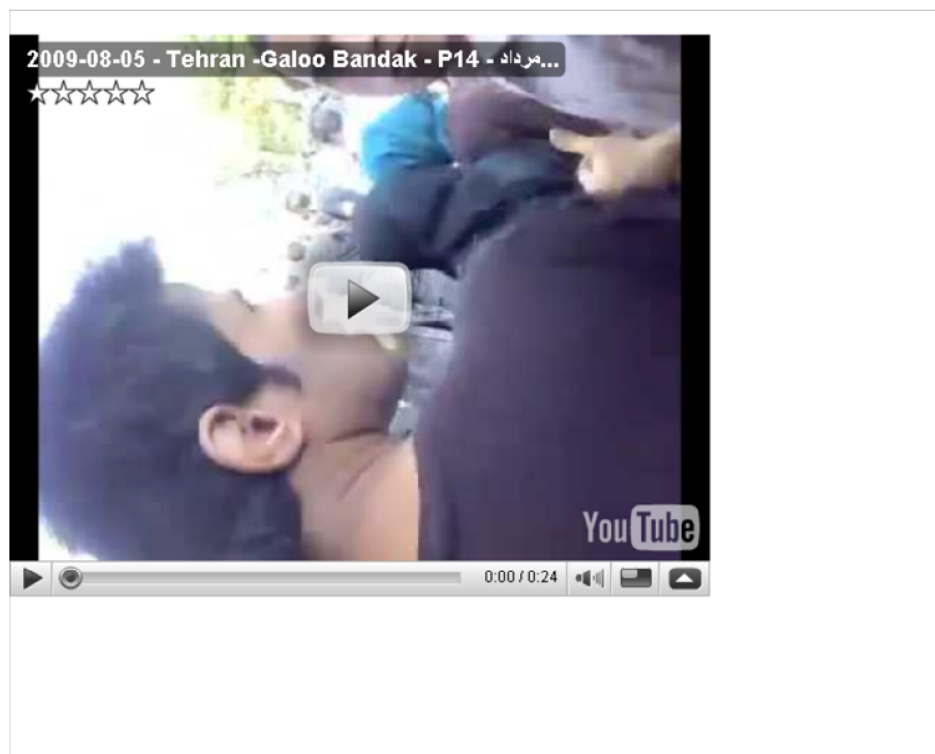
Suddenly we heard an argument. A woman was running away. A man was chasing her and kept kicking her, until she dropped to the ground. I was very frightened. The kind of scene I witnessed make people insensitive, deaf and blind.

The woman being harassed made people boo and shout, while moving towards Jomhuri Street. They were shouting out slogans, such as "God is great" and "Death to the Dictator."

Then we saw plain-closed police coming on their motor bikes, filming us, and pouring spray on us. We ran into an alley. A woman's hands were burnt from the spray.

Update | 5:50 p.m. The video embedded below was uploaded to YouTube today by an anonymous video blogger who says that it was shot in Tehran on Wednesday. Towards the end of this clip, we can hear a chant [we've heard before](#) from opposition supporters, which a Farsi-speaking colleague translated as: "Back us up!"

Back us up! Brave Iranians Back us Up!"



As usual, if anyone can help us to say where this video seems to have been shot, or has seen it posted on a previous day, we'd appreciate hearing from you.

Update | 5:24 p.m. As [Robert Tait reported](#) in The Guardian on Tuesday one of the minor celebrities who attended Monday's ceremonial endorsement of Mr. Ahmadinejad by the country's ruling cleric, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, was the coach of Iran's national soccer team, Afshin Ghotbi. Opposition supporters were outraged that Mr. Ghotbi, an Iranian-American — who was [interviewed by my colleague Jack Bell](#) earlier this year — seemed to be lending his support to Mr. Ahmadinejad.

Now, according to a blogger supporting the opposition, it seems that an Iranian in Dubai has taken vigilante action of a sort against Mr. Ghotbi, by visiting the apartment the coach lives in there and taping a flyer to his door featuring a graphic photograph of Neda Agha-Soltan, the young woman who was killed during a protest on July 20.

Update | 5:06 p.m. The Iranian blogger [Sheyda Jahanbin wrote on Twitter](#) about 30 minutes ago that Iran's former president, Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, will once again deliver the Friday Prayer sermon next week. Ms. Jahanbin called this "important news" and wrote:

Friday August 14th's prayer will be by Rafsanjani again. Hope to see another big turn out.

Update | 3:47 p.m. According to [a post](#) on the National Iranian-American Council's blog on Wednesday, opposition leader Mehdi Karroubi's newspaper, [Etemadmeli](#), has reported that Iran's Parliament "intends to investigate the death of a 12 year old boy who died as a result of getting hit on the head by a baton."



NIAC's blog posted what it says is a photograph of the boy (reproduced at right), apparently from the reformist newspaper. According NIAC's summary of the report in the newspaper, the boy, Ali Reza Tosali, went to the mourning ceremony for opposition protesters killed during the security crackdown last Thursday in Tehran's Behesht-e-Zahra cemetery with his father.

NIAC's summary explains:

Ali Reza reportedly got separated from his father and was fatally hit in the head with a riot police officer's baton. His body was held for a period of four days by authorities before being returned to his family on Monday. According to Iranian officials, Ali Reza is the first child to die during the demonstrations.

Update | 3:21 p.m. [Reuters reports](#) that one of the presidential candidates who continues to contest the results on the June 12 election, Mehdi Karroubi, was quoted on his newspaper's Web site saying that the authorities should allow street protests. According to the Web site of Etemademelli, Mr. Karroubi said: "Using frightening methods to suppress people will bear no result. Allow people to protest in the streets and to chant slogans ... an imposed state of security will harm our national security ... mass arrests of moderates and having such mass trials will endanger the country's national interests."

Mr. Karroubi expressed similar sentiments in an interview with the Spanish newspaper El Pais published on Tuesday, which [we discussed yesterday on The Lede](#).

Update | 12:53 p.m. Since Iran's recent history is not well-known to many people in the English-speaking world, the new documentary series "Iran and the West," which charts the history of the Islamic Republic, "From Khomeini to Ahmadinejad," is an invaluable resource. The documentary was originally made for television, and aired in the past few months on both the BBC, in Britain, and the National Geographic Channel, in the United States. Readers may be able to find [copies of the video](#) on video-sharing Web sites, but the documentary has recently been reworked for radio and made available online by the BBC World Service in three parts. You can listen to [the documentary on the World Service Web site](#), or download it to an MP3 player.

[Part 1](#) focuses on the fall of the Shah and the American hostage crisis. [Part 2](#) is mainly about the Iran-Iraq war and the founding of Hezbollah in Lebanon. [Part 3](#) looks at the brief period of cooperation between Iran and the United States after the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington in 2001, which came to an abrupt halt when President Bush said Iran was part of "an axis of evil," in 2002.

The series, like other programs made by the same British production company, [Brook Lapping](#) — including "The Fall of Yugoslavia," "Endgame in Ireland" and "The 50 Years War, Israel and the Arabs" — is built around extensive interviews with people who took part in the events it describes. Both of the former presidents of Iran who now support the opposition movement, Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanajani and Mohammed Khatami, discuss their attempts to improve relations with the United States during the presidencies of George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush.

Update | 12:00 p.m. [Reuters reports](#) that White House spokesman Robert Gibbs has retracted [the statement](#)

he made on Tuesday, when he called Mahmoud Ahmadinejad “the elected leader” of Iran.

White House spokesman Robert Gibbs on Wednesday said he had misspoken in calling Mahmoud Ahmadinejad Iran's elected leader and that Washington will let the Iranian people decide whether Iran's election was fair.

“Let me correct a little bit of what I said yesterday. I denoted that Mr. Ahmadinejad was the elected leader of Iran. I would say that's not for me to pass judgment on,” Gibbs told reporters aboard Air Force One. “He's been inaugurated. That's a fact. Whether any election was fair, obviously the Iranian people still have questions about that, and we'll let them decide about that.”

According to [a post](#) on the National Iranian-American Council's blog, a White House official had said earlier that Mr. Gibbs, the President's spokesman, did not mean to say that Mahmoud Ahmadinejad had won the June 12 presidential election, but was referring to the 2005 election. NIAC reports:

A major controversy erupted yesterday when White House press secretary Robert Gibbs said Ahmadinejad is Iran's “elected leader.” NIAC has been told by a White House official that Gibbs was not recognizing Ahmadinejad as the winner of the most recent election, but was referring to the previous election.

For an administration that has taken pains not to take sides in Iran's election dispute, this obviously wasn't one of Gibbs' best moments. The statement was quickly picked up by Iran's state media.

In the absence of confirmation by other White House officials, this should be interpreted as a poorly constructed statement — not administration policy. The administration has been walking a tightrope, condemning the human rights abuses in Iran while allowing Iranians to sort out their own election dispute.

President Obama himself has been the main driver behind the American approach to Iran, and he will have the final word.

Last week in The New York Times Magazine, [Roger Cohen wrote](#), in an article about official American efforts to engage with Iran over its nuclear program despite the post-election crisis: “The Obama administration's strong conviction, as several officials told me, is that Ahmadinejad's election was fraudulent.”

Update | 11:49 a.m. A witness told The Associated Press that protesters did gather and chant outside Iran's Parliament on Wednesday before being dispersed. The [A.P. reports](#):

Hundreds of protesters chanted “Death to the Dictator” before security forces broke up a demonstration near parliament, striking people with batons and blasting them with pepper spray, witnesses said.

Some of the protesters wore black T-shirts in a sign of mourning and others wore green — the color of the opposition movement. A middle-aged woman carried a banner warning Iran's leaders if they do not listen to people's demands, they will face the same fate as Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, who was toppled in the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Update | 11:47 a.m. The Iranian blogger [Mojtaba Samienezad](#), still working from inside Iran, passes on a message posted earlier today on Twitter by another blogger, suggesting that there will be more opposition protests on Thursday. The message says:

call some of your friends & tell them about tomorrow's protests & know that even 1 person is useful

Update | 11:21 a.m. A [report from Press TV](#), Iran's state-supported, English-language satellite channel, detailed the security measures taken by the authorities to prevent protests during Mr. Ahmadinejad's swearing in on Wednesday:

According to a Press TV correspondent, thousands of security and Basij forces with their motorcycles were present in the areas around Baharestan square. *Parliamentnews* reported that more than 5,000 security forces were guarding the downtown block while other reports said officers with sniffer dogs patrolled the area searching for possible bombs.

All shops and businesses around Parliament — where President Ahmadinejad was being sworn in — were ordered to close. Security forces had cordoned off the neighboring areas near the Majlis hours before the ceremony began, reports said.

In a separate move, Head of Tehran's metro company Jafar Rabihi said the authorities ordered the trains not to stop at two stops near Parliament — Baharestan and Mellat stations — until the end of the inauguration ceremony.

Somewhat confusingly, Press TV cited reports that ,”despite the heavy security presence, opposition supporters held sporadic demonstrations in protest at the inauguration of President Ahmadinejad,” but then also quoted Iran's deputy police chief Ahmad-Reza Radan who insisted that there were no protests:

“Despite mass propaganda by satellite TV channels and foreign media calling on the people to gather in front of Majlis, no illegal protests were held [in the area],” Radan said.

Update | 9:25 a.m. According to [a report](#) on the Farsi-language Web site Gooya News, run from outside Iran, the security presence on Tehran's streets on Wednesday was much larger than Iran's state media reported, running into the tens of thousands.

Update | 9:12 a.m. A reader points out that this video, uploaded today to [a YouTube channel](#) which has compiled video of opposition protests, is said to show protesters gathered in Baharestan Square in Tehran, outside Iran's Parliament building, on Wednesday:



Again, if anyone can help us confirm the location shown in this video, or has seen it online at an earlier date, please let us know.

Update | 8:48 a.m. A [Reuters report](#) says that a witness in Tehran described a scene outside the country's Parliament earlier on Wednesday much like the scenes in the video we [embedded in our 7:21 a.m. update](#):

A witness reported seeing hundreds of Mousavi supporters in the vicinity of parliament, but no clashes with the riot police and Basij militia there. Police arrested at least 10 protesters, the witness said, adding that mobile phones had been cut off.

Update | 8:39 a.m. Earlier today, the Iranian blogger Mojtaba Samienezad wrote on Twitter that crowds of opposition supporters had gathered in the area of [Tehran's bazaar](#). A reader writes to point us to the two video clips embedded below, which were uploaded to YouTube today by [an Iranian blogger](#) we are not familiar with, who says that they were filmed today in the bazaar and show opposition supporters chanting anti-government slogans.

If any readers who know Tehran can tell us if this does indeed look like the neighborhood around the bazaar, we would be grateful. We would also like to hear from anyone who may have seen these videos on the Web at an earlier date, since some YouTube clips from Iran have been re-posted with incorrect dates.

In both videos, some women appear to be wearing surgical masks, which some opposition supporters have used to conceal their identities during public rallies. The chant in the first video is "Allahu Akbar!" ("God is Great!"), which has been an opposition rallying cry:



In the second video, the crowd chants “Marg bar Russiye!” (“Death to Russia!”), to protest over the Russian government’s swift embrace of the official results of the June 12 presidential election:



The blogger who uploaded these videos also posted [this text](#), in Farsi, said to be an account of the protest at the bazaar on Wednesday. If readers see any other accounts of this protest, please let us know.

Update | 8:19 a.m. There are rumors online that more protests may be planned for later today in Iran, although the bloggers we have found reliable in recent weeks have not indicated that they are expecting any more

activity.

While the opposition movement was apparently muted today, in the face of what seems to have been heavy security near Iran's Parliament, [the large protests last week](#), during a mourning ceremony at Behesht-e-Zahra cemetery in Tehran for protesters who have been killed since election day, showed that Mr. Ahmadinejad's opponents are still enraged over the election and the violent crackdown on dissent that followed it.

This morning we came across [this video](#), apparently shot and uploaded to YouTube on July 30, showing opposition supporters during that mourning ceremony in Behesht-e-Zahra cemetery last Thursday, which gives a better sense of the size of the crowd than any of the images we saw last week.

Update | 8:04 a.m. As [Matt Weaver of The Guardian points out, a statement](#) posted on Mr. Ahmadinejad's own Web site on Wednesday in English claims that the "ceremony was covered live by more than 320 domestic and foreign reporters, photographers and journalists." Given that Iran imposed and still maintains severe restrictions on the media, to prevent coverage of the ongoing protests against the official results of the June 12 presidential election, it seems an odd thing to boast about.

Then again, the main story on [the home page of Mr. Ahmadinejad's Web site](#) right now refers to "his stunning victory" in the election, which, [the site modestly claims](#), can be explained by "the four-year shining performance" of Mr. Ahmadinejad's government during his first term.

Update | 7:58 a.m. The BBC published [this video](#) of Mr. Ahmadinejad taking his oath of office. On The Guardian's Web site there is [a video with English subtitles](#) showing excerpts from both the oath and Mr. Ahmadinejad's speech to Parliament.

Update | 7:55 a.m. A [report](#) posted on Wednesday on the Iranian Parliament's Web site described Mr. Ahmadinejad's address to Parliament after taking the oath of office:

In his first address during his second term, the president struck a defiant tone at 'oppressive powers' who seek to deal with the Iranian nation through 'interference and foul language.' "We will resist oppressors and try to correct the global discriminatory mechanisms in order to benefit all the nations of the world," he said.

Ahmadinejad also took a swipe at Western powers, including the United States, France and Germany, for their refusal to congratulate him on his reelection. "We heard that some of the Western leaders had decided to recognize but not congratulate the new government ... Well, no one in Iran is waiting for your messages," he said. "Iranians will neither value your scowling and bullying nor will they pay attention to your smiles and greetings."

The ceremony was attended by 244 of Iran's 290 lawmakers, as the Reformist faction of the Iranian Parliament had boycotted the ceremony, news reports said. The official website of the faction added that from its 70 members only 13 had taken their seats at the Majlis, while a number also walked out as the president began his address to the parliament.

Other notable figures not present at the ceremony were former president Mohammad Khatami, the head of the Expediency Council Ayatollah Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani and Ayatollah Mohammad-Reza Mahdavi Kani, a member of the powerful Assembly of Experts. Defeated presidential candidates, Mohsen Rezai, Mehdi Karroubi and Mir Hossein Mousavi were also absent.

Update | 7:46 a.m. An English-language [report](#) on the Web site of Iran's Parliament has this translation of the oath of office Mr. Ahmadinejad took earlier today:

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful; I, as President, swear, in the presence of the

Holy Quran and the people of Iran, by God, the Exalted and Almighty, that I will guard the official religion of the country, the order of the Islamic Republic and the Constitution of the country; that I will devote all my capacities and abilities to the fulfillment of the responsibilities that I have assumed; that I will dedicate myself to the service of the people, the honor of the country, the propagation of religion and morality, and the support of truth and justice, refraining from every kind of arbitrary behavior; that I will protect the freedom and dignity of all citizens and the rights that the Constitution has accorded the people; that in guarding the frontiers and the political, economic, and cultural independence of the country I will not shirk any necessary measure; that, seeking help from God and following the Prophet of Islam and the infallible Imams (peace be upon them), I will guard, as a pious and selfless trustee, the authority vested in me by the people as a sacred trust, and transfer it to whomever the people may elect after me.

Update | 7:33 a.m. The Iranian blogger Omid Habibinia, now working from Switzerland, [wrote on Twitter](#) earlier today that more than 20 protesters were arrested in one location in Tehran, and that security forces were “attacking [people] brutally.”

Mr. Habibinia also posted [a video](#) on the Web site of the French broadcaster France 24, which he said shows a bare-chested and handcuffed protester who was freed by other demonstrators after he had been arrested during a protest on Monday*. The description of the video on the France 24 site says that it shows other protesters attempting to unlock handcuffs that were placed on the man before he was pulled away from the security forces, when he also lost his shirt. Near the end of the video a woman arrives with a shirt for the man to wear.

Later: A reader points out that this version of the same clip was uploaded to YouTube on Tuesday:

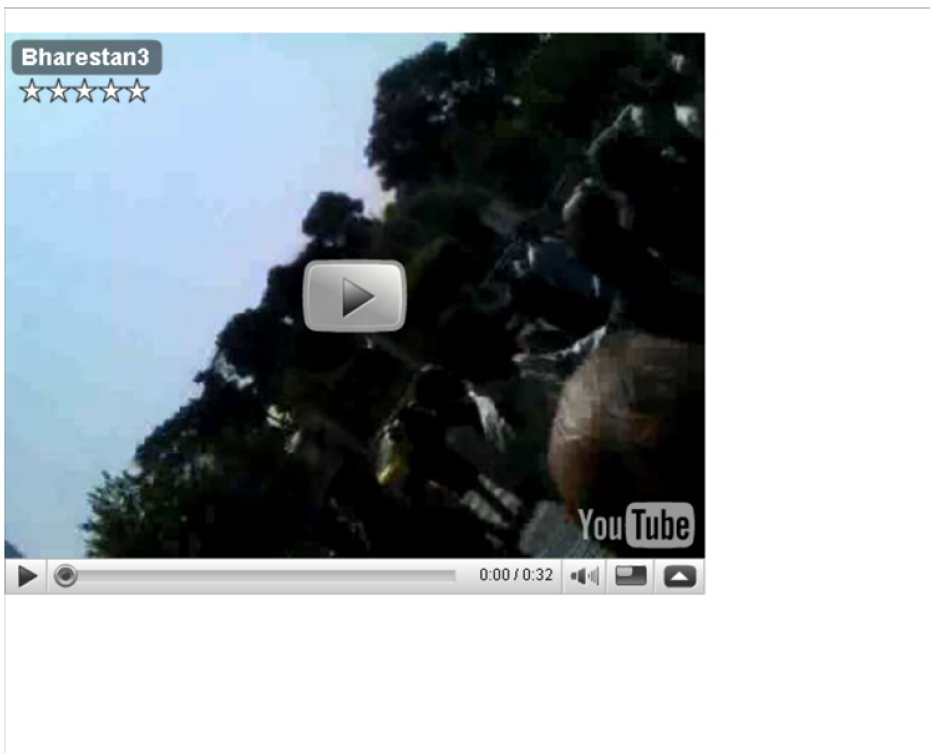


Update | 7:21 a.m. Several Iranian bloggers have pointed to these short mobile phone video clips, uploaded to YouTube today, which are said to show the scene near Iran's Parliament building on Wednesday, where a heavy security presence made it difficult for protesters to gather without getting arrested. This clip appears to show that a large number of the motorcycles used by the security forces to disperse protesters were assembled on the streets:



These three videos, apparently made by someone not wanting the mobile phone camera he was carrying to be obvious, are said to show opposition supporters attempting to assemble in Baharestan Square, outside Parliament, for a protest:





Update | 6:40 a.m. My colleagues Robert Worth and Alan Cowell report that Mahmoud Ahmadinejad took the oath of office earlier today in Tehran. They add: "Protests erupted outside the parliament building as he was inaugurated, with several people arrested and police using pepper spray to disperse demonstrators, according to news reports."

According [a report from to Iran's Press TV](#), a state-supported, English-language satellite channel, security was tight during the ceremony:

More than 5,000 security and police forces gathered around the building of Majlis in central Tehran. Sniffer dogs were securing the area.

This heavy security presence, and a reported block on mobile phone service near the Parliament in Tehran, seems to have made it difficult for opposition supporter to gather in large numbers to protest the ceremony.



A photograph an Iranian blogger says shows protesters in Tehran on Wednesday.

The Iranian blogger Mehdi Saharkhiz, who is now working from outside the country, [posted](#) what he said was a photograph of opposition supporters demonstrating today in Tehran. But Mr. Saharkhiz noted on [his Twitter feed](#) a few hours ago that he had heard little from his contacts in Iran: "I usually have over 75 emails till this hour. Today I have 0."

The Iranian blogger Mojtaba Samienejad, still working from inside Iran, [reported on Twitter](#) that opposition supporters who attempted to gather on the streets outside Iran's Parliament were being dispersed by the security forces.

**An earlier version of this post mistakenly said that the Iranian blogger Omid Habibinia said that the video he posted on France 24's Web site of a man in handcuffs, apparently freed from custody by opposition supporters, had been shot on Wednesday. In fact, Mr. Habibinia said that it was shot two days earlier, during Monday's protests in Tehran.*

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1. August 5, 2009 8:33 am [Link](#)

<http://iran.whyweprotest.net/news-current-events/26333-inaguration-protests-day-2-news-4.html#post59266>

some new videos out apparently from the bazar

— *Chris*

2. August 5, 2009 9:02 am [Link](#)

just saw this

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bi_RSnuqoj8

— *Chris*

3. August 5, 2009 9:25 am [Link](#)

Has there been any news about the fate of Jafar Pahani, the filmmaker who was arrested in Iran last week? I think the film community should have organized some kind of protest to express outrage about the treatment of this very important film director. I'm sure he was very high on the government's list of enemies of the state having made some films critical of the status of women in Iranian society.

LEDE BLOG REPLY: Iran's state-supported satellite channel, Press TV, reported last Friday that he had been released.

— *Phyllis Levy*

4. August 5, 2009 10:25 am [Link](#)

I'm glad the Iranian people are fighting on. The election was probably a fraud and so many people want him out of office.

— *Alex Elliott*

5. August 5, 2009 11:01 am [Link](#)

Please help us fight for democracy in Iran. Read our manifesto and constitution and make your comments and changes.

Democratic nation of Iran

<http://iran115.org>

— *Jamshid Azadinejad*

6. August 5, 2009 11:22 am [Link](#)

Another four years of tyranny in Iran. Actually the west pinned its hope on Moussavi who himself was a modern face of revolution, not a visionary. Iran needs a secular revolution fueled by the young generation.

<http://proamericanmuslims.wordpress.com/>

— *Saad Khan*

7. August 5, 2009 11:42 am [Link](#)

Tehran Metro, "Down With Dictator.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u8bQQdub28k>

— *massood*

8. August 5, 2009 12:54 pm [Link](#)

Now that the new despot Shah of Iran has been sworn in (backed by his secret police, Revolutionary Guards and the Mullahs); it is only a matter of time that this despot goes like his predecessor did in 1979. Along with him the Mullahs will also be swept away; and with it the Islamic Republic which was no more a republic than when Iran was ruled by the despot Shah.

The protests seen up to now were only the beginning. I find it quite doubtful that Mr. Ahmadinejad will be able to squelch the erupting volcano he, and the Mullahs, unleashed. There are too many people to contain and when the real protests truly erupts; Iran may resemble the waning days when Romania fell; complete with their leaders suffering a cruel fate.

— *Nick*

9. August 5, 2009 1:21 pm [Link](#)

It's as simple as this: the Iranian government, and Ahmadinejad in particular, desperately want to be respected in the world, and yet do not even have the respect of their own people. Until they earn that respect by holding a credible election, they deserve none from any other source.

— *Steve Johnson*

10. August 5, 2009 1:26 pm [Link](#)

two new YouTube protest videos from today posted on Mousavi's facebook page. One date-verified by a shot of a newspaper.

— *jimmy*

11. August 5, 2009 3:06 pm [Link](#)

Some links from the last 2 days that might have not been seen yet:

Green protest against Nokia yesterday in Shiraz (photo and video):

<http://peykeiran.com/Content.aspx?ID=4851>

From 2 days ago in Park Sai protest in Tehran; attempts to get the handcuffs off a protester who was

apparently freed from basiji/police. the lady is calling for them to get him a shirt, the man for pliers, at the end the cameraman gives the date of Monday 12 mordad, park sai:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aj-OOVs1faw>

LEDE BLOG REPLY: Thanks.

— *Iranian*

12. August 5, 2009 3:13 pm [Link](#)

From today in Tehran's Metro: "Death to the dictator."

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eF7AQAO-6w>

LEDE BLOG REPLY: Thanks, I saw that, but you cannot actually see anyone's face, so it is impossible to tell if the video is real or invented. I see that it is attributed to a Web site, mahastim.info, that I am not familiar with but appears to be associated with opponents of the Islamic Republic, so it is not clear if it documents something that happened today or not.

— *Iranian*

13. August 5, 2009 3:49 pm [Link](#)

Will the Iranian regime allow dissent to exist like when Gorbachev allowed Yeltsin to exist? For several days now, Kayhan newspaper in Iran is running articles about arresting Moussavi and Khatami and even Rafsanjani.

Moussavi and Khatami will go under house arrest and Rafsanjani will slowly join them. The Montazeri club is becoming popular.

— *Daniel*

14. August 5, 2009 4:34 pm [Link](#)

Demonstrations at the Tehran Bazaar are important since the bazaar has been one of the principal supporters of the Islamic Republic and has traditionally played an important role in politics. There was a strike there last year when Ahmadi... tried to impose a value added tax. During the recent event, the days during which there was supposed to be a general strike, the government declared a holiday. It is reported that bazaars in Iranian Kurdistan and Azarbaijan provinces did go on strike during recent events. However, as long as the security forces support the hardliners, protesters will have a hard time getting what they want.

The economy may eventually do Ahmadi... in with oil prices half of what they were last year, the stock market plummeting, business being affected by recent events, and technocrats refusing to work with him.

— *han*

15. August 5, 2009 5:32 pm [Link](#)

About #12 and metro clip. I thank Lede for his objectiveness. If it is from Mahastim People, it is highly unreliable. In the past they have released many fake pictures and news. I believe this kind of action would hurt rather than help people's cause. There are enough protest and resentment against this "anti-human" regime that there is no need for lie or even exaggeration.

LEDE BLOG REPLY: Thanks Masood. We are always glad to have as much information as possible about who has posted each of these videos.

— *massood*

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August 05
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[Al Gore Welcomes Freed Journalists Home](#)

Video shows that Al Gore was present this morning at the airport in Burbank, California when Laura Ling and Euna Lee, who work as journalists for his company, Current TV, returned home to the United States after four months in North Korean custody.

August 05

[\(15\)](#)

[Latest Updates on Iran's Post-Election Crisis](#)

As Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was sworn in today for a second term as Iran's president, reports of protests outside Iran's Parliament building have appeared online. The Lede is tracking news of the protests on the Web.

August 05

[\(16\)](#)

[Clinton \(Hillary, That Is\) Reacts to Journalists' Release](#)

Hillary Clinton reacts to the release of two journalists from North Korea.

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[Despite Protests, Ahmadinejad Consolidates Grip on Power](#)

Last week, even before he was officially endorsed as the winner of Iran's disputed June 12 presidential election, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad quietly tightened his grip on power by taking direct control of the country's intelligence ministry.

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[Bill Clinton Leaves North Korea With Two Freed American Journalists](#)

Former U.S. President Bill Clinton met with two detained American journalists on Tuesday in North Korea, during a visit to try to win their release.

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The Lede is a news blog that remixes the day's top stories, adding information gleaned from Web sites around the world or gathered through original reporting by writers, editors and readers of The New York Times, to

provide fresh perspectives on events and to draw readers in to the world-wide conversation about the news taking place online.

Readers are encouraged to take part in the blogging by using the comments threads to suggest links to relevant material elsewhere on the Web or by submitting eyewitness accounts, photographs or video of news events.

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About The Lede Blogger

Robert Mackey writes and edits The Lede, the news blog of The New York Times, which also features posts written by members of The Times' staff in New York and around the world. [Read more.](#)

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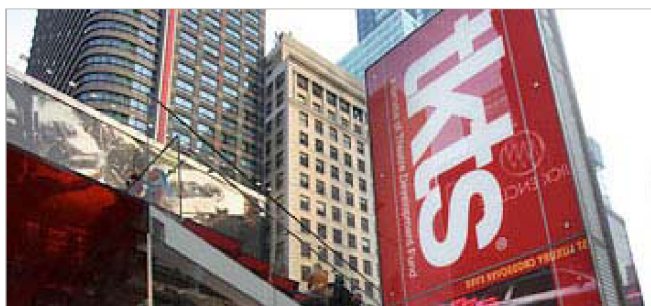
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