

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/iran-concern-about-treatment-of-21-02-2012,41912.html>

Middle East/North Africa - Iran

intolerable

Concern about treatment of detained journalists and netizens des journalistes et net-citoyens

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Reporters Without Borders is extremely concerned about the way that six journalists and netizens who were arrested in January – **Said Madani, Ehssan Hoshmand, Mohammad Solimaninya, Parastoo Dokoochaki, Marzieh Rasouli** and **Sahamoldin Borghani** – are being treated in detention.

According to the information obtained by Reporters Without Borders, they have been denied their most basic rights and have been placed in solitary confinement in Section 209 or Section 2A of Tehran's Evin prison to get them to make televised confessions implicating foreign-based media and opposition groups. The intelligence ministry runs Section 209, while the Revolutionary Guards run Section 2A.

The family of **Saeed Malekpour**, a netizen who has been sentenced to death, has meanwhile reported that his sentence order has been sent to the office responsible for carrying out sentences, which means that he could be executed at any time during the coming hours or days. Two other netizens, **Vahid Asghari** and **Ahmadreza Hashempour**, recently had their death sentences confirmed by the supreme court.

"As tension between Iran and the international community mounts, the regime is increasingly targeting independent journalists," Reporters Without Borders said. "The level of violence towards imprisoned journalists has become intolerable. United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay and the special rapporteur on the human rights situation in Iran, Ahmed Shaheed, must intervene as quickly as possible to protect endangered journalists and netizens."

The journalist **Mahssa Amrabadi** has just been sentenced by a Tehran revolutionary court to five years in prison (one definite and four conditional) for giving interviews and writing articles in support of her imprisoned husband, fellow journalist **Masoud Bastani**. She was previously sentenced by another Tehran revolutionary court on 14 October 2010 to a year in prison for various activities including "being in contact with the families of other prisoners."

Her husband, who used to work for the daily Farhikhteghan, is in Rajaishahr prison. Arrested on 4 July 2009, he was tried along with many other journalists in the Stalinist-style mass trials that the government began organizing in Tehran in August 2009. A revolutionary court sentenced him to six years in prison on 1 November 2009.

Background on six arrested in January

Said Madani and Ehssan Hoshmand are both journalists. They were arrested by plainclothes men at their Tehran homes on 7 January. Confirming their arrest the next day, intelligence minister Heydar Moslehi said they had "envisaged carrying out American plans to disrupt the parliamentary

elections by using cyber-space and social networks.” This was a clearly trumped-up charge by a regime which, without any evidence, systematically accuses dissidents of being spies working for the United States or Israel.

Mohammad Solimaninya is the head of u24, a social networking website for Iranian professionals that has been rendered inaccessible. He has also created and hosts the websites of many civil society organizations, NGOs and Iranian intellectuals. He was arrested on 10 January after being summoned before a revolutionary tribunal in Karaj, a town 20 km north of Tehran. Plainclothes intelligence ministry officials searched his home the same day, confiscating his computer, hard disks and CDs. His family still does not know why he was arrested.

Parastoo Dokoohaki is a blogger and women’s rights activist. Marzieh Rasouli is a journalist who writes for the arts and culture sections of several newspapers. The two women were arrested separately by intelligence ministry officials at their Tehran homes on 15 January on charges of anti-government propaganda.

Sahamoldin Borghani is a journalist who writes for the news website Irdiplomacy. He was arrested at his Tehran home on 18 January. Members of his family, who were absent at the time of his arrest, found a note attached to the door saying: “We have taken Shama and his equipment.” They do not know why he was arrested. Irdiplomacy is headed by Mohammad Sadegh Kharazi, a former Iranian ambassador in France who is close to reformist former president Mohammad Khatami.
