

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/iran-press-freedom-violations-recounted-16-04-2012,41718.html>

Middle East/North Africa - Iran

Press freedom violations recounted in real time (from 1st January 2012)

21 November 2012

19.11.2012 Two arrests and one release

Reporters Without Borders has learned that **Alireza Roshan**, a journalist who wrote book reviews for the newspaper *Shargh*, was arrested on 17 November after being summoned to the prosecutor's office that is attached to Tehran's Evin prison.

He is to serve the one-year sentence he received from a Tehran revolutionary court following his arrest with other members of the [Majzooban Nor](#) website during a police raid on 8 September 2011.

After being convicted on a charge of activities against state security, he was released provisionally on 3 October 2011 pending the outcome of an appeal. His sentence was eventually confirmed by a Tehran appeal court.

Reza Entesari, another [Majzooban Nor](#) contributor who was arrested during the September 2011 raid, has been held ever since in Evin prison. He has several ailments and has been hospitalized in Tehran twice since his arrest.

Reporters Without Borders has also learned **Yashar Darolshafa**, a netizen and contributor to several news media, has been arrested in order to serve the five-year jail sentence he received from a Tehran revolutionary court in March 2010.

The sentenced was finally confirmed by an appeal court on 7 November. Darolshafa had originally been arrested on 2 November 2009 and 4 February 2010, when he was held for a month both times.

Finally, Reporters Without Borders has also learned that *Kashan news* website editor **Ali Moslehi** was released on bail of 300 million toman (300,000 euros) on 10 September pending trial. He was arrested on 4 July.

18.10.2012- Fears for life of jailed Iranian netizen taken ill in prison

Reporters Without Borders is concerned about the health of **Mohammad Reza Pourshajari**, the jailed author of the blog [Iran Land's Report](#), who was taken ill on 3 October in his cell at Rajaishahr prison. His family says he is still in a critical condition. He is suffering from kidney failure, aggravated by a lack of medical treatment.

Pourshajari, detained since September 2010, was sentenced to three years' imprisonment in April 2011 by a revolutionary court in the city of Karaj, north of Tehran, for insulting the leadership of the Islamic Republic and anti-government propaganda. In December last year, he received a one-year sentence from the same court for insulting the holy scriptures of Islam. Both trials took place without the presence of his lawyer.

In September last year, he was moved into a cellblock for common criminals. Common law prisoners are frequently used to harass political detainees in Iranian jails. Reporters Without Borders fears for the lives of a number of jailed journalists and netizens who are in poor physical and mental condition.

11.10.2012-Authorities arrest last free member of Centre for Human Rights Defenders

Reporters Without Borders condemns the detention of **Mohamed Ali Dadkhah**, a lawyer who has defended many journalists and cyber-dissidents. Arrested on 30 September to begin serving a nine-year jail sentence, he was one of the founding members of the Centre for Human Rights Defenders, along with Nobel peace laureate **Shirin Ebadi**.

At the time of his arrest, Dadkhah was the only remaining member of the centre in Iran not already in prison. It was his membership of the centre that led a Tehran revolutionary court to sentence him in July 2011 to nine years in prison and an additional ten-year ban on working as a lawyer.

Dadkhah had been harassed constantly and arrested several times in the past. After his arrest at his Tehran law office on 8 July 2009, he was held for two months until released on a bond of 500 million toman (450,000 euros) pending trial.

The centre's other detained members are **Mohammad Seifzadeh**, held since April 2011 and sentenced to nine years in prison, **Abdolfattah Soltani**, held since September 2011 and sentenced to 13 years in prison and a 20-year ban on practising law, and **Nasrin Soutodeh**, arrested in September 2010 and sentenced to six years in prison.

The Centre for Human Rights Defenders had lawyers and human rights activists who defended political prisoners, including journalists, free of charge. The government declared its activities to be illegal in 2006 – a decision that Reporters Without Borders has always condemned.

03.10.2012 - Another journalist arrested

Reporters Without Borders has learned that **Mohammad Mehdi Emami Naseri**, the editor of the daily *Maghreb*, was arrested at his office on 1 October by officials from the Tehran prosecutor's office, who confiscated his computer and questioned all of his colleagues.

In a news conference later the same day, prosecutor-general Gholam Hossein Ejechi said Naseri's arrest was not linked to his work as a journalist. [The newspaper](#), which was launched at the beginning of September, may be the latest victim of the infighting between rival government factions.

11.09.2012 - Two bloggers freed

Mohammad Reza Ali Pyam, a blogger and satirical poet openly critical of the government, was released on bail of 100 million toman (100,000 euros) on 9 September pending trial. The editor of the blog [Halloo](#), Pyam was arrested at his home by men in plain-clothes on 14 August.

Reporters Without Borders has also received confirmation that **Esmail Jafari**, the editor of the blog [Rah Mardom](#) (People's Way), was released on 28 July on completing a seven-month jail sentence on a charge of endangering national security that an appeal court confirmed on 14 November 2011. He was arrested on 28 December 2011 to begin serving the sentence in Bushehr prison.

13.08.2012 - Three netizens freed from prison

Reporters Without Borders learned today of the release of three imprisoned netizens.

Ahmad Shariat, the supervisor of a blog called [Nedai az Daron](#) (*Internal Way*), was released on bail on 7 August after 18 days in detention, after paying a bond of 100 million tomans (approx. 80,000 euros). He is still awaiting trial.

The organization also learned of the release on bail of **Mohammad Solimaninya**, head of the social networking site *u24*, after he paid a bond of 500 million tomans (approx. 400,000 euros). He was arrested on 28 May for a second time after he was summoned to Tehran's Evin prison.

[Iman Masjedi](#), released on 17 March after his sentence was reduced by a year and four months, was arrested in July 2010 with six other students, **Amir Latifi**, **Mohammad Reza**

Gholizadeh, Ladan Mostoufi Ma'ab, Hanieh Sate Farshi, Hojat Nikoui and Sepehr Ebrahimi. In April last year a Tehran revolutionary court sentenced them to heavy prison terms – eight years in the case of Masjedi and Ebrahimi, seven years for Gholizadeh and Farshi, five years for Nikoui and Ma'ab, and seven years and 74 lashes for Latifi.

Their convictions were upheld on appeal and they are still in prison. Several are ill or are suffering serious physical and psychological effects of their treatment.

Narges Mohammadi, a journalist and spokeswoman for the Centre for Human Rights Defenders, was granted permission to leave prison for medical treatment on 31 July after paying a bond of 600 million tomans (approx. 480,000 euros). She was detained in the northern city of Zanzan on 21 April and taken to Tehran's Evin prison. Her health is a cause for concern and she was admitted to the Vali Asar hospital in Zanzan on 9 July.

24.07.2012 - Conservative blogger released, another arrested

Reporters Without Borders condemns conservative blogger **Mohammad Hassan Nobakhti's** recent detention for a total of 99 days. The editor of the news website *Nosazi*, he was finally released on 22 July. [He was previously arrested in February 2008](#) after posting an article about Mullah Hassan Khomeiny, grandson of the late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeiny.

Ahmad Shariat, the supervisor of a blog called [Nedai az Daron](#) (Internal Way), was meanwhile arrested on 22 July after responding to a summons to report to the Tehran prosecutor's office. He was detained because he was unable to arrange a bond of 100 million tomans (75,000 euros).

Since the start of the Iranian year (on 21 March), a number bloggers who support President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad have been hounded by the Tehran prosecutor's office for criticizing associates of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the current supreme leader. Rivalry between the Khamenei and Ahmadinejad factions is taking a growing toll within conservative media circles.

12.07. 2012- Online journalist and rights activist arrested, netizen sentenced

Reporters Without Borders has learned of the arrest on 4 July of **Ali Moslehi**, who runs the website Kashan News and also contributes to the [Jaras](#) site, which is close to Iran's reformists. He was arrested in the street and his family were informed by local shopkeepers. The reason for his detention and his whereabouts are not known.

The blogger and human rights campaigner **Nasour Naghipour** has been re-arrested and sent back to prison to serve a seven-year sentence handed down on 8 July. Naghipour, who runs the site <http://www.nasour.net/>, was initially arrested at his home in the city of Qazvin on 2 March. He was released on bail of 100 million tomans (75,000 euros) on 20 June.

On 8 July, the lawyer of netizen **Mansoureh Behkish** was informed that her client had been given a six-month prison sentence by the 54th chamber of the appeal court for anti-government propaganda, and a suspended sentence of three-and-half years for conspiring against national security.

Last December, Behkish was sentenced to four-and-a-half years' imprisonment by the 15th chamber of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran. She has been imprisoned several times and subjected to constant harassment.

She and 33 other members of the "Mothers in Mourning" movement were arrested while demonstrating in Tehran's Laleh Park in January 2010. Banned from leaving the country when she was freed on 17 March 2011, she was arrested again in Tehran on 12 June 2011 and spent a month in Section 209 of Evin prison.

Behkish also belongs to the "Mothers of Khavaran," a movement named after the south Tehran cemetery used as mass grave for political prisoners who were executed en masse in 1988.

She has written several articles for various websites about the group, the ceremonies they organize commemorating the deaths of their loved ones, as well as the repression they have suffered.

Six of Behkish's close relatives (four brothers, a sister and a brother-in-law) were executed during the 1980s.

03.06.2012- Wave of arrests and convictions of journalists undiminished in Iran

Reporters Without Borders learned on 30 June of the arrest on of **Mohammad Solimaninya**, head of the social networking site *u24*, after he was summoned to Tehran's Evin prison.

[The netizen had been previously arrested on 10 January](#) this year then released on bail on 22 May on payment of a bond of 40 million tomans (about 4,500 euros).

On 22 June, we received word of the arrest of the journalist Poya Dabiri Mehr who runs the blog [Andishe Poys](#). The reasons for his arrest and where he was being held were not known. The journalist, who is close to the government of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, may have been the victim of high-level rivalry between supporters of the president and those of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

On 9 June, lawyer Farideh Gheirat was informed that his client, the feminist journalist **Noushin Ahmadi Khorasani**, had been handed a one-year suspended prison sentence by the 26th chamber of the Tehran revolutionary court. She is the founder of [the Feminist School](#) website and co-organizer of the "One Million Signatures for Equality" campaign calling for the reform of laws that discriminate against women.

Since early March, just before International Women's Day, the government has stepped up pressure on [online feminists such](#) as Khorasani, who are regularly the target of threats and arrests.

The journalist **Bahman Ahamadi Amoe**, who had been held in Evin prison since 20 June 2009, was transferred on 12 June to Rajai Shahr jail in the northern town of Karaj after he took part in a ceremony organized by prisoners in an Evin prison dormitory in memory of the journalist and writer Hoda Saber, who died on 12 June after a hunger strike.

Rajai Shahr is regarded as one of Iran's harshest prisons because of its high number of cases of torture, rape and murder. Since his arrest, the journalist has been subjected to constant harassment by the judicial authorities. He appeared before the Tehran revolutionary court on 25 June and was placed in solitary confinement.

31.05.2012-Shargh journalist re-arrested over bail problem

Reporters Without Borders has learned that **Sam Mahmoudi Sarabi**, a journalist with the newspaper *Shargh*, was re-arrested on 28 May because the person guaranteeing his bail of 150 million tomans (120,000 euros) refused to continue acting as guarantor.

Arrested on 9 January 2011 for the second time in less than two years, Sarabi spend five months in prison before being released on bail on 9 May 2011, pending trial.

23.05.2012- Two online journalists convicted and another released on bail

Two journalists from the website of the *Beheshti* foundation (<http://www.beheshti.org/>), **Meisam Mohammadi** and **Omid Mohadess**, were each sentenced to four years' imprisonment on 6 May, and banned from working in journalism and engaging in political activity for five years. They were arrested at their homes by plainclothes police in February 2010 and released on bail after two months, pending trial.

Reporters Without Borders also learned yesterday of the release of **Mohammad Solimaninya**, director of the website *u24*, on bail of 40 millions tomans (about 4,500 euros). He was arrested on 10 January after being summoned before a revolutionary tribunal in Karaj, a town 20 km north of Tehran.

26.04.2012 Two journalists freed

Reporters Without Borders has learned that **Ehssan Hoshmand**, a journalist and sociologist who has specialized in the history of the Kurdish people, was released on bail of 150 million

toman (140,000 euros) on 23 April. He was arrested at home on 7 January.

The organization has also learned that **Reza Taleshaian Jolodarzadeh**, the editor of the weekly *Sobeh Azadi*, was freed on 17 April after being held for two and a half months. He suffers from a chronic illness resulting from an injury sustained during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war. The Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance suspended his newspaper on 19 October 2011 after it ran a photo of former President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.

16.04.2012 - Netizen freed on bail

The blogger and human rights activist **Kouhyar Goudarzi**, who kept a blog called [Kouhyar](#), was finally released on bail of 100 million tomans (90,000 euros) on 12 April. Following his arrest on 1 August 2011 in Tehran, he spent several months in Evin prison without the authorities saying where he was being held.

Last month, a Tehran revolutionary court sentenced Goudarzi to five years in jail and internal exile: he is supposed to serve his time in prison in the northeastern city of Zahedan.

On 2 August 2011, his mother, Parvin Mokhtare, was arrested at her home in the eastern city of Kerman and was sentenced by a Kerman revolutionary court to 23 months in prison. She freed on 19 March.

05.04.2012- More journalists and netizens arrested, sentenced to jail terms

Reporters Without Borders is appalled to learn that more journalists and netizens have been arrested or have been given long jail sentences in the past few days.

Mehran Faraji, a journalist with the newspaper *Shargh* and the now-closed newspaper *Etemad Melli*, was arrested on 3 April in order to serve a six-month jail sentence on a charge of anti-government propaganda.

Arrested on 12 December 2010 and then freed on bail on 4 February 2011, Faraji was originally sentenced by a Tehran revolutionary court in October 2011 to a year in prison, but an appeal court later reduced it to six months in prison plus six months suspended. He suffers from severe osteoarthritis and a long spell in jail is likely to exacerbate his condition.

Rihaneh Tabatabai, another *Shargh* journalist, was notified on 2 April that a Tehran revolutionary court has sentenced her to a year in prison. Arrested at her home by intelligence ministry officials on 12 December 2010, she was freed on 16 January 2011 on bail of 10 million tomans (7,500 euros).

The netizen **Mansoureh Behkish** has also just learned that a Tehran revolutionary court has sentenced her to four and half years in prison on charges of anti-government propaganda and creating the "Mothers in Mourning" movement in order to "meet and conspire against national security."

Aged 54, Behkish, has been campaigning for years about the arbitrary execution of political prisoners during the 1980s and has repeatedly been harassed and jailed. She and 33 other members of "Mothers in Mourning" were arrested while demonstrating in Tehran's Laleh Park on 9 January 2010. Banned from leaving the country when freed on 17 March 2011, she was arrested again in Tehran on 12 June 2011 and spent a month in Section 209 of Evin prison.

Bekish also belongs to the "Mothers of Khavaran," a movement named after the south Tehran cemetery used as mass grave for political prisoners who were executed en masse in 1988. Its members are harassed by the authorities for demanding justice and for holding ceremonies commemorating the deaths of their loved-ones.

Six of Bekish's close relatives (four brothers, a sister and a brother-in-law) were executed during the 1980s. She posts articles on various websites about these groups, their ceremonies and the harassment to which they are subjected.

Under Iran's Islamic criminal code, Tabatabai and Behkish have 21 days to appeal against their sentences.

Reporters Without Borders has learned that two journalists, **Ali Mousavi Khalkhali** and **Mehdi Khazali**, and a jailed blogger's mother, Parvin Mokhtare, were released on 19 March.

Khalkhali, who worked for the [Irdiplomacy](#) news website, was held in Tehran's Evin prison after being arrested by intelligence ministry officials at his home on 24 February. He is a nephew of Ayatollah Hakim, a senior Shiite cleric of Iranian origin in Iraq.

The editor of the blog Baran, Khazali was arrested for the third time in less than two years on 9 January and was sentenced on 5 February to four years in jail followed by 10 years of internal exile in the southern city of Borazjan on a charge of insulting government officials. His family said his health deteriorated while detained.

Mokhtare, the mother of the jailed blogger **Kouhyar Goudarzi**, was herself sentenced to 23 months in prison by a revolutionary court in the southeastern city of Kerman.

23.03.2012 -Two freed on bail

Reporters Without Borders has learned of the release on bail on 10 March of **Rahim Sarkar**, editor of the weekly *Hadiss Qazvin*, after payment of a bond of 50 million tomans (about 45,000 euros).

He was arrested on 8 March after being summoned to the revolutionary court in the city of Qazvin. He had been charged on 27 February with "publishing false information with the aim of disturbing public opinion".

According to the prosecution, "The newspaper published in its latest edition, images of prisons, poverty, executions, etc. in order to paint a bleak picture of the country. The accompanying article forecast a poor turnout at the parliamentary election on 12 March."

The press freedom organization has also been informed of the release on bail on 26 December last year of **Ali Dini Torkamani**, a writer and economist who contributes to the Tehran-based online magazine *Alborznet*. He was arrested on 2 August at his home in the capital.

28 February 2012 - Journalists arrested in January round-up released, photographer detained

Reporters Without Borders has learned of the release on bail two days ago of **Parastoo Dokoohaki**, a blogger and women's rights activist, and yesterday of **Sahamoldin Borghani**, a journalist who writes for the news website [Irdiplomacy](#) and **Marzieh Rasouli**, who contributes to the arts and culture sections of several newspapers.

They were arrested on 15 and 18 January and held in solitary confinement in Sections 209 and 2A of Tehran's Evin prison which are run by the intelligence ministry and the Revolutionary Guards.

The journalists were freed after the payment of a bond of 300 million tomans each by Dokoohaki and Rasouli, and of 200 million tomans by Borghani.

The day before their release, the organized crime unit of the Revolutionary Guards in a statement on the website [Gerdab.ir](#), accused them of collaborating with the *BBC*, British intelligence and the foreign-based opposition.

The Revolutionary Guards announced that an opération code-named "eye of the fox" had led to the break-up of a network that gathered information and produced content for the *BBC* in Iran. The British broadcaster denied it employed staff in Iran. In the past, satellite stations such as the *BBC* and *Voice of America*, have been jammed at regular intervals.

The press freedom organization has also been informed of the arrest of photographer **Tahmineh Monzavi** by officials of the intelligence ministry at her workplace on 19 February. Her family does not know the reasons for her arrest or where she is being held.

6 February 2012 - Blogger sentenced to jail, newspaper suspended

The Tehran revolutionary court yesterday sentenced **Mehdi Khazali**, editor of the *Baran* blog,

to 14 years' imprisonment, 10 years' internal exile in the south-western city of Borazjan and 70 lashes. He was arrested on 9 January for the third time in less than two years.

Khazali is the son of Ayatollah Abolghasem Khazali, an influential member of the Council of Guardians of the Iranian Constitution for the past three decades. Despite his frequent run-ins with the authorities, Khazali is very scathing about the government's policies and human rights violations in his blog, which has been hacked and is no longer accessible.

According to the [Mashregh](#) website, which is close to the intelligence services, **Sharam Golshani**, head of the currency conversion site [Mesghal](#) is reported to have been arrested two days ago, at the height of a currency crisis in Iran. The site, which gives exchange rates for the Iranian rial and foreign currencies, was accused of contributing to the fall of the rial against the U.S. dollar.

On 1 January, U.S. President Barack Obama signed into law Washington's toughest sanctions yet against Tehran. Subsequently the value of the rial fell by more than 20 percent, despite the intervention of the Iranian central bank.

The website was unavailable for several days in early January. Golshani was accused of being a member of the Baha'i faith, which is not recognized as a religion by Iran, and of being and of working on behalf of Iran's enemies.

Reporters Without Borders has learned of the release on bail two days ago of **Simien Nematollahi**, a contributor to the website [Majzooban](#), after the payment of a surety of 100 million tomans (about 90,000 euros). She was arrested on 7 January at her Tehran home by officials of the intelligence ministry on a charge of anti-government propaganda.

The newspaper *Roozegar* was closed down two days ago on the orders of the Tehran prosecutor responsible for the print media after it published a front-page interview and photo of the reformist leader, Mohammad Reza Khatami. It was the third time the daily had been banned. It was suspended for two months on 4 September 2011 and had earlier been closed down between 2007 and February 2010.

Reporters Without Borders is seeking the release of **Said Razavi Faghih**, a journalist and former student leader who has worked for several reformist newspapers. He was detained at Tehran airport on 22 January after arriving in the country from France where he had lived since 2004. He was studying philosophy in Paris.

The publications for which he has worked include the reformist newspaper *Yase No*, which was closed down in 2009.

On 30 January 2009, officials of the intelligence ministry confiscated his passport and banned him from leaving the country. He was ordered to attend the revolutionary court the next day. He was released a month later, but the ban on leaving Iran remained in force.

Faghih was detained for several months in 2003 with three other journalists from *Yase No* and spent more than 78 days in solitary confinement.

1st February 2012 - Two journalists freed on bail

Reporters Without Borders had learned of the release on bail on 3 January of the documentary film-maker **Hassan Fathi**, arrested on 12 November, and today of **Fatemeh Khardmand**, a journalist for the monthly *Gozareh Sanat Chap*, who was detained on 7 January.

They were released after paying a surety of 50 million tomans (about 45,000 euros) each.

30 January 2012- Four held over Facebook page

Iran's police responsible for Internet security have [announced](#) the arrest of two men and two women accused of creating a network aimed at corrupting Iranian youth by "promoting prostitution and immorality".

The cyber police have taken control of the [Facebook page "Daf & Paf"](#) which the group is alleged to have set up.

The page, which has nearly 27,000 members, encouraged male and female participants to take part in an online beauty contest by submitting photographs of themselves.

19 January 2012 - Journalist arrested in late December in Bushehr

Reporters Without Borders has learned of the arrests of two journalists late last month in the southwestern city of Bushehr. One was **Esmail Jafari**, a journalist, human rights activist and editor of the blog [Rah Mardom](#) (Voice of the People), who was arrested on 28 December to serve an eight-month jail sentence in Bushehr prison on a charge of endangering national security.

Originally detained in April 2008 for covering a demonstration outside the Bushehr prefecture by about 20 workers protesting against their dismissal, Jafari was formally arrested on 16 December 2008 and was released on bail on 18 March 2009 after being sentenced. He was arrested yet again on 7 April 2009 and was freed 17 days later on bail of 50 million tomans (45,000 euros). He was finally told on 14 November 2011 that his sentence had been confirmed and that he would have to begin serving it.

18 January 2012 - New wave of arrests in Tehran and provinces

A renewed crackdown on journalists and bloggers is continuing in Iran, with two journalists and a blogger arrested in Tehran and another journalist arrested in the northwestern city of Tabriz in the past five days alone.

Sahamoldin Borghani, a journalist who writes for the news website [Irdiplomacy](#), 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 or where he is being held.

Irdiplomacy is headed by Mohammad Sadegh Kharazi, a former Iranian ambassador in France who is close to reformist former president Mohammad Khatami.

Peyman Pakmehr, the editor of the [Tabriz News](#) website, was meanwhile arrested by local intelligence ministry officials in the northwestern city of Tabriz on 17 January on the orders of prosecutors in Tehran and was transferred to Tehran's Evin prison. The reason for his arrest is still not known.

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

11 January 2012 - New wave of arrests

Arrests of netizens are meanwhile continuing. **Simien Nematollahi**, a contributor to the pro-Sufi website Majzooban (www.majzooban.org), was arrested at her Tehran home by intelligence ministry officials on 11 January on a charge of anti-government propaganda. Several members of the website's staff were arrested on 7 and 8 September and were freed on bail on 4 October pending trial.

Mohammad Solimaninya, the head of [u24](#), a social networking website for Iranian professionals, was arrested on 20 January after being summoned before a revolutionary tribunal in Karaj, a town 20 km north of Tehran, on 10 January. 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 or where he is being held. As well as running u24, Solimaninya has created and hosts the websites of many civil society organizations, NGOs and Iranian intellectuals.

Journalists **Fatemeh Khardmand**, **Ehssan Hoshmand** and **Saeed Madani**, 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 is 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.

Madani, a sociologist as well as a journalist who has written dozens of articles in the independent media, was previously arrested and sentenced to six years in prison. Hoshmand, who is also a sociologist, has specialized in the history of the Kurdish people.

Khardmand is a journalist with the monthly Gozaresh Sanat Chap. According to her husband, Masoud Lavassani, a journalist and blogger who was released in July after two years in detention, her arrest was carried out by four intelligence ministry officials with a warrant who said she was accused of "being in contact with the families of political prisoners." Her state of health is a source of concern and their four-year-old son, who was already disturbed by his father's long imprisonment, is in state of shock.

Mehdi Khazali, who edits the *Baran* blog and has been arrested several times in the past, was arrested again on 9 January. According to his wife, he was injured in the course of his arrest, which was carried out in a very violent manner. Khazali is the son of Ayatollah Abolghasem Khazali, an influential member of the Council of Guardians of the Iranian Constitution for the past three decades. Despite his frequent run-ins with the authorities, Mehdi Khazali is very scathing about the government's policies and human rights violations in his blog, which has been the victim of a cyber-attack and is no longer accessible.

[Press freedom violations recounted in real time \(January-December 2011\)](#)

[Press freedom violations recounted in real time \(July-December 2010\)](#)

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[Press freedom violations recounted in real time \(June-December 2009\)](#)
