

Reporters Without Borders

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Middle East & North Africa - Iran

Harassment

More arrests, threats and sentences for Iran's journalists

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Reporters Without Borders firmly condemns a new wave of arrests of Iranian journalists in recent weeks. The following journalists were arrested between 1 August and 27 September without any official reason being given:

- **Hamid Moazeni**, a blogger and journalist who works for several local newspapers in the south-coast city of Bushehr;
- **Ali Dini Torkamani**, a writer and economist who contributes to the online magazine Alborznet;
- **Hadi Ahmadi**, a journalist who works for the news agency ISNA in Karaj, a city 20 km northwest of Tehran;
- **Mehrdad Sarjoui**, a Tehran-based journalist who writes for several English-language newspapers;
- **Amir Ali Alamehzadeh**, a journalist who works for the news agency ILNA in Tehran;
- **Ebrahim Rashidi**, a journalist with the weekly **Bayram** in the northwestern city of Ardabil;
- **Faranak Farid**, a writer and translator who contributes to the Feminist School website. She was arrested on 3 September in the northwestern city of Tabriz.

As already reported, members of the staff of Majzooban Nor, a website that supports Iran's Sufis, were arrested during raids by intelligence ministry officials on 7 and 8 September, again without any official reason being given.

The following are still held: **Alireza Roshan**, a book reviewer for the newspaper Shargh, **Ali Akrami**, editor of the Sheydaqooyi blog (<http://sheydaqooyi.blogfa.com/>), **Ali Straki**, **Mehdi Hossini**, **Mehdi Osanlo**, **Hamid Moradi**, **Mehran Rahbari**, **Mostafa Abdi**, **Nosrat Tabassi**, **Ali Moazemi** and **Reza Entesari**.

These detained journalists are being denied their rights. They do not have access to their own lawyer. Some of them, such as Mehrdad Sarjoui, have been in solitary confinement for weeks. Others, such as Faranak Farid, have been mistreated. Their families are threatened with reprisals if they talk to the media.

Reporters Without Borders is also outraged by the way the various intelligence services are harassing journalists and intellectuals in an attempt to force them to collaborate with the regime and betray colleagues. Several detained journalists are suffering from depression after being pressured in this way. Others who are not in prison have fled the country to escape this form of harassment.

The journalist **Narges Mohammadi** has meanwhile just been sentenced to 11 years in prison on charges of collaborating with the Human Rights Defenders Centre, "meeting and conspiring against the Islamic Republic" and anti-government propaganda. Until her arrest, she was the centre's a spokesperson and a close colleague of Nobel peace laureate Shirin Ebadi.

Ahmad Reza Ahmadpour, a theologian and editor of the "Silent Echo" website (<http://www.pejvak-kh.com>) who has been held since 18 July, was sentenced on 26 September to three years in prison and 10 years of internal exile on a charge of disseminating false information attacking the government.

A cleric and blogger based in the religious city of Qom, Ahmadpour was previously arrested in December 2009 and was given a one-year sentence on a similar charge. While held, he sent an open letter to UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon to draw attention to his arrest.

According to the pro-reformist website Kalameh, **Chari Mohammad Moradof**, a citizen of Turkmenistan held for the past 26 months in Tehran's Evin prison, has been sentenced to 21 years in prison on charges of spying and anti-government propaganda. A student and translator, he was arrested while filming a street protest shortly after President Mahmoud Ahmadinedjad's disputed reelection in June 2009.
