

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/press-freedom-violations-recounted-23-01-2014,45705.html>

---

Middle East/North Africa - Iran

Continuing crackdown

## Press freedom violations recounted in real time January 2014

3 November 2014

---

### 03.11.2014 - *ISNA* photographer released on bail

Reporters Without Borders has learned that **Arya Jafari**, a photographer with the *ISNA* news agency, was released on bail on 1 November. Plainclothesmen arrested him after searching his home in Isfahan on 23 October because he covered a demonstration by about 100 people outside the lawcourts [in Isfahan in protest against a spate of acid attacks on women](#).

---

### 21.10.2014 - Woman journalist freed on completing sentence

Reporters Without Borders has learned that **Marzieh Rasouli**, a journalist who worked for the arts and culture pages of several newspapers, was released on 19 October after it was determined that she had completed her sentence.

She was originally sentenced to a total of two years in prison and 50 lashes on two charges – “meeting and conspiring against the Islamic Republic” and “anti-government publicity – but the sentence was reduced on appeal to a year in prison.

First [arrested](#) on 18 January 2012, she was freed on bail of 300 million toman (350,000 euros) two months later and was returned to prison on 8 July 2014 to serve her sentence.

She was deemed to have served her time under article 135 of the new Islamic penal code (amended in 2013), which says that “a defendant sentenced for several offences or crimes serves only the main sentence.”

Application of this law could lead to the release of thousands of detainees including many journalists and netizens.

---

### IRAN 7.10.2014 - Journalist freed on completing sentence, another bailed

Reporters Without Borders has learned that the journalist **Bahaman Ahamadi Amoe** was released on 4 October on completing a five-year jail sentence for criticising former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s government.

He was arrested in June 2009 at the same time as his wife, fellow [journalist Jila Bani Yaghoob](#), who was freed on bail in August 2009 and was sentenced by a Tehran court the following October to a year prison and a 30-year ban on working as a journalist. Yaghoob was re-arrested in September 2012 to serve the jail term and served it in full.

Reporters Without Borders is meanwhile relieved by the announcement that **Yeganeh Salehi**, a journalist who works for *The National*, a newspaper based in the United Arab Emirates, was released provisionally on 4 October in return for a large sum in bail.

Salehi was arrested in Tehran on 22 July together with [her husband, Jason Rezaian](#), a reporter with dual US and Iranian nationality who works for the *Washington Post*, and a freelance photographer with dual US and Iranian nationality whose family does not want her name revealed.

The photographer and her husband were released provisionally a month later but Rezaian is still detained in a completely illegal manner.

According to an *Agence France-Presse* report out of Tehran, Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance foreign media department chief Mohammad Koushesh said, when confirming Salehi’s release, that her press card was still valid and she could continue working in Iran.

He was responding to her brother-in-law, who told the *Washington Post* the previous day that she

had been stripped of her press accreditation.

---

### **16.09.2014 - Writer jailed, two netizens freed**

Reporters Without Borders condemns 73-year-old ailing writer **Ali Asghar Gharavi**'s return to Tehran's Evin prison on 14 September to serve the rest of a six-month sentence at the behest of the prison office for sentence implementation.

Gharavi was arrested on 10 November 2013 over [an article for the 23 October issue of the reformist daily Bahar](#) that had led to the newspaper's suspension on 28 October by the Commission for Press Authorization and Surveillance. He was freed on bail on 7 January pending trial.

A Tehran court imposed the six-month prison sentence on Gharavi on 11 May and the supreme court confirmed it on 20 August. At the same time, the court sentenced Bahar editor [Saied Pour Aziz](#) to 91 days in prison and gave him an additional suspended two-year jail term, while Bahar was closed for good.

Reporters Without Borders has meanwhile learned that netizen Saeed Haeri was freed on 8 September on completing a two-year jail term and netizen Mohamed Davari was freed on 12 September on completing a five-year jail term.

The editor of the *Etemad-e Melli* news website (<http://sahamnews.org/>), Davari was arrested during a police raid on the newspaper on 8 September 2009. A Tehran court gave him the five-year sentence the following November on charges of "meeting and conspiring against the Islamic Republic" and anti-government publicity for publishing reports about torture and rape in Iran's prisons.

A member of the "[Committee of Human Rights Reporters](#)," Haeri was arrested on 12 December 2012 to serve the rest of a two-year jail sentence. He was originally arrested on 20 December 2009 and then released provisionally on 11 March 2010. A Tehran court originally sentenced him to 30 months in prison and 74 lashes on an anti-government propaganda charge. An appeal court reduced it to two years in prison six months later.

Two other members of the "Committee of Human Rights Reporters" were previously freed. They were [Shiva Nazar Ahari](#), released conditionally on medical grounds in September 2013 before completing her four-year sentence, and [Said Jalali Far](#), released on 8 February 2014 after his three-year sentence was reduced.

---

### **04.09.2014-Reformist journalist freed on completing five-year sentence**

Reporters Without Borders has learned that **Mehdi Mahmoudian**, a journalist linked to pro-reform media, was released yesterday on completing a five-year jail sentence on charges of anti-government propaganda and spreading false news.

Arrested on 16 September 2009 and convicted a month later, Mahmoudian was the journalist responsible for revealing that detained demonstrators had been tortured and killed in Kahrizak prison after the disputed presidential election of June 2009.

---

### **03.09.2014- Another journalist arrested in Tehran**

Reporters Without Borders condemns the arrest of **Amar Kalantari**, the editor of the *Free University News Agency (ANA)*. Plainclothes men arrested him at the ANA office in Tehran on 1 September and took him to Evin prison.

No reason was given for his arrest but former colleague Foad Sadeghi said on his Facebook page that Kalantari was detained to begin serving a four-year jail sentence.

He was tried on a charge of "insult" in December 2009 as a result of a complaint by Mohammad Ali Ramin, the deputy minister of culture and Islamic guidance and a loyal adviser to then President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

---

### **25.08.2014 - Blogger freed on completing four-year jail sentence**

**Mohammad Reza Pourshajari**, the editor of a blog called "Relation to the Land of Iran," was released on 23 August on completing a four-year jail sentence. Held since 12 September 2010, he was sentenced by a court in Karaj (20 km north of Tehran) in April 2011 to three years in prison on charges of anti-government propaganda and "insulting the Islamic Republic's leaders."

The same court sentenced him in December 2011 to an additional year in prison on a charge of

"insulting Islam's holy texts." Both trials went ahead without his lawyer being present. He served the last three years of his sentence in the wing of Karaj prison where non-political prisoners, including convicted criminals, are detained.

---

### **21.08.2014 - Two women journalists released provisionally**

Two women journalists were released provisionally yesterday. One is a freelance photographer with US and Iranian dual nationality who works for several media including the *Washington Post*, which has confirmed her release. Her family does not want her named.

She was arrested on 22 July at the same time as two other journalists – **Jason Rezaian**, the *Washington Post*'s Tehran correspondent, who also has US and Iranian dual nationality, and Rezaian's Iranian wife **Yeganeh Salehi**, who works for The National, a newspaper based in the United Arab Emirates.

The other journalist released yesterday was **Saba Azarpeyk**, who worked for the monthly *Tejarat-e-Farda* and the daily *Etemad*. Her mother said she was released yesterday evening on bail of 200 million toman (190,000 euros) pending trial. [Arrested on 28 May](#), she spent more than 80 days in isolation. It is still not known where or why she was held or who had her arrested.

Despite these two releases, [Iran continues to be the world's biggest prison for women journalists and bloggers, with a total of eight still detained](#).

Reporters Without Borders has meanwhile learned that six netizens – **Zahra Ka'abi**, **Hamid Hekmati**, **Ismael Izadi**, **Farid Saremi**, **Farjad Salehi** and **Ali Chinisaz** – were arrested at the Kahh (Earth) cultural centre in the northeastern city of Mashhad on 27 July were taken to an unknown place of detention.

Plainclothes intelligence ministry officials searched several of their homes, confiscating computers, hard disks and CD-ROMs. More than three weeks have gone by since their arrest but their families and lawyers have still not been told where or why they are being held.

---

### **12.08.2014 - Authorities close several privately-owned religious TV stations**

Reporters Without Borders has learned that the offices of privately-owned religious TV stations that support Ayatollah Sadegh Shirazi – a dissident cleric who has criticized the regime ever since the 1979 revolution – have been closed in several provincial cities.

[In a communiqué on 3 August](#), the intelligence ministry accused these TV stations of "working illegally for satellite TV stations based in the United States and Great Britain," "provoking sectarian tension within Islam," "showing a degrading image of Shi'ism" and "insulting the holy figures of Islam."

Plainclothes intelligence officials raided the premises of five TV stations – *Imam Hossein*, *Abolfazal Abass*, *Alghaem*, *Alzahra* and *Almehdi* – confiscating all of their communication and computer equipment and then closing them.

Several of the directors and employees of these TV stations were arbitrarily arrested during the raids. **Hamed Taghipour**, a religious programme producer in the city of Mashad, is still being held. So too is **Masoud Behnam**, one of *Imam Hossein*'s directors, who was taken from a hospital in Isfahan to an unknown location.

Despite censoring these TV stations, the government is allowing other privately-owned stations to continue broadcasting messages of hate against Sunni Moslems.

---

### **11.08.2014 - Journalist gets six-year jail term**

Reporters Without Borders condemns the six-year jail sentence that journalist **Saraj Mirdamadi** received on 26 July on charges of "meeting and plotting against the Islamic Republic" and "anti-government publicity." Saraj has worked for several media including *Hayat-é-No*, a daily closed by the authorities in January 2003, and Radio *Zamaneh*, a station based in the Netherlands. A Tehran revolutionary court heard his case on 21 July.

---

### **16.07.2014- journalist freed on completing four-year jail term**

Reporters Without Borders has learned that **Siamak Qaderi**, a journalist who used to work for the government news agency *IRNA*, was released on 13 July on completing a four-year jail sentence.

Arrested on 5 August 2010, Qaderi was convicted on 21 January 2011 of using his blog to

disseminate anti-government propaganda and false information "liable to disrupt public order." As well as four years in prison, he was sentenced to 60 lashes and was fired from IRNA.

His arrest was prompted by his blog posts about government repression and, in particular, his interview with gays, which were all the more sensitive since President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's claim during a visit to the United States in September 2007 that "there are no homosexuals in Iran."

Qaderi was one of the 100 "[information heroes](#)" that Reporters Without Borders profiled for this year's World Press Freedom Day (on 3 May).

---

### **08.07.2014-Another woman journalist imprisoned, third in past month**

Reporters Without Borders condemns journalist **Marzieh Rasouli's** reimprisonment today after being summoned by the sentence application court in Tehran's Evin prison and told to begin serving a two-year jail term on charges of "meeting and conspiring against the Islamic Republic" and anti-government propaganda.

The court also ordered implementation of the other part of Rasouli's sentence – 50 lashes.

Rasouli, who writes for the arts and culture sections of several newspapers, said the sentence application court ignored the fact that her appeal against the sentence has yet to be heard.

[Originally detained on 18 January 2012](#) and placed in solitary confinement in Section 2A of Evin prison, a wing managed by the Revolutionary Guards, she had been freed on bail of 300 million toman (350,000 euros).

She is the third woman journalist to be imprisoned in the past month. The first was Mahnaz Mohammadi, a documentary filmmaker who began serving a five-year jail term on 7 June. The second was **Rihaneh Tabatabai**, who used to work for the daily Shargh and who began serving a one-year sentence on 21 June.

**With a total of 64 journalists and netizens detained, Iran continues to be one of the world's five biggest prisons for media personnel.**

---

### **10.06.2014-Woman filmmaker begins serving five-year sentence**

Reporters Without Borders condemns a court decision ordering documentary filmmaker and women's rights activist **Mahnaz Mohammadi** to return to prison to serve the five-year sentence she received last year on charges of "meeting and conspiring against the Islamic Republic" and "anti-government propaganda."

Mohammadi was summoned to the sentencing court in Tehran's Evin prison on 7 June to begin serving the sentence.

She was previously arrested on 29 July 2009 and 26 June 2011, each time spending a month in Evin prison before being released in return for an exorbitant amount in bail. She was notified of her five-year sentence on 23 October.

Mohammadi is best known for her 2003 film "Women Without Shadows." In a letter read by filmmaker **Costa-Gavras** at the 2011 Cannes film festival, she wrote: "I am a woman and a filmmaker, two reasons sufficient to be treated like a criminal in this country."

---

### **12.05.2014 - Arrest of journalist who used to live in France**

Reporters Without Borders condemns journalist **Saraj Mirdamadi's** arrest on 10 May. A resident in France since 2001, Mirdamadi had returned to Iran in August 2013, in the wake of the moderate conservative Hassan Rouhani's election as president.

Mirdamadi has worked for various media including *Hayat-é-No*, a daily suspended in January 2003, and Radio *Zamaneh*, which is based in the Netherlands. He is sympathetic to Iran's reformists and actively supported the protests that followed Mahmoud Ahmadinejad reelection in 2009.

His passport was confiscated at Tehran airport on his return and, a few days later, the prosecutor's office located at Tehran's Evin prison placed him under investigation on suspicion of "activities against national security." A Tehran court sent the case file back to the prosecutor's office on 8 January on the grounds that it was "incomplete."

His arrest on 10 May followed a summons to report to the prosecutor's office in Evin prison. His brother, Sadra Mirdamadi, told [Radio Farda \(Radio Free Europe\)](#) that he is accused of "anti-regime propaganda" in connection with his journalistic activities and the interviews he has given to news

media, and "conspiring during meetings against national security" in connection with this political activities.

According to the information obtained by Reporters Without Borders, the Revolutionary Guards were responsible for his arrest.

---

### **07.05.2014- Another reformist daily suspended**

Reporters Without Borders condemns today's suspension of the reformist daily *Ghanon* (Law) by the Tehran media court in response to a complaint presented by the Tehran state prosecutor.

**Alireza Nikoui**, a member of the newspaper's staff, said the court found *Ghanon* guilty of "publishing false information contrary to Islamic values and likely to disturb public opinion." *Ghanon* editor **Masoud Kazemi** said "the prosecutor's office told us by phone this morning that the complaint refers to a report in yesterday's issue about Mohamed Royanian's release."

Royanian is a former Revolutionary Guard commander and former head of a Tehran soccer club who was arrested on 5 May in connection with several corruption allegations. Reports of his release on bail of 1 billion toman were also posted on several news websites.

Pro-reform media and journalists count among the leading victims of the judicial system established by conservatives allied with the Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei.

Reporters Without Borders has meanwhile learned that the suspension imposed on the reformist daily *Ebtekar* on 26 April was rescinded later the same day. The suspension of the conservative daily *9 day*, imposed on 17 March, was also lifted on 26 April.

---

### **28.04.2014 - Newspaper suspended, threats against families of prisoners**

Reporters Without Borders condemns the pro-reform newspaper *Ebtekar*'s suspension by the Tehran prosecutor's office for media and culture on 26 April, two days after it reported that the head of the Iranian prison system, Golamhossien Esmaili, had been fired.

*Ebtekar* editor Mohamad Ali Vakili said that "according to the letter from the prosecutor's office, the newspaper has been suspended under article 6 of the press law for publishing false information."

Judicial authority chief Sadegh Amoli Larijani relieved Esmaili of his position and appointed him head of the Tehran provincial department of justice on 23 April, a week after at least 50 detainees, including prisoners of conscience, were injured during a violent operation by security forces in Tehran's Evin prison.

Reporters Without Borders has meanwhile learned that the families of some prisoners have been threatened. Families received a text message on 24 April warning that they could be arrested "in the event of any illegal demonstration." A demonstration had been planned for 26 April.

**Kaveh Darolshafa**, the brother of jailed netizen **Yashar Darolshafa**, was arrested at his Tehran home following a search by plainclothes intelligence ministry officers on 25 April. His family still does not know why he was arrested or where he is being held.

More information about the 17 April raid by security forces on Section 350 of Evin prison:

- [Many detainees beaten during police search of Evin prison](#) (posted on 18 April)
  - [RWB calls for independent inquiry into police search of Evin prison](#) (posted on 24 April)
- 

### **19.03.2014-Censors close hardline conservative weekly**

Reporters Without Borders condemns the hardline conservative weekly **9-Day** closure by the Commission for Press Licensing and Surveillance, the censorship arm of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance. *9-Day* is the mouthpiece of a radical faction that supports Supreme Guide Ali Khamenei. The commission closed the weekly on 17 March under articles 6 and 12 of the press code for alleged "insults and defamation" and "publication of false information."

Ever since moderate conservative President Hassan Rouhani's administration began negotiating with western countries about Iran's nuclear programme, it has been the target of fierce criticism from regime hardliners.

The media and journalists are among the leading victims of the in-fighting between the rival factions within the Iranian ruling elite. Independent media have been particularly affected.

---



## 18.02.2014-Website blocked, netizen gets eight years for Facebook content

Reporters Without Borders condemns the government's crackdown on netizens and independent news websites. Another site has been rendered inaccessible in the past few days, while a netizen has been sentenced to eight years in prison for what he posted on Facebook.

At the behest of the Working Group for Identifying Criminal Content, the [IbnaNews](#) site was blocked on 9 February for posting reports about protests in three western and southwestern provinces (Lorestan, Khuzestan and Bakhtiari). The site's director, **Mohessin Heidari** also received a court summons.

The demonstrations were staged by members of the Bakhtiari and Lur peoples in protest against a state TV series with comments that were seen as having insulted Sardar Assad Bakhtiari, one of the leaders and national heroes of the Constitutional Revolution of the 1906-1909.

Reporters Without Borders learned on 16 February that a Tehran revolutionary court sentenced **Arash Moghadam Aslani** to eight years in prison on charges of anti-government propaganda and "insulting Islam's sacred values" in connection with the content he posted on Facebook.

Arrested at his Tehran home by plainclothesmen last August, Aslani has been detained ever since in Section 350 of Tehran's Evin prison.

**Said Jalali Far**, a netizen who had been serving a three-year jail sentence, was released on 8 February as a result of a pardon by the Supreme Leader for several dozen prisoners of conscience on the Islamic Revolution's 34th anniversary.

Like some of the other beneficiaries, Jalali Far had only a few more months of his sentence left to serve. Convicted on 30 July 2011, he had been back in prison since 8 September 2012.

---

## 06.02.2014- Website blocked for publishing letter criticizing nuclear policy

The website [Entekhab](#) (The Choice) has been inaccessible since 1 February as a result of a complaint by the Tehran public prosecutor and a closure order issued by the Tehran media court.

Entekhab editor Mstafa Faghihi told the government [news agency Irna](#) that the site was blocked for publishing a letter in which a university academic, Sadeq Zibakalam, criticized Iran's nuclear policy as well as other sensitive issues such as public health and education.

*Zibakalam* wrote: "Even if the United States and 199 other countries reach agreement on our nuclear policy (...) this policy is economically not beneficial for Iran. It is a complete mistake. We have lost millions of dollars for nothing."

During a court appearance yesterday, Zibakalam was charged with anti-government propaganda, circulating false information designed to disturb public opinion, insulting the justice system and defamation. He was released on bail of 50 million toman (about 50,000 euros) pending trial.

---

## 23.01.2014- Newspaper owners held arbitrarily since 2011

**Mehdi Karoubi**, a 77-year-old newspaper owner who has been under house arrest since February 2011, was taken to an unknown place of detention of 17 January after undergoing two back operations – a laminectomy and discectomy – at Tehran's Arad Hospital.

A dissident theologian, former parliamentary speaker and owner of the closed newspaper *Etemad Melli*, Karoubi has been hospitalized a total of five times since mid-2013 for various ailments including a heart condition, according to his wife, Fatemeh Karoubi. He underwent an angioplasty on 31 July.

**Mir Hossein Mousavi**, the owner of the closed newspaper *Kalameh Sabaz*, and Mousavi's wife, the writer **Zahra Rahnavard**, who were placed under house arrest at the same time as Karoubi, continue to be held at their home on the intelligence ministry's order.

Mousavi and Rahnavard have also been hospitalized several times in Tehran – in August 2012, September 2013 and most recently October 2013 – for heart problems. Karoubi, Mousavi and Rahnavard are being held arbitrarily. There is no legal basis for their detention under either Iranian or international law. Depriving them of their freedom and denying them the right to a fair trial is a flagrant violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

---

## 08.01.2014 -Government closes ultra-conservative weekly

Reporters Without Borders condemns the suspension of *Yalasarat Hossien*, a weekly published by the radical Islamist group Hezbollah in Iran, following articles in recent weeks that were very critical

of moderate conservative President Hassan Rouhani's government, especially its nuclear accords.

It was suspended on 6 January by the Press Licensing and Surveillance Commission – an offshoot of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance – under article 12 of the press code for “insults and defamation” and “publishing false information.”

Reporters Without Borders has meanwhile also learned that **Ali Asghar Gharavi**, a journalist arrested on 10 November in connection with an article in the 23 October issue of [the reformist daily Bahar](#), was released on bail yesterday pending trial.

The Press Licensing and Surveillance Commission suspended Bahar on 28 October for publishing the article .

---

[Press freedom violations recounted in real time \( January-December 2013\)](#)

---

[Press freedom violations recounted in real time \(January-December 2012\)](#)

---

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

---

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

---

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

---

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

---