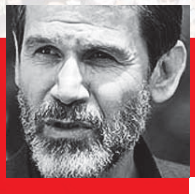
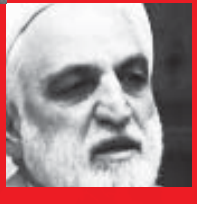
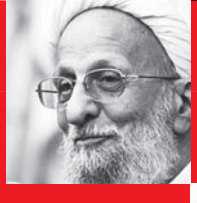
IRAN

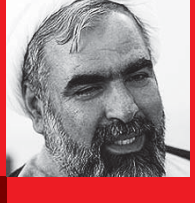
Men Of Violence

Perpetrators of the Post-Election Crackdown

June 2010





INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN IRAN

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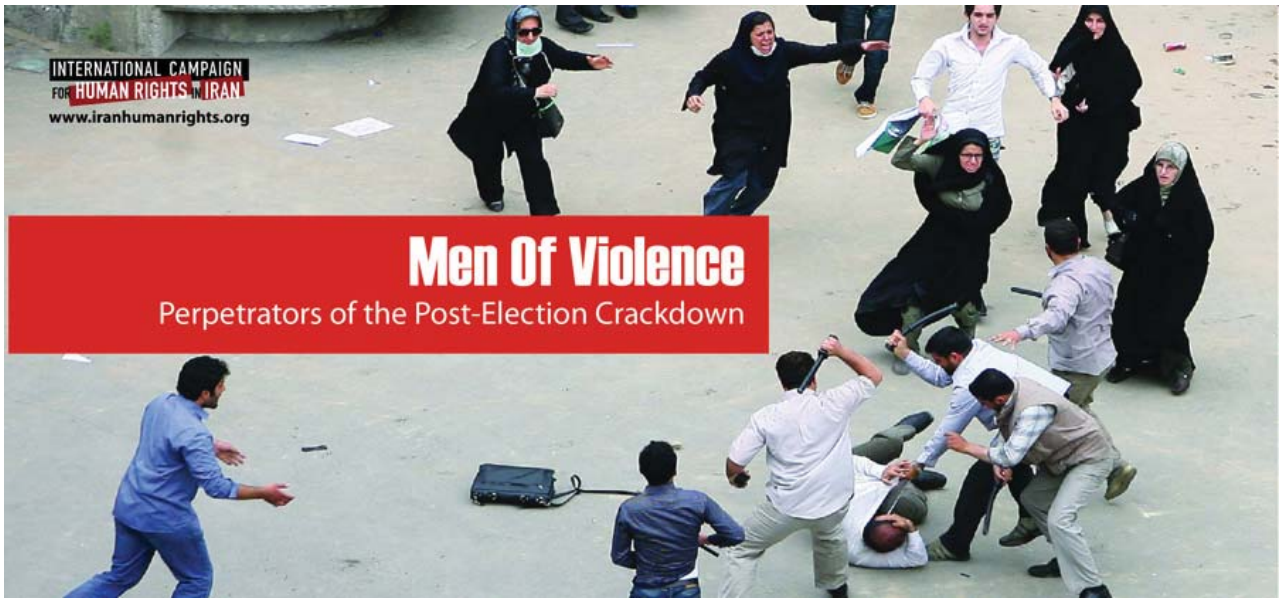
Introduction



On the anniversary of the disputed June 2009 election and one year of unprecedented violence and repression in Iran, the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran is releasing this report naming fifteen leading officials responsible for carrying out the brutal repression against peaceful protestors and civil society activists.

The 36-page report, Men of Violence: Perpetrators of the Post Election Crackdown, provides detailed profiles of fifteen officials who either implemented brutal policies of repression or instigated and promoted violence against protestors. The report is available in multimedia as well as print formats on the Campaign's website at: http://www.iranhumanrights.org/men-of-violence/

Although the Iranian Judiciary has moved swiftly in prosecuting dissidents and protestors in patently unfair trails, it has taken no steps to identify and hold responsible those committing widespread atrocities.

According to government's own accounts, at least 48 protestors died on the streets during the past year as well as four detainees who were murdered under torture at the Kahrizak Detention center. According to Iranian human rights defenders, the number of those killed is much higher, but the government has intimidated the families of the dead regarding publicizing their names.

The Campaign calls on the international community, particularly countries where the fifteen human rights violators named in this report may travel to or hold financial assets, to implement travel bans against them and freeze their assets. These countries could particularly include member states of the European Union, Canada, UAE, and Malaysia.

The International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran calls for a comprehensive investigation and prosecution of all the perpetrators of this violent crackdown, who either through their own direct actions or those of their subordinates are responsible for these atrocities. There are also numerous officials who have promoted, encouraged, and instigated violence. The Campaign is presenting some of the main perpetrators and promoters of violence here. Iran's leader, Ayatollah Sayed Ali Khamanei, as the commander in chief of the armed forces as well as the ultimate authority in charge of the security and intelligence apparatus as well as the judicial branch, is obligated to order the investigation and prosecution of those responsible.

The fifteen individuals named in this report include:

1)Hossein Taeb, Commander of the Basij Forces during the time of June elections. Forces under his command participated in mass beatings, murder, detention and torture of peaceful protestors.

2)Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejei, Minister of

Intelligence at the time of elections and the country's current General Prosecutor. Intelligence agents under his command were responsible of detention, torture, and extraction of false confessions under duress from hundreds of activists, journalists, dissidents, and reformist politicians.

3)Ismail Ahmadi Moghadam, Head of the Iranian Police. Forces under Moghadam's command led brutal attacks on peaceful protests, attacks on and destruction of private property, and a violent night time attack on the dormitories of Tehran University.

4)Saeed Mortazavi, Tehran's prosecutor General at the time of June elections. He issued a blanket order used for detention of hundreds of activists, journalists, and students. In some instances, the blanket arrest warrant bearing his signature was dated two days before the 12 June elections. He is also responsible for sending detained street protestors to the Kahrizak Detention Center where they were tortured and ill-treated, resulting in four deaths.

5)Sadeq Mahsouli, the Minister of the Interior of the Islamic Republic of Iran at the time elections. As Interior Minister, Mahsouli had authority over all police forces, interior ministry security agents, and its plainclothes agents. His forces were responsible for attacks on the dormitories of Tehran University on 15 June 2009.

6)Abolghassem Salavati, presiding judge of Branch 15 of the Islamic Revolutionary Courts. During the post election show trials, Salavati is one of the only three judges in charge of post-election cases. He has sentenced more than a hundred political prisoners, human rights activists, and peaceful demonstrators to lengthy prison sentences as well as at least nine execution sentences, earning the moniker, "The Judge of Death."

7)Seyed Hassan Firouzabadi, Chief of Staff of the Joint Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the highest military organization responsible for directing all military divisions and policies, including the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) and police. Forces under his command carried out brutal repression of peaceful protestors as well as mass detentions.

8)Mohammad Ali Jafari, Commander of IRGC. Forces under his command were directly responsible for a significant part of post-elections violence and arrests of reformist political figures, activists, and journalists.

9)Mohammad Moghisseh, Head of Branch 28 of the Islamic Revolutionary Courts. He has been in charge of the cases of many activists and protesters arrested after the June 2009 elections. He has not only issued long prison sentences based on unfounded charges, he has also issued at least three death sentences for the protesters.

10)Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati, Secretary General of the Guardian Council. Since the 12 June presidential election, Jannati has unabashedly incited violence, demanded death sentences for election protestors, and coordinated his rhetoric with the IRGC and security forces. He has repeatedly called protestors "corruptors on earth," a charge that carries the death penalty. Jannati has continuously demanded execution sentences from the Iranian Judiciary, and supported the implementation of such sentences.

11)Ayatollah Mohammad Taghi Mesbah Yazdi, is the head of the Khomeini Education and Research Institute in Qom and a member of the Assembly of Experts. Over the past decade, he has become known as "the theoretician of violence," for his unabashed promotion and defense of state-sponsored violence against dissidents. Through his inflammatory statements, he has been a leading figure in instigating violence against peaceful protestors objecting to election results and human rights violations.

12)Yadollah Javani, Head of the IRGC Political Office. He has repeatedly supported the use of violence and harsh interrogation tactics against post-election protesters. Javani's statements have become the basis for indictments against protestors and have resulted in the IRGC's takeover of interrogations.

13)Rouhollah Hosseinian, Member of Parliament. He has continuously incited violence and demanded death sentences against protestors. He led a group of 36 parliamentarians in introducing an urgent bill in Parliament that would reduce the appeals period for persons charged with moharebeh (enmity against God) and sentenced to execution to only five days. The bill was justified as a means to expedite the implementation of death sentences issued for post-election protestors.

14)Ali Saeedi, Representative of Supreme Leader in IRGC. Saeedi vehemently defended the role of IRGC forces in post-election crackdowns and their use of violence on citizens, becoming one of the highest ranking Islamic Republic authorities to sanction the actions of security apparatuses.

15)Hossein Shariatmadari, Editor-in-Chief of Kayhan Newspaper is one of the individuals who first accused reformist presidential candidates of a velvet revolution during the vote count after the June presidential elections and promoted violence against protestors. Shariatmadari's definition of a "velvet revolution" soon became the dominant literature used by the IRGC, Ministry of Intelligence, Basij, and police forces for cracking down on the post-elections protesters.

Hossein Taeb

Commander of the Basij Forces at the time of June election

Hossein Taeb was Commander of the paramilitary Basij Resistance Force during the June 2009 presidential elections. He was appointed to that position in July 2008 by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei. Forces under his command were instrumental in beating and killing demonstrators in post-election unrest.

Eyewitnesses interviewed by the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran confirm the brutal treatment doled out by Basij forces. (i) Some protestors were taken to Basij bases and illegal detention centers, such as Lolagar Mosque Basij Base and Basij Meghdad Base 177, prior to being transferred to police stations or Intelligence Offices. During such stays, Taeb's Basij forces beat, abused, psychologically or physically tortured, and threatened protestors with death. (ii)

The most extreme acts of abuse occurred soon after 12 June. In one street protest on 20 June, in which according to Tehran's mayor three million protestors participated, authorities claimed eleven people were killed, but the Campaign's research indicates that at least 34 people were murdered by Basij and plainclothes agents. (iii) According to documents, photographs, and eyewitness reports, Basij forces were widely responsible for shooting (iv) and killing demonstrators. (v)

During the night of 15 June 2009, in the dormitories of Tehran University, Basij forces, together with police agents, broke into university dormitories, violently forcing their way into student's rooms, destroying their property and injuring many. A video, leaked on the internet in February 2010, shows the attack by police and Basij forces on the university dormitories, leaving no doubt about the illegal forced entry and subsequent abuse. (vi) Taeb attributed the murder of 27-year old Neda Agha Soltan on 20 June as well as the deaths of numerous other protestors to "rioters." (vii)

Former government officials, who spoke with the Campaign on the condition of anonymity, describe Taeb as assuming responsibility for maintaining order after election protests began. These officials alleged that, due to Taeb's security background, he was one of the managers of the "prisoner confessions project" for arrested political prisoners at Evin prison after elections. Taeb also trained a division of his Basij forces for "street riots" shortly prior to the presidential election. Many of his forces used warm and cold weapons against the protestors during protests.

Following criticism of the violent actions of forces under his command, Taeb claimed a campaign was being waged to discredit the Basij, saying, "It is very easy to join the Basij. Anyone can join Basij very easily and sabotage its image by doing ugly and unwarranted actions in order to change people's views about their own children."

On 29 June 2009, Taeb claimed the unrest was caused by foreign states and groups opposed to the Islamic Republic when he said, "We heard on the news several times that different kinds of weapons and bullets were imported into the country by opposition groups and foreign states, but we never suspected that they planned to use these weapons in Iranian elections." Accusing the protesters of using firearms, he claimed that many Basijis were killed and several "sustained injuries through stones and sticks and knives of rioters and were transferred to hospitals." (viii)

A month later, during a speech at a Basij gathering in Mashad, he offered a contradictory explanation about the murders of several protesters, saying, "On June 15 this year, several people who were protesting the election results through creating riots in Tehran, intended to attack a Basij resistance base and disarm it. If this action had been allowed and the protesters were able to get arms, we could not have easily ended this debacle. During a confrontation with these attackers of Basij, some people were killed." (ix)

Following the news of the murder of a protestor named Taraneh Mousavi, presidential candidate Mehdi Karroubi accused Taeb of masterminding a television program to make the news appear to be a lie. (x) During the TV program, the family of a young woman by the same name were interviewed, and said that their daughter was alive. According to Karroubi, Taeb used one of his own relatives by the name of Taraneh Mousavi to deny the news of the murder. Details of the fate of Taraneh Mousavi remain ambiguous, but two medical sources who were present at Imam Khomeini Hospital have confirmed Mousavi's presence at that hospital in their statements to the Campaign.

A critical letter to the extremist newspaper Kayhan, written 10 August 2009, by conservative Iranian MP Ali Mottahari, explicitly mentions Hossein Taeb as responsible for the crackdown on protestors. Mottahari wrote, "We could have managed this crisis in such a way that many of these martyrdoms, murders and damages could have been avoided. We could have calmed down the huge excitement of the protesters which had reached its height following the election campaigns and inappropriate and often unfair debates, through issuing a few demonstration permits and continuing debates on IRIB [state TV and radio] about the election process, and we could have dealt respectfully with ordinary people who had become angered and disillusioned and really thought that there had been election fraud. We could have then observed that managing this crisis was not such a difficult task after all, considering the social development and high intelligence of our people."

Mottahari added, "But when we delegate crisis management to people like Taeb who are more familiar with the baton than with thought and wisdom and prudence, we must anticipate these results..." Taeb has never denied his involvement.

The International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran

The International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran demands a thorough and independent investigation into the role of Hossein Taeb in post-election events in Iran and urges that an independent committee be formed to look into widespread arrests, the presence and activities of plainclothes forces in the suppression of public gatherings, attacks on people's private homes and automobiles, abuse and mistreatment of prisoners, forced confessions, detention of prisoners in illegal detention centers, the shooting of civilians, and the deaths of tens of peaceful protesters.

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Background

Hossein Taeb was born in 1963 in Tehran. After Ali Khamenei was made Iran's Supreme Leader in 1989, Taeb was transferred to the Leader's headquarters as Deputy in charge of Coordination for several years. He was subsequently made Cultural Deputy of the Joint Command of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) for three years, as well as the head of Imam Hossein University, the IRGC's exclusive university. During the presidency of Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, Taeb worked at the Ministry of Intelligence under Minister Ali Fallahian as Commander of the IRGC Information Security Unit and Deputy Commander of Counter-Intelligence within the Ministry. After the chain murders were exposed in 1998, Taeb was dismissed from the Ministry of Intelligence. During his tenure there, Taeb developed a reputation as one of the most violent interrogators.

In the past two years, after a command change took place at the IRGC and the Basij and IRGC were integrated, Taeb was appointed as the IRGC's Deputy Commander of the Basij Organization (representing IRGC Commander Mohammad Ali Jafari). In 2008, Commander Mohammad Ali Jafari appointed Taeb as nationwide Commander of the Basij. He was removed from this post in October 2009 and appointed to the newly-established IRGC Intelligence Unit. The IRGC Intelligence Unit is directly responsible for the majority of the arrests and interrogations of political activists, journalists, and human rights activists imprisoned after the elections.

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v. The Death of Amir Toufanpour, International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran, 31 July 2009, http://www.iranhumanrights.org/2009/07/toufanpour

vi. Tehran University Attacks, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F52wtg1BROk

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viii. Taeb Accuses Foreign States of Intervening in Interview with Kayhan, 30 June 2009, http://www.kayhannews.ir/880409/14.HTM#other14031

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Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejei

Minister of Intelligence at the time of election

At the time of the 12 June 2009 presidential election, Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei was the Minister of Intelligence in Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's cabinet. He is currently the country's General Prosecutor. The Iranian Ministry of Intelligence was responsible for the arrest, investigation, interrogation, and torture of hundreds of prominent activists and journalists following the election. (i)

Immediately following the election, only 22 hours after polls had closed on the night of 13 June, Intelligence officers began arresting activists and opposition members starting with the leaders of the Islamic Participation Front, the Islamic Revolution Mojahedin Group, the Freedom Movement of Iran Party, several journalists, and senior managers of Mir Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karroubi's campaigns. (ii) Soon after the elections, Mohsen Ejei threatened protesters, saying, "I announce here that we are monitoring their activities, and if they keep coming to the streets again during the coming days and nights… they can rest assured that they will be arrested." (iii)

Lawyers of political prisoners arrested following the election told the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran that their clients were arrested based on a blank warrant without any charges or names written on it. In the case of Abdolfattah Soltani, a prominent human rights lawyer, the warrant was issued several days before the election. Mohseni Ejei has confirmed his role in acquiring blanket warrants and authorizing confrontations with protestors and arresting them. Mohsen Ejei said in an interview, "I have received authorization from judicial authorities. I said I would issue a warning, then I would issue a general warning, and if people didn't heed the warning, we would have no choice but to arrest them and to publicly introduce the main operatives and elements prior to their trial." (iv)

Post-election investigations by the Intelligence Ministry have been riddled with inconsistencies and unethical practices. Under Mohsen Ejei's direction, many of those arrested have been detained with no charges being brought against them while being denied legal counsel. Several distinguished political figures, arrested after the election and released from prison after several weeks or months, told the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran that they were coerced during interrogations to confess to trumped-up charges against them. In one case, a released journalist told the Campaign, "From the very beginning of my arrest I gathered that there were no legal charges against me. The intelligence officer told me, 'We are aware of your relationship with one of your colleagues.' He said, 'This can destroy your life. Therefore either you will confess to your involvement in the post-election unrest or we will tell your wife about this.'"

Another political figure arrested after the election told the Campaign, "During the first two weeks after my arrest the intelligence officers did not raise any political charges against me. All the interrogators' efforts were based on proving charges about my immoral conduct, so that afterward I would accept my political charges and confess on camera. For this reason I was beaten up many times. I was threatened that both myself and my wife would lose our jobs and that I would spend a long time in prison...When, under unbearable interrogations, which sometimes lasted ten hours per day, I didn't agree to confess to things I hadn't done, they stopped interrogating me for four whole weeks while I was kept in solitary confinement. After that they started asking me about political charges that were at least six or seven years old." He told the Campaign that his post-election arrest had nothing to do with the protests but was political retribution. "At my trial, I was sentenced to imprisonment, while my defense was ignored and no evidence was produced by officers involved in my case about the charges. The court's decision was pre-determined."

From the moment of arrest, political prisoners faced abuse and torture at the hands of intelligence officers. One of those arrested after the elections told the Campaign that during the first few days after their arrest, interrogators vigorously attempted to force them to confess to false charges. He said the interrogators relied on months of surveillance of telephone calls in order to hasten their confession to meet the Ministry of Intelligence's goals. According to this source, intelligence officers presented tapes of phone conversations and hidden camera footage of his apartment to put psychological pressure on him.

Mohseni Ejei also accused some international reporters, including Maziar Bahari, of collecting information for foreign states. (v) Despite Bahari's forced confessions, the information gathered during the interrogations was never proven.

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Physical torture carried about by intelligence officers was widespread and brutal. In August 2009, presidential candidate Mehdi Karroubi presented evidence of the rape and sexual abuse of detainees by intelligence officers to a three-member committee from the Judiciary. (vi) After his dismissal from the Ministry of Intelligence, as General Prosecutor, Mohseni Ejei was one of the three committee members. Regarding Karroubi's statements, Mohseni Ejei said "they are totally baseless." (vii) Investigations by the Campaign, however, show that in the case of at least one of the detainees -- Ebrahim Mehtari -- the Tehran Medical Examiner, under the auspices of the Iranian Judiciary, issued a certificate confirming injuries resulting from sexual abuse. (viii) None of the victims' statements regarding sexual abuse were acknowledged and instead, Ministry of Intelligence forces threatened rape victims that if statements were not retracted, they and members of their families would suffer the consequences. (ix)

On 16 June 2009, Mohseni Ejei justified arresting political activists, claiming that the reason for the arrests of prominent and well-known figures was the "penetration of anti-revolutionary groups in elections campaigns." He accepted responsibility for the arrests, saying, "Those elements have been identified and arrested, too, and they are in detention right now." (x)

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http://www.women.gov.ir/pages/?cid=6361.

x. Ibid.

Ismail Ahmadi Moghadam

Head of the Iranian Police

Ismail Ahmadi Moghadam is Head of the Iranian Police, a position he has held since 2005. During peaceful protests following the 12 June 2009 presidential election, police forces under Moghadam's command actively beat, injured, and arrested protesters. (i)

Prior to 12 June 2009, police forces closed down the campaign headquarters of candidates Mir Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karroubi in several cities, claiming they were over-crowded. (ii) Starting at 5 pm on Friday, 12 June 2009, while polls were still open, police forces began a "Maneuver of Strength" in Tehran, whose stated aim was "to instate order and higher security" in the squares and thoroughfares of Greater Tehran. (iii) On the eve of election day, Police Special Units and plainclothes officers, known as the NOPO, stormed the campaign headquarters and offices of Mir Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karroubi in Tehran. Tear gas was thrown into buildings to force employees and supporters out, who were then beaten and arrested while fleeing.

Between 13 and 15 June 2009, police forces attacked university dormitories in Tehran, Shiraz, Isfahan, and other cities despite laws prohibiting military and police forces from entering campuses. (iv) According to a report by Daftar-e Tahkim-e Vahdat, during an attack on Tehran University, five students were murdered, dozens injured, and 300 arrested. An 18-minute recording of the attack was leaked in January 2010, showing the brutality of police. (v)

In an interview with the Iran Student News Agency on 1 July 2009, Moghadam took responsibility for the attack on Tehran University dormitories, saying, "Based on duty and law, police cleansed Tehran University dormitories in 15 minutes and arrested some individuals." (vi)

Following the election, police forces and Special Units played a dominant role in quashing peaceful protests, murdering demonstrators, arresting dozens of prominent reformist figures, journalists and students, and abusing prisoners. Several people present during post-election protests told the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran that during the major protests of 15 June 2009, they were beaten and injured by police forces. Moghadam called protestors "rioters" and accused them of "attempting a velvet revolution". Moghadam even thanked police forces for planning confrontations with demonstrators and cracking down on protests. (vii)

On 1 July 2009, Moghadam publicly confirmed the arrest of 1,032 individuals by forces under his command, though actual numbers approach 5,000. (viii) A demon strator who was beaten near Tehran's Azadi Square told the Campaign that he was transferred to a police base in central Tehran after being arrested. He said, "During the 40 hours that we were detained in the basement of a police station, police forces beat us with sticks several times with different excuses, including requesting to use the bathroom. On the last day at lunch time, they threw our food of Rice and stew on the floor and ordered us to eat with our hands. When we resisted, they beat us over our heads with sticks, forcing us to eat our food from the floor."

The Islamic Participation Front, many of whose high ranking members are currently in prison, has alleged that police forces under Moghadam's direction have beaten and flogged detainees while keeping them in organized lines. (ix) Police forces also tortured detainees, forcing them to swear at themselves and their families, dousing them in petrol and making them stand under the sun in hot summer weather for hours, and forcing them to lick the police station's toilet bowl.

Police forces also raided private residences and destroyed property based on Moghadam's assertion that, "Any building which for any reason becomes a safe location for the rioters, the police can enter it according to the law...Police officers are allowed to enter buildings during visible crimes and they don't need warrants and there is no problem in this area." (x) (xi)

A resident of Sa'adat Abad in Tehran told the Campaign that one night when people were chanting Allah-o-Akbar from rooftops, police forces attacked his home and broke down his door, "After four anti-riot forces broke down the door by kicking it and hitting it with sticks, they entered our home by force and went to the rooftop, breaking all the windows on their way up. While the building residents were too frightened to open the door for them, the anti-riot forces started breaking satellite dishes and throwing them into the yard below." Various reports received by the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran attest to widespread violations of citizens' private domains by police. (xii) Moghadam later claimed that shared spaces inside residential complexes such as hallways, rooftops, and yards are not private domain and police forces do not need warrants to enter them.

Moghadam also acknowledged the violation of citizen's privacy as police forces monitored e-mail and text messages, heralding a new stage of restrictions on individual freedom. On 15 January 2010 he told reporters, "E-mails and text messages are sent from a place which are in our complete control...they mustn't think that anti-proxy [software] will protect them, and they must not have the erroneous idea that they are not being monitored, because we have been patient with them so far." (xiii)

Moghadam's rhetoric following the election echoed those of Judicial and Intelligence officials as he repeatedly threatened opposition groups with violence. On 30 December 2009, he said, "The time for patience has ended and we will blind the eye of sedition. Whoever participates in these types of protests will face the police's assertive confrontation."

Though without judicial authority, Moghadam promised death sentences for those arrested saying, "Those who are arrested during the riots will face assertive confrontation as

Though without judicial authority, Moghadam promised death sentences for those arrested saying, "Those who are arrested during the riots will face assertive confrontation as criminals. Actions of those who participate in the gatherings of rioters and cause insecurity, is moharebeh." Ignoring the citizens' right to peaceful protests he said, "The time for patience with rioters and anarchists has ended and henceforth, whoever participates in this kind of protests will face the police's hard and assertive reaction. Additionally, the Judiciary has also increased the intensity of its confrontation."

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During Ashura protests on 25 December when a police vehicle ran over a protester, Moghadam refused to take responsibility and refrained from ordering an investigation into the incident. (xv) Moghadam has confirmed the coordinated efforts of the Intelligence Ministry, Judiciary, and police forces saying, "The void among the Police Force, Ministry of Intelligence, Basij, IRGC, and Ministry of Interior was eliminated and our coordination reached a peak at 11 February 2009. With a good command center and with the coordinated presence of those from the top all the way to the lowest ranks, a safe and peaceful atmosphere was realized." (xvi)

Within only two months after the election, the Secretary of the Political Committee of Imam's Line Faction in the Iranian Parliament demanded the dismissal of Ismail Ahmadi Moghadam. (xvii) The abuse and beatings of innocent people, the intentional destruction of private property and vehicles by a number of the police force during 'post-elections incidents, widespread public knowledge of the crimes and atrocities which took place in Kahrizak Detention Center, and the illegal and inhumane confrontation of some of the detainees,' are some of the instances which Jamshid Ansari, Secretary of the Political Committee of Imam's Line Faction in the Iranian Parliament posed as reasons for the dismissal of Moghadam from his position as Head of the Police Force.

Elucidating his demand, Ansari said, "As a first step, considering the direct responsibility of Brigadier Ahmadi Moghadam in recent events, action must be taken to dismiss him." In an article on Parleman News' website, Ansari compared the events which took place under Moghadam's supervision with the serial murders of Iranian intellectuals in the summer of 1998. He asked Moghadam to accept responsibility for what transpired just as Minister of Intelligence Dorri Najafabadi had in 1998, and to resign. Moghadam has never shown accountability for the actions of police forces under his command. Ansari said, "Today Iranian society is shocked by the atrocities and crimes which took place in the organization under Brigadier Ahmadi Moghadam's responsibility, and the public will not be convinced with such explanations and dodging of responsibilities."

Background

Ismail Ahmadi Moghadam was born in 1961 in Tehran. He is a former IRGC commander who held positions as Head of Tehran's Basij and Deputy Commander of the Basij until 2005. In summer 2005, shortly after Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's election, Moghadam was appointed as Head of Iran's Police Forces by Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei.

During his five-year command over the police force, Moghadam implemented projects such as "Moral and Social Security", a campaign that resulted in the arrests of thousands of young men and women on charges of poor hejab.

During his tenure, special units and anti-riot battalions were equipped with advanced arms and several urban anti-riot maneuvers were staged in Tehran and other large cities.

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Saeed Mortazavi

Tehran's prosecutor General at the time of June election

Saeed Mortazavi served as Tehran's Prosecutor at the time of the June 2009 presidential elections. He issued a general arrest warrant four days before the elections, later used by security and intelligence agents to arrest hundreds of well-known journalists, students, and political activists deemed "suspicious." (i)

Iranian and international due process rights were violated in these arrests as detainees were taken to unknown locations and held without charge for prolonged periods, often in solitary confinement, without contact with their families or lawyers. (ii)

Lawyers for detainees reported that individuals arrested in post-election protests not on the basis of specific warrants for their arrest, but were rather arrested based on Mortazavi's general warrant. Saleh Nikbakht, a lawyer, said, "I noticed that the indictments of people arrested in their offices falsely stated that they were arrested during the confrontations and while provoking riots." (iii)

Nicknamed the "Torturer of Tehran," Mortazavi ordered the transfer of post-election detainees to Kahrizak Detention Center alongside high risk criminals, in substandard conditions, and subject to torture and abuse, resulting in the deaths of at least four persons, including Mohsen Rouholamini, Amir Javadifar, Mohammad Kamrani, and Ramin Aghazadeh following violent treatment. (iv) In total, 147 detainees were sent to Kahrizak.

A statement by the Armed Forces Judiciary Organization on 18 December 2009 reported their cause of death as manslaughter through injuries sustained in beatings, despite claims by Mortazavi that they died of meningitis. (v) The report confirmed Mortazavi's personal issuance of transfer orders to Kahrizak for detainees. Some of the individuals detained after the elections claim that Mortazavi had a direct role in interrogations by the Ministry of Intelligence and the IRGC's Intelligence Unit, during which suspects were pressured to make confessions. Some of those arrested told the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran of abuse by agents of the Prosecutor's Office during their arrest and detention.

On 13 July 2009, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei was informed of "detainees being kept next to gangsters and hoodlums and being beaten." (vi) The same day, he ordered Saeed Jalili, Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council to "shut down Kahrizak Detention Center, and if necessary, transfer all detainees to official prisons." Mortazavi evaded moving detainees from Kahrizak, reasoning that other prisons had no vacancies. No action was taken by Mortazavi to release detainees from Kahrizak. The report of a special committee of the Iranian Parliament, charged with investigating events at Kahrizak, was completed on 6 January 2010, submitted to the Parliament Presiding Board, and read in an open session on 10 January 2010. (vii)

After the official announcement of Mortazavi by the Parliamentary fact-finding committee as "the Kahrizak Suspect," he was removed from his position as Tehran's Prosecutor on 30 August 2009, and was appointed as the country's Deputy General Prosecutor. (viii) At his farewell ceremony, Mortazavi called election protests the "big sedition," and said, "The Tehran General and Revolutionary Courts had a sparkling report card during the recent riots." (ix) Subsequently, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad named Mortazavi as the Head of the Anti-Smuggling Task Force in his administration.

Families of some of those harmed at Kahrizak demanded "removal of the judicial qualifications of Saeed Mortazavi." Saleh Nikbakht, lawyer to the family of Amir Javadifar who was murdered at Kahrizak, said on 11 January 2010 that he and lawyers of others murdered intended to file suit against Mortazavi and several other judges who were involved. Gholamreza Asadollahi, an MP and member of the Parliament's post-election events fact- finding committee, told Mehr News Agency, "Presently, the Judge's Court is reviewing the cases brought up in relation to Saeed Mortazavi's role in Kahrizak events." (x) However, as of this date, no actions have been taken in Mortazavi's prosecution.

On October 13, 2009, Mortazavi publicly denied any responsibility for crimes at Kahrizak, saying, "The arrests and dispatch of suspects to Kahrizak was completely official and legal and the presiding judge in the case of recent riots suspects has not committed any violations. Even if any violations have taken place, it is within the jurisdiction of the Rey City Prosecutor and is not related to Tehran. The three people who lost their lives in Kahrizak were injured during the confrontations and riots and transferred to Kahrizak. Two of them were transferred to the hospital and one of them lost his life on the way. This is related to those who were doing the transfer and is not related to us or to the Judiciary....On principle, Kahrizak is within the jurisdiction of Rey City and I am the Tehran Prosecutor." (xi)

Rasoul Jalali, Head of the Kahrizak Justice Department, refuted these claims by Mortazavi, saying, "Since those who introduced the detainees to this detention center were located in Tehran and the detainees were arrested during confrontations and riots in Tehran, this matter is not related to the Kahrizak Justice Department and we have no information about it. The oversight and management of Kahrizak Detention Center was not our responsibility either, and we have no knowledge about the number of detainees and those transferred to other detention centers." (xii) According to orders from the Judiciary, no one should have been transferred to Kahrizak Detention Center without permission from the Tehran Prosecutor (MP Parviz Soroori's interview with Panjereh Weekly).

Mortazavi's actions are against Articles 37, 38, and 39 of the Iranian Constitution. Article 37 states that, "No person is considered legally guilty, except in cases where his guilt is established in a competent court." Article 38 of the Constitution

At the time of publication of this report, the Iranian Judiciary has refused to hold Saeed Mortazavi accountable. The International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran demands a comprehensive and objective investigation about the direct role of Saeed Mortazavi, as well as an investigation of the claims of rape in those prisons and detention centers to which Saeed Mortazavi has dispatched prisoners.

states that, "Any kind of torture used to extract an admission of guilt or to obtain information is forbidden. Compelling people to give evidence, or confess or take an oath is not allowed. Such evidence or confession or oath is null and void. Any person infringing this principle is to be punished in accordance with the law." Article 39 states, "Aspersion of the dignity of and respect due to any person who has been arrested or put in detention, or imprisoned or exiled by command of the law is forbidden in any form, and is liable to punishment."

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Background

Mortazavi was born in Meibod in 1967. So far he has filled many government positions including: Head of Shahr-e Babak General Courts; Head of Branch 9 of Tehran General Courts; Head of Branch 34 of Government Employees Judicial Complex; Head of Branch 1410 and Press Court; and Tehran Prosecutor. He was appointed Political Deputy of the Judiciary in 1994. After his dismissal as Tehran Prosecutor, Mortazavi was appointed as Deputy to Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei, General Prosecutor, but on Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's request, he was appointed as Head of the Anti-Smuggling Task Force.

Mortazavi was the main official responsible for the murder of Iranian-Canadian photographer Zahra Kazemi, who died in custody nineteen days after her arrest on 23 June 2003 as a result of "a hard item hitting her head." Even after a Presidential report implicated him as most responsible, Mortazavi never admitted his involvement and avoided prosecution.

Another journalist and blogger, Omid Reza Mirsayafi, was arrested and imprisoned on the orders of Mortazavi in January 2008, only to die in custody on 18 March 2009, under suspicious circumstances. (xiii) In 2004, in the "Case of the Bloggers", Mortazavi's orders to arrest, torture, and coerce false confessions from Omid Memarian, Roozbeh Mirebrahimi, Javad Gholam Tayamomi, and Shahram Rafizadeh were verified by all four detainees. (xiv) Mortazavi threatened to kill the prisoners by orchestrating car accidents if they mentioned the torture they endured in prison when released.

In his position as Head of Branch 1410 and Press Court in 2000, through actions later referred to as "wholesale banning of the press," he ordered closures of hundreds of publications, sending tens of journalists to prison. Most imprisoned journalists were kept in solitary confinement and tried in closed door courts. Two United Nations Special Rapporteurs, Amibi Ligabo and Loui Juane, who investigated the arbitrary arrests and restrictions on freedom of the media in Iran, provided testimony in a report from 2005. The Rapporteurs called for the dismissal of Mortazavi from all judicial responsibilities.

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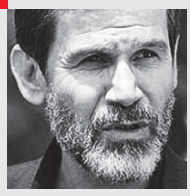

Sadeq Mahsouli

Minister of the Interior time of June election

Sadeq Mahsouli was the Minister of the Interior of the Islamic Republic of Iran at the time of the 12 June 2009 presidential elections. As Interior Minister, Mahsouli had authority over all police forces, interior ministry security agents, and its plainclothes agents. (i) These forces were responsible for attacks on the dormitories of Tehran University on 15 June 2009.

On 22 February 2010, a video recorded by an individual who was present during the attack on Tehran University dormitories was leaked and published over the internet. (ii) This video clearly shows the coordinated efforts of police and plainclothes forces in the dormitory attack. The violence displayed by police forces is so severe that in sections of the film plainclothes forces can be heard asking the police to stop beating the students. The attacks resulted in the beatings and injury of students, destruction of student property, and the detention of 50 students inside the Interior Ministry building.

According to testimonies collected by the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran, the 50 students arrested were taken to the Ministry of Interior's basement, four levels below the ground level and known as the "-4" floor. During their transfer and while detained inside the Ministry, the students were tortured. They were thrown into a small room and beaten with sticks. Bathroom use was allowed only for 30 seconds and if they took any longer the detainees were beaten. The students also reported sexual abuse.

Conservative Parliament Speaker, Ali Larijani, identified Mahsouli as responsible for the events of 15 June 2009, and demanded he be held accountable. The Parliament Speaker's actions led to Mahsouli's orders to the Governor of Tehran to investigate the attacks at Tehran University. (iii) No reports of any investigations by the Minister of the Interior or the Tehran Governor were ever published.

According to testimonies, on "-4 Floor" of the Ministry of Interior's main building basement, there was a detention center that operated under the supervision of Mahsouli. Kazem Jalali, an MP and spokesperson for the Parliament's Special Committee to investigate the situation of those arrested after the elections, stated that the Committee had received some information about the "-4 Detention Center" at the Interior Ministry. (iv) James Longley, an American journalist who was detained along with his translator in this detention center for a few hours, confirmed its existence. (v)

On the torture that occurred there Longley said, "All during this process my translator was being kicked and sworn at." Longley also reported about the use of vulgar language by agents towards his translator, calling his sister and mother names. "At one point he was beaten with a belt buckle. Another time, they beat him with a police truncheon across his back, leaving a nasty welt," he said.

Police forces under Mahsouli's orders committed crimes during post-election public gatherings, using batons and firearms to injure protesters. (vi) Government statistics report the deaths of at least 48 people during the post-election protests. Iranian human rights activists claim the number to be considerably higher.

By virtue of his command over the Police, Mahsouli is responsible for the transfer of detainees to Kahrizak Detention Center. At least four protesters were beaten to death at Kahrizak before it was closed down after widespread abuses and deaths under torture came to light. The detention center did not operate under the auspices of the Iranian Prisons Organization, and Police forces were directly responsible for its operation.

The International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran demands an independent investigation of Sadeq Mahsouli's direct and indirect role during the Tehran University dormitory attack, the murder, physical abuse, and injury of protesters on streets during gatherings, and the abuse and mistreatment of detainees while in detention centers in the basement of the Ministry of

The International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran demands an independent investigation of Sadeq Mahsouli's direct and indirect role during the Tehran University dormitory attack, the murder, physical abuse, and injury of protesters on streets during gatherings, and the abuse and mistreatment of detainees while in detention centers in the basement of the Ministry of Interior, Kahrizak, and other police detention centers to which hundreds of protesters were taken. Under the doctrine of "command and responsibility" Mahsouli should be held accountable for any unlawful actions taken by police forces or interior ministry personnel.

Interior, Kahrizak, and other police detention centers to which hundreds of protesters were taken. Under the doctrine of "command and responsibility" Mahsouli should be held accountable for any unlawful actions taken by police forces or interior ministry personnel.

The Campaign strongly objects at the omission of Sadeq Mahsouli's name in the report of the Iranian Parliament's Special Committee to investigate the detainee abuses released on 6 January 2010, and believes that independent investigations into the role of forces under Mahsouli's command during the post-election events can reveal facts that have been covered up during the months after the elections. (vii)

Background

Sadeq Mahsouli, 50, was born in Orumieh in the Province of Western Azerbaijan. He has an engineering degree from Elm-va-Sanat University, where Mahmoud Ahmadinejad also studied, and received his graduate degree in Management from Tehran University. According to IRNA News Agency, Mahsouli has cooperated with Construction Jihad Corps and prior to that served as Governor of Orumiyeh, Deputy Governor of Western Azerbaijan, Commander of IRGC Region 5 (East and West Azerbaijan provinces), Commander of IRGC Special Army 6, Deputy Minister of Defense in charge of budget and planning, and Secretary to the Council of Advisors for the Expediency Council. He is currently the Minister of Welfare in Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's cabinet.

Mahsouli's weak management in responding to criticism for events such as the attack on Tehran University dormitories, on the Sonhan residential complex, the shooting of protesters, and the detention of protesters in the basement of the Interior Ministry forced Ahmadinejad not to appoint him to the post of Interior Minister during his second term. Even so, Mahsouli remained in the cabinet in an advisory position and was eventually introduced as the Minister of Welfare to Parliament.

Footnotes

i. On 28 December 2008, upon request from Mahsouli, with the endorsement of the Chief of Staff of Iran's Joint Armed Forces and the approval of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei (Chief Commander of Joint Armed Forces according to Iranian law), Mahsouli was delegated the Supreme Leader's authority over the Iranian police. Mahsouli gained full oversight and final decision-making authority over all police affairs, only the powers of appointment and dismissal of the Police Chief remained with the Supreme Leader. In Mahsouli's request letter to the Supreme Leader, he stated that given the Ministry of Interior's responsibilities in maintaining order and the intertwined relationship between the Ministry of INterior and Police, the authority over police should be transferred to the Interior Minister.

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Abolghassem Salavati

Presiding judge of Branch 15 of the Islamic Revolutionary Courts

Abolghassem Salavati is the head and presiding judge of Branch 15 of the Islamic Revolutionary Courts and a Substitute Judge for Tehran's General Courts. Since the presidential election of 12 June 2009, Salavati has been instrumental in sentencing political prisoners, human rights activists, and peaceful demonstrators to lengthy prison sentences in patently unfair trials.

Salavati has presided over numerous trials in the aftermath of the 12 June election and is the "Number One Man" in issuing death sentences for those arrested since the election. He has issued the highest number of death sentences, earning the moniker of "Judge of Death." He has issued death sentences for at least nine post-election defendants: Reza Khademi, Hamed Rouhinejad, Nasser Abdolhosseini, Arash Rahmani Pour, Mohammad Reza Ali Zamani, Ahmad Karimi, Abdolreza Ghanbari, Mohammad Amin Valian, and Amir Reza Arefi. Arash Rahmani Pour and Mohammad Reza Ali Zamani were executed on 28 January 2010. (i) (ii)

Over 120 years worth of imprisonment has been doled out by Salavati for protesters spanning all strata of society, from political activists, to journalists, to ordinary citizens. The only charge in most cases was participation in protests and demonstrations. A human rights lawyer representing several post-election prisoners told the Campaign, "When Judge Salavati presides over a trial, 'defending' the accused becomes meaningless. Not only does he not pay any attention to their defense, he so aggressively takes sides with the Prosecutor and the intelligence organizations in charge of the case that there is no hope for seeing justice delivered in his courtroom. A trial with Salavati as its judge has a predictable outcome--the accused will receive a heavy sentence."

Salavati's cooperation with the Intelligence Ministry is such that his rulings are directly based on the content of interrogations conducted by intelligence officials without an impartial evaluation. Salavati has limited the rights of detainees before they even enter the courtroom. Families of prisoners have told the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran that Salavati has refused to accept the defense lawyers' power of attorney documents allowing for independent legal counsel.

Salavati has ruled in politically motivated cases with charges including "actions against national security," "propaganda against the regime," "congregation and mutiny with the intent to disrupt public order," "disrupting public order through riots," "participation in the destruction of public property," "participation in illegal congregations," "creating doubt about election results," and "depriving the regime of public trust." Salavati was the judge in the first "show trial" held after the presidential election, where more than 100 political activists, protestors, journalists, students, and influential figures were prosecuted in August 2009.

Salvati sentenced Mohammad Amin Valian, a 20-year-old university student, to execution for throwing three rocks during a protest. (iii) During the proceedings neither Valian's family nor his lawyer had access to his file. An appeals court has overturned Salavati's death sentence for Valian. (iv)

Majid Tavakoli, a student at Amir Kabir University, spent months in jail before being sentenced by Salavati to eight years and six months in prison, five years deprivation of education, and a five year ban on foreign travel. (vi) Throughout his detention, on orders from Salavati, Tavakoli was deprived access to his lawyers or any other rights available to prisoners such as telephone calls to his family, books, newspapers, and visitation rights.

Other notable figures sentenced by Salavati include: Abdollah Momeni, Salman Sima, Massoud Bastani, Hessam Salamat, Omid Montazeri, Shahabeddin Tabatabaee, Morteza Alviri, Mostafa Tajzadeh, Mohsen Mirdamadi, Davood Soleimani, Abdollah Ramezanzadeh, Mohsen Aminzadeh, Behzad Nabavi, Mohammad Ali Abtahi, Ozrasadat Ghazi Mirsaeed, Mohammad Pourabdollah, Kiarash Kamrani, Mehrdad Varshoee, Faramarz Abdollah Nejad, Saeed Hazari, Morteza Layeghi, Ghader Rahimi, and Hossein Bastani Nejad.

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Background

There is little information on how Salavati became a judge in the Revolutionary Court system or his prior record. Salavati first became known during the "Velvet Revolution" case against Kamiar and Arash Alaei, Silva Harotonian, and Mohammad Ehsani. (vi) He sentenced them to three to six years in prison. The Campaign's review of Salavati's ruling indicates that the case lacked the evidence to support such sentences and was primarily a rehashing of the Intelligence Ministry's allegations. (vii)

Salavati also sentenced Saeed Matinpour, a journalist and human rights activist, to eight years in prison on the charge of "relations with foreigners," and to one year in prison for "propagation against the regime." Salavati was also in charge of a case against Iranian author and satirist Seyed Ebrahim Nabavi. According to Nabavi, he was summoned and after he did not appear in court, Salavati detained and threatened his lawyer, Nehmat Ahmadi.

Most cases presided over by Salavati have ended with heavy sentences based on indictments lacking legal bases and proper evidence of "crimes," and reflect a lack of adherence to Iran's Penal Code Procedures and international standards of due process.

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Seyed Hassan Firouzabadi

Chief of Staff of the Joint Armed Forces

Seyed Hassan Firouzabadi is the highest military authority in the Islamic Republic of Iran. He is Chief of Staff of the Joint Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran, responsible for directing all military divisions and policies, including the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) and police. The IRGC and police forces played a prominent role in suppressing post-election protests. At least 5,000 people were arbitrarily detained by units managed by the IRGC's Intelligence Unit and tens of people were killed on the streets or in prisons. (i)

Several people arrested after the elections told the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran that IRGC Intelligence forces coerced them to make false confessions. Lawyers for activists who have received long prison sentences for post-election activities told the Campaign that the Judiciary issued their clients' sentences according to orders by the Ministry of Intelligence and IRGC's Intelligence Unit.

Firouzabadi has consistently publicized his political opinions and support of violence against dissidents and government critics, despite laws in the Iranian Constitution and military protocol prohibiting such behavior. Prior to the June presidential election, he expressed his support of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, claiming that no candidate could defeat him when he said, "Some groups of politicians think they have... been successful in...introducing a new presidential candidate to end the Ahmadinejad matter, but this won't happen. They are wrong." (ii) After presidential candidate Mehdi Karroubi objected to these statements in a letter, Firouzabadi replied, "Rest assured I won't intervene in the elections." Firouzabadi's unlawful statements of support for Ahmadinejad continued despite such assurances. (iii)

In a post-election letter addressed to the Twelfth Imam, Firouzabadi wrote, "We are standing with all our might to sustain the regime." (iv) Before judicial authorities expressed any opinions about those arrested after the election, in his letter Firouzabadi accused protestors of attacking mosques, calling the movement "sedition with a velveteen exterior, but with a dry and prickly and rough interior that harmed the culture and people of my land... With destruction, massacre, and riots they attacked the Basij bases and God's mosques."

After the election and during crackdowns on public protests, Firouzabadi defended interventions by Basij forces in politics and in confrontations with demonstrators. During a commemoration of the Islamic Revolution in February 2010, Firouzabadi threatened dissidents when he said, "The road to repentance for those who have committed injustice against people and were attempting to weaken the regime at a sensitive time does not only include showing remorse, but these people must submit to the punishment that Sharia and law have determined." (v)

Firouzabadi's constant stream of political opinions in support of the government and against its critics violates regulations of the Armed Forces Judiciary Organization which states that "interference, participation, or actions by employees of the armed forces in groups, political controversies, and elections campaigning is prohibited and considered a crime, punishable by six months to three years in prison." (Article 40 of Laws Governing Crimes of Armed Forces, approved December 30, 2003)

The International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran demands an independent and objective investigation of Brigadier General Seyed Hassan Firouzabadi's role in post-election violence against protestors and the actions of forces under his command including the IRGC, Basij, and police forces. Brigadier General Firouzabadi bears direct responsibility for the atrocities committed by the above mentioned forces.

Background

In 1989, Seyed Hasan Firouzabadi was appointed as Chief of Staff of Iran's Joint Armed Forces. The Joint Armed Forces operates under the supervision of the Islamic Republic's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who appoints its Chief of Staff.

After the election and during crackdowns on public protests, Firouzabadi defended interventions by Basij forces in politics and in confrontations with demonstrators. During a commemoration of the Islamic Revolution in February 2010, Firouzabadi threatened dissidents when he said, "The road to repentance for those who have committed injustice against people and were attempting to weaken the regime at a sensitive time does not only include showing remorse, but these people must submit to the punishment that Sharia and law have determined."

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Mohammad Ali Jafari

Commander of IRGC

Major General Mohammad Ali Jafari, Commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) was directly responsible for a significant part of the post-election arrests of reformist political figures, activists, and journalists. He is also responsible for orchestrating the extraction of false confessions from those arrested. Basij forces, which are a subset of the IRGC, had a direct role in post-election violence such as the 15 June 2009 attack on Tehran University dormitories. (i)

Authorities claimed that during post-election violence 48 people were killed. However, research conducted by the Campaign indicates that there were as many as 100 fatalities and hundreds of injuries. The use of firearms with live bullets is a clear instance of excessive use of force against unarmed civilians. Neda Agha Soltan, Kianoosh Assa, and Sohrab Aarabi are amongst a dozen who were killed on the streets. (ii) (iii)

In April 2010, Mohammad Pakpour, Commander of the IRGC Ground Force admitted to the IRGC's direct role in the crackdown on post-election public demonstrations. (iv) At a gathering of IRGC forces he said, "The IRGC performed admirably during the 2009 events. IRGC members did not give in to doubt and the rogues who wished to cause harm. The IRGC and Basij brought them under control."

Several released prisoners told the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran that they were arrested by the Prosecutor's Office, but their investigations and interrogations were carried out by the IRGC's Intelligence Unit. Many prisoners who were in custody of the IRGC's Intelligence Unit, especially during the first two months following the elections, were mistreated and physically and psychologically abused, and were coerced to make false confessions. Their interrogators had stated the condition of their release as their confessions against themselves and their colleagues, as well as accepting a role in post-election public protests.

Even though officials of the Islamic Republic have accused protesters of intending to overthrow the regime, there is evidence that officials from the IRGC and security apparatuses, prior to the election, had planned to put down any challenge to the results.

A prominent political figure who was arrested after the elections told the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran that arrests of prominent reformists were planned prior to elections. (v) As soon as he was detained his interrogators put forward a substantial file, showing he had been under surveillance conducted by IRGC Intelligence forces for months.

Human rights lawyers also told the Campaign that IRGC Intelligence forces routinely coerce Revolutionary Courts judges to issue severe sentences for post-election protesters.

As early as 29 September 2007, Mohammad Ali Jafari has been admitting that Basij forces are mobilized under his command saying, "If the IRGC's mission is to defend the Revolution's achievements, the Basij's responsibility is the same, as the Basij and IRGC are inseparable." (vi)

After the elections, Jafari accused the protesters of trying to instigate a "velvet revolution." (vii) The subject of a velvet revolution was later used repeatedly by the Islamic Republic's high officials and courts to accuse prominent reformist politicians and the two contending presidential candidates. The term had been used by various IRGC and military officials before the elections (see Yadollah Javani's profile).

Commander Jafari justified the crackdown and the unleashed violence as a means to counter the putative velvet revolution against the Islamic regime. He said that opposition forces had attempted a velvet revolution through elections. "Many say we must not use the term 'velvet revolution,' because it's impossible to have a revolution in Iran...but this has happened in many countries through elections and democracy," he said. He referred to the confessions of prisoners to prove his claim, saying, "Some of the gentlemen who were arrested a while ago have made confessions which explicitly state that they were pursuing the same goals before, but in a different shape."

"These events were designed months in advance and it was even announced in our enemies' statements that they were pursuing a change of behavior in the Islamic Republic. This change of behavior is the same as deviating from the fundamentals of the revolution," he added. (vii)

The Campaign has received credible information about severe psychological and physical pressure on political prisoners. The information demonstrates that some of the confessions to which Commander Jafari is referring were obtained through IRGC Intelligence authorities' threats to reveal certain personal secrets of the prisoners or threats of long-term prison sentences for them.

Former Deputy President Mohammad Ali Abtahi and Mohammad Atrianfar, a former Ministry of Interior official and journalist, were two prisoners who were forced under severe physical and psychological pressure to confess to actions they had not committed. Human rights organizations vehemently objected to the televised broadcast of these confessions.

Replying to objections to the forced confessions, Jafari said, "Some may say that the published confessions of people such as Mr. Abtahi were made under force and duress. The claimants have no choice but to lie. During the time of his incarceration, Mr. Abtahi was removed from the atmosphere which no longer ruled him and by separation from his friends, through free discussion, he went through a transformation and made those statements. Of course he will leave [the prison] some day and you can then judge his reasoning. Because the people are entitled to knowledge, they must know." (viii)

On 9 September 2009, the reformist minority fraction of the Iranian Parliament denounced the extraction of coerced confessions from imprisoned reformist politicians. (ix) The parliamentarians termed the prisoners' confessions illegal and the IRGC's actions punishable by law. In their letter they wrote, "These degrading charges, which are a deflection tactic to cover up the effective interference of military personnel in the elections, are based on the claimed confessions of some imprisoned political activists. The credibility and accuracy of the claimed confessions and the legality of these prisoners' trials have been repeatedly refuted by different groups inside and outside the country. There is no doubt that the unfair allegations and false accusations based on these confessions against the servants of the revolution and reformist leaders not only lack any credibility and value and do not warrant a reply, they should be pursued by the law."

On 8 September 2009, a political-religious organization in Iran, the Society of Combatant Clerics, announced that it would file a law suit against IRGC commanders with the Iranian Judiciary.

Also reacting to Jafari's statements justifying his forces' actions for "preserving the regime," a prominent religious organization of Iran, the Association of Researchers and Teachers of Qom issued a statement saying, "Preservation of the regime cannot be achieved through military action, intimidation, arrests, and unjustified, un-Islamic, and inhumane actions." (x)

The International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran demands the accountability of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Commander for the systematic violations of human rights, pre-planned efforts to crackdown on political dissidents, torture, mistreatment, and abuse of prisoners aimed to extract forced confessions, murders of people on the streets by forces under his supervision, attempts to conceal the truth and to misrepresent the events to exonerate them, interfering in the decision-making process of judges by demanding heavy sentences for political prisoners, and promotion of violence through subsequent speeches and statements.

Jafari never showed any accountability for the murders of dozens of protesters at the hands of forces under his supervision or the police. He claimed that only nine protesters had been killed. In September 2009, Mohammad Ali Jafari reported the deaths of nine "opposition" members, even though Farhad Tajjari, a member of the Parliament's special committee to investigate the post election prisoners' issues, had earlier announced the number of murdered protesters as 30. (xi) This number grew during the coming months and especially after the Ashura Day protests, which left ten more dead. At the same time, Alireza Beheshti, the speaker for the joint committee appointed by Mousavi and Karroubi to investigate the conditions of post-elections detainees, presented the Parliament with a list of 69 individuals whose deaths during the post-elections incidents were confirmed by the committee.

The IRGC Commander who also heads the Basij forces further discussed the 15 June 2009 attack on the Tehran University dormitories and did not completely deny the Basij forces' role in the incident. He said some Basij members had participated in the attack on the Tehran University dormitories in an unorganized manner. Investigations aimed at identifying agents responsible for the brutal attack on Tehran University dormitories which left tens of people injured and ended in the arrests of at least 50 students, causing widespread destruction of the students' property, has not led to identification of any responsible individuals or organizations one year after the event.

"Investigations conducted by IRGC's Security and Intelligence Unit show that Basij forces were not present in this incident. Though it is possible that a few unorganized Basij forces may have entered the scene, we scarcely saw Basij members among the plainclothes and vigilante forces. Most of them were plainclothes forces who were not related to Basij," the IRGC Commander said.

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Based on existing evidence, the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran holds Commander Jafari accountable as one of the chief officials implicated in the post-election crackdown and for systematic violence against the protesters and activists. The Campaign demands an investigation by an independent and impartial committee to determine Mohammad Ali Jafari's role and to hold him accountable so that the atrocities, which claimed dozens of lives and sent thousands to prison, leading to a deepening of systematic violence against Iranian citizens, is prevented in the future.

Background

Brigadier Commander Mohammad Ali Jafari was born on 1 September 1957 in Yazd. He attended primary and high schools in the City of Yazd. In 1977 he was admitted to Tehran University's College of Architecture. He joined the Islamic Association of Tehran University as his college's representative. He was also active in the occupation of American Embassy in Tehran. At the onset of Iran-Iraq War, Mohammad Ali Jafari was dispatched to the war front as a Basij member. He joined the IRGC in 1981 and served continuously as Commander of West and South Operations Bases throughout the war, assuming positions such as IRGC's Deputy Operations Commander at Sousangerd, Commander of Ashura Brigade, and Commander of Quds and Najaf Bases. After the war ended, Jafari returned to Tehran University to complete his studies. He received a graduate degree in Architecture in 1992. He also completed a high military degree in Command and Staff at IRGC's War University in 1992 and 1993. He taught Command and Staff at IRGC University for awhile. Concurrent with his education, he was Head of Joint Command Operations and Deputy Commander of IRGC Ground Forces. Beginning in 1992, he became Head of IRGC Ground Forces for 13 years during the last five years of which he was also Commander of Sarollah Base in Tehran. (xii) His last position to which he was appointed by Commander-in-Chief of the Iranian Joint Armed Forces, Seyed Ali Khamenei in 2005 and in which he continues to serve is responsibility for the establishment and operation of IRGC's Strategic Center.

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Mohammad Moghisseh

Head of Branch 28 of the Islamic Revolutionary Courts

Judge Mohammad Moghisseh, Head of Branch 28 of the Islamic Revolutionary Courts, has been in charge of the cases of many activists and protesters arrested after the June 2009 elections. He has not only issued long prison sentences, but he has also issued several death sentences for the protesters.

The International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran has conducted interviews with human rights lawyers, families of prisoners, and released prisoners. Information received by the Campaign clearly demonstrates that in most of cases reviewed and ruled by Judge Moghisseh, the suspects have been deprived of a fair trial, whether the sentence was imprisonment or execution. In most cases Judge Moghisseh has paid no attention to the defense presented by the suspects or their lawyers, and has issued sentences demanded by interrogators and intelligence agents.

Judge Moghisseh presided over the prosecution of Roxana Saberi, the Iranian-American journalist falsely accused of spying, and sentenced her to eight years in prison in April 2009. The appeals court overturned this sentence and Saberi was eventually released. (i)

Several human rights lawyers who represented post-election political prisoners told the Campaign that rulings issued by Judge Moghisseh lacked legal foundation. The sentences very closely followed what the interrogators had threatened the suspects with during their imprisonment, including death sentences.

A lawyer who represented several post-election prisoners told the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran, "What we saw in our numerous meetings with him is that he is incapable of understanding the simplest judicial concepts and only serves as a signature machine for heavy and baseless sentences. No honest judge would ever confirm his rulings."

"Unfortunately, a few judges who follow orders from intelligence organizations close their eyes on the evidence in the files and the defense presented by the suspects and their lawyers, and issue political rulings. This has turned the Iranian Judiciary into a subsidiary of the Ministry of Intelligence," he added.

During the show trials in Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Courts, Judge Moghisseh tried two detainees, Jafar Kazemi and Mohammad Ali Haj Aghaee, on charges of moharebeh for contacting and cooperating with Mojahedeen-e Khalgh Organization (MKO) and propaganda against the regime. (ii) Moghisseh found both suspects guilty and sentenced them to death.

Judge Moghisseh issued rulings for two prominent Iranian student activists, Bahareh Hedyat and Milad Asadi. He sentenced Bahareh Hedayat to nine and half years and Milad Asadi to seven years in prison. (iii) According to Bahareh Hedayat's husband, there was no evidence of any crime in her case file. Against Iranian law, the two defendants' lawyers were not allowed to defend their clients in court.

Another repeating pattern in Judge Moghisseh's rulings is the disproportionate relationship between the crimes and their punishment. After the two prison sentences were issued by Judge Moghisseh, the Campaign asked the Iranian Judiciary to suspend Judge Moghisseh from his position as a judge on grounds of repeated violations of the law and a growing suspicion that his rulings are politically motivated. The Campaign further demanded that the Judiciary appoint a group of independent judges to review the cases he had reviewed. So far the Iranian Judiciary has abstained from taking this recommendation.

In a letter to the Head of the Iranian Judiciary, Mohammad Mostafaei, a human rights lawyer who has represented several post-elections political prisoners wrote about this judge's violations. (iv)

Reporting on the violations in Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Courts, the attorney wrote, "Regrettably, Mr. Moghisseh of Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Courts has acted against the law during the reviews of several cases, some of which I have represented. He has particularly acted against basic and fundamental laws such as the Iranian Code of Criminal Procedure and the Citizen's Rights Law. For example, some of the violations which should be reviewed and especially examined in this branch are: the illegal extended imprisonment of suspects despite the law's stipulation that suspects should not be detained for a period longer than the minimum punishment for their crimes; refusal to end temporary detention orders within the legal time frame; refusal to issue orders allowing lawyers to meet with their clients in prison, as well as for signing the power of

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attorney documents; refusal to serve the defense with accurate trial dates and more importantly, the refusal to serve the defense with accurate trial dates and more importantly, the related court papers and copies of the indictment; and depriving the suspects from their chance to present a fair defense."

On 19 April 2010, several political prisoners at Evin prison wrote an open letter, detailing their ill-treatment and lack of due process during their prosecutions. (v) In the letter, the prisoners described their difficult conditions and the physical, sexual, and psychological abuse they have had to endure during their detention.

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Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati

Secretary General of the Guardian Council

Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati is the Secretary General of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Guardian Council and one of the country's highest ranking authorities. Since the 12 June presidential election, Jannati has unabashedly incited violence, demanded death sentences for election protestors, and coordinated his rhetoric with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and security forces. He has repeatedly called protestors "corruptors on earth," a charge that carries the death penalty. Jannati has continuously demanded execution sentences from the Iranian Judiciary, and supported the implementation of such sentences.

Jannati has explicitly advocated the use of violence, saying for example: "I hope God does not show mercy to those who show mercy to corruptors on earth. There is no room for compassion; there must be confrontation, just as when during the time of the Prophet, those who broke their promise were killed, we cannot have compromises in punishment." Jannati provoked the Judiciary to pursue reformist political leaders when, on 1 August 2009 at a Friday Prayer sermon in Tehran, he asked, "Why have the leaders not been arrested yet? Why haven't those whom all know to be the roots of sedition and the mother of all corruption been arrested yet?" (i)

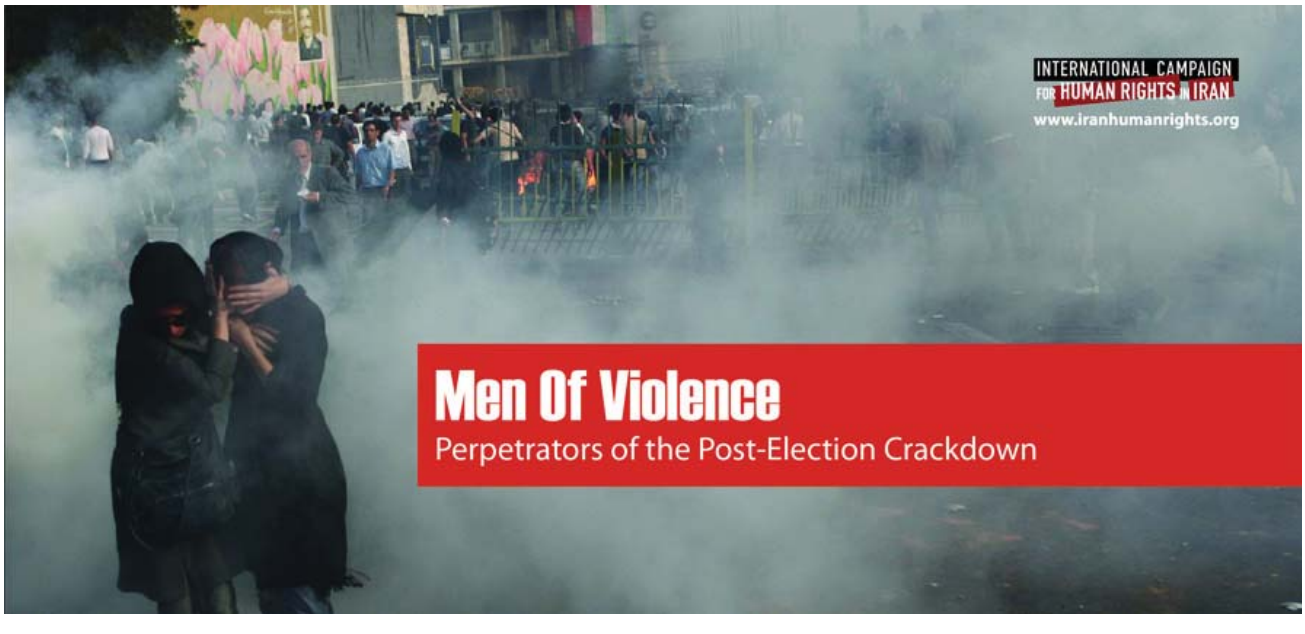
On 29 January 2010, Jannati defended the execution of two political prisoners, Mohammad Ali Zamani and Arash Rahmanipour, carried out the day before and called for more executions in an address to the Head of the Iranian Judiciary, saying, "...you have an anti-oppression and revolutionary attitude. So, for God's satisfaction, just as you executed those two individuals, thank you, stand like a man." (ii) (iii) Jannati believes in the implementation of executions as a means of dissuading citizens from protesting, "We showed weakness after 18 Tir. (iv) (Reference to student demonstrations in 1999 that were suppressed by police) (v) We must ask the Judiciary, how many people were executed which led to (the protests of) Ashura? I say that if you show weakness, a worse future is awaiting you." After protests on Ashura, on 1 January 2010 at a Tehran Friday Prayer sermon, Jannati once again demanded maximum penalties for protestors describing them as "manifestations of corruptors on earth" (charges of "corruption on earth" or moharebeh are punishable by the death penalty) saying Revolutionary Courts should try and convict them. (vi) He continued, saying that if protesters continue their demonstrations after Ashura (30 December 2009), "They mustn't be given another chance; they must be punished and the Judiciary must act swiftly in this area and to assign the revolutionary judges of 1979 to these cases and not some wimp judges."

Jannati announced the coming of televised coerced confessions by post-election detainees, demonstrating his knowledge of what was happening inside prisons. On 3 July 2009, during a Friday Prayers sermon, Jannati said, "Some people have been arrested and they are providing confessions and we will inform the public to the degree that it is appropriate." (vii)

Several individuals imprisoned after the elections and released after several weeks told the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran that they were coerced to make false confessions against themselves or other reformists. Some said they were physically and psychologically tortured. Only a few weeks after Jannati's statements, on 1 August 2009, the confessions of several former high ranking officials in Mohammad Khatami's cabinet including former Vice President Seyed Mohammad Ali Abtahi were broadcast on Iranian state television during show trials. (viii)

As a faqih, or theological expert, on the Guardian Council (responsible for vetting Presidential candidates) Jannati is expected to remain impartial. However, he supported Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's candidacy and talked about sentencing and punishing his opponents. Jannati's lack of objectivity moved even conservative Iranian MPs to react. Ali Motahari, a conservative Member of the Iranian Parliament, accused Jannati of having made a "mistake" by announcing his support for Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Motahari told ILNA News Agency, "In my opinion some of the members of the Council such as Mohammad Yazdi, Ahmad Jannati, Mohammad Momen, as well as Gholamhossein Elham, have made mistakes in their approach to the elections. The Guardian Council is in the position of referee, and a referee must not express an opinion in favor of one of the opponents. But, unfortunately, they supported Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's candidacy...When before a game is held a referee announces his support for a particular team, it is only natural if the spectators get confused." (ix)

Jannati has explicitly advocated the use of violence, saying for example: "I hope God does not show mercy to those who show mercy to corruptors on earth. There is no room for compassion; there must be confrontation, just as when during the time of the Prophet, those who broke their promise were killed, we cannot have compromises in punishment." Jannati provoked the Judiciary to pursue reformist political leaders when, on 1 August 2009 at a Friday Prayer sermon in Tehran, he asked, "Why have the leaders not been arrested yet? Why haven't those whom all know to be the roots of sedition and the mother of all corruption been arrested yet?"



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Yadollah Javani

Head of the IRGC Political Office

Yadollah Javani is the Head of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' (IRGC) Political Office. He has repeatedly supported the use of violence and harsh interrogation tactics against post-election protesters. Javani's statements have become the basis for indictments against protestors and have resulted in the IRGC's takeover of interrogations. Javani, since before the election, described the role of the IRGC as the arbiter of justice against dissidents saying, "The IRGC is responsible for defending the revolution and encountering threats. Depending on the nature of threats, the IRGC will formulate its confrontation methods."

Javani's statements against election-related protests, some made even before the election happened, have become the basis for actions of the IRGC since the elections of 12 June 2009. Two weeks before the elections, Sobh-e Saadegh Weekly, the official publication of the IRGC, quoted Javani as saying, "A public invitation of supporters to use the color green in their scarves, robes, hats, wrist bands, etc... pursues objectives other than rallying support and enthusiasm for the elections in the society and among supporters." (i)

Just under one month after the election, at a convention of IRGC authorities and leaders, Javani publicly supported the use of violence against protesters, saying, "Prior to the elections, in an analytical report I wrote in Sobh-e Sadegh, I predicted the efforts of anti-state groups, [I predicted] the velvet revolution. People's awareness left these conspiracies fruitless and nipped it in the bud. During the elections, we faced a deep sedition; a sedition whose source is the new dissension. The pre- and post-elections events showed the face of new dissension and people will know this face even more in the future. During these incidents, the sedition's eye was damaged, but it wasn't blinded. We must now completely blind the sedition's eye and remove it from the socket. Blinding the sedition's eye can only be possible by shining a light on [what is happening] behind the scenes." (ii)

Released prisoners have told the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran that their arrests were carried out by the Prosecutor's Office, but that interrogations and investigations were carried out by the Intelligence Unit of the IRGC. Prisoners turned over to the IRGC's Intelligence Unit, especially within the two months following the election, were mistreated, physically and psychologically abused, and pressured to make false confessions. Confessions to false charges were made a condition for release, and Javani has been a staunch advocate for the publication and broadcast of these confessions. Javani has said, "It is necessary to broadcast the confessions of those arrested" and has confirmed that distinguished political figures were forced to make confessions when he called for them to be broadcast on television. (iii) (iv)

Proof of the IRGC's infiltration of the judicial process is apparent in Javani's public use of confidential information from prisoner interrogations. Laws of the Islamic Republic of Iran stipulate that details of interrogations must remain confidential. Javani has publicly quoted from the texts of confessions by prisoners such as Mohammad Ali Abtahi, former Vice President of Iran, and Mohammad Aghaee, another political figure. On 17 August 2009, Javani demanded that presidential candidate Mir Hossein Mousavi be put on trial. In his speech, he revealed information from the confessions of Hedayat Aghaee, a member of the reformist Kargozaran Party, whose trial had not been held yet. (v) Javani quoted Aghaee as saying that the reformist and opposition candidates' strategy in the presidential election had been to come to power at whatever cost. A few months later, Aghaee was sentenced to five years in prison.

Javani has accused those arrested in post-election sweeps of attempting a "soft overthrow" of the Islamic Republic government. Several months after the election the subject of a soft revolution arose in the indictment made against 100 people who were among those arrested and put on trial. Javani's statements in post-election speeches comprised a large part of that indictment. According to Fars News Agency, Javani published an article in Sobh-e Sadegh Weekly, demanding punishment of protesters, accusing them of working towards a velvet revolution, "Any group or any individual, regardless of their background or position, who wishes to accompany the Great Satan US to change the Islamic Republic regime and to replace it with a non-religious regime, must be punished as an overthrowing and treacherous group. In the text of the indictment, referring to documented and available evidence, as well as the confessions of the suspects and those arrested during the post-elections riots, it is expressed that a group supported by the West and especially the US, using the [excuse of the] presidential elections, intended to have a velvet revolution in Iran." (vi)

Javani made explicit references to IRGC's interference in the post-elections events, saying, "With its maximal presence the IRGC was able to have a positive and effective role in the elections." According to the Iranian Constitution, any interference in politics by military personnel is illegal. As a leading military authority, Yadollah Javani has incited violence before, during, and after the presidential election of 12 June. He has advocated violence against protesters, revealed the contents of suspect's interrogation transcripts before their trials, and defended using violence against protesters.

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Footnotes

i. Javani Quoted Saying Plans Existed to Target Protestors Wearing Green, Sobh-e-Sadegh, http://sobhesadegh.ir/1388/0399/M05.HTM#m1

ii. Javani Supporting the Use of Violence Against Protestors, RFI, 11 June 2009, http://www.rfi.fr/actufa/articles/114/article_6805.asp

iii. Javani Supports the Publication and Broadcast of Confessions, Aftab News, 24 June 2009, http://www.aftabnews.ir/vdceo78o.jh8zpi9bbj.html

iv. Javani Says Confessions Should be Broadcast and Reveals Information in Them, Aftab News, 15 August 2009, http://www.aftabnews.ir/vdcfxyd1.w6d0jagiiw.html

v. Ibid

vi. Javani Publishes Article in Sobh-e-Sadegh Demanding Punishment for Protestors, Fars News, 11 August 2009, http://www.farsnews.com/printable.php?nn=8805181344

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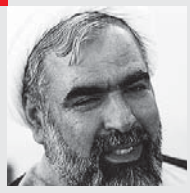

Rouhollah Hosseinian

Member of Parliament

In January 2010, Rouhollah Hosseinian, led a group of 36 parliamentarians in introducing an urgent bill in Parliament that would reduce the appeals period for persons charged with moharebeh (enmity against God) and sentenced to execution to only five days. The bill was justified as a mean to expedite the implementation of death sentences issued for post-election protestors.

During post-election trials, Revolutionary Courts have handed down at least thirteen death sentences for those charged with moharebeh. Two of those convicted have since been executed. On 4 January 2010, Parleman News, the website for the Iranian Parliament's minority fraction, reported about this urgent bill initiated by Hosseinian and signed by 35 other pro-government MPs. Although the bill was eventually abandoned in face of strong criticisms during the following weeks, if approved, it would become an addendum to Article 236 of Iran's General and Revolutionary Courts Criminal Code, and would reduce the period allowed for an appeal in cases of "disturbing public order" and moharebeh to five days, instead of the 25 days currently allowed.

Human rights organizations, including the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran, have repeatedly described the legal review process applied to protesters arrested after the 2009 presidential elections as violating international standards and procedures for fair and objective trials, as well as Iranian laws. In most cases where suspects are convicted of moharebeh, defendants are deprived of access to a lawyer of their choice and are brought to court after enduring harsh detention conditions without the opportunity to build an effective legal defense. In one of these cases, Mohammad Amin Valian, a twenty-year old man whose only crime was throwing three rocks during a post-election protest, was sentenced to death. The appeals court subsequently overturned the sentence.

In the introductory section of the proposed bill, member of the parliament offered the following justification: "Considering recent events (post election), and the need for the immediate review of charges against rioters, punishment of perpetrators, and prevention [of similar crimes], [this] urgent bill is presented."

Rouhollah Hosseinian, Hamid Rasaee, Mohammad Kamran, Elias Naderan, and Fatemeh Alia, all pro-government Principalist MPs, were among those who signed the proposed bill.

Government critics and some MPs have criticized the Members of Parliament who proposed the bill. In an interview with Parleman News on 5 January 2010, Ali Mottahari, member of the Principalist Fraction, said, "This bill reflects the extremist and radical mentality of its initiators, especially Mr. Hosseinian." Describing Hosseinian, he said that he had a special interest in executions, adding: "When he was a judge, he issued many execution orders."

Hosseinian has a history of defending extra-judicial assassinations by intelligence agents. He defended Saeed Emami, a former Deputy Minister of Intelligence and the prime suspect for the 1998 assassinations of at least five intellectuals, known as the "chain murders," committed by agents of the intelligence ministry. He was a supporter of the former Deputy Minister of Intelligence, who reportedly committed suicide in a prison bathroom after being arrested. Praising him as "an intelligence genius," he has said: "Saeed Emami was a powerful and strong intelligence operative." Hosseinian has also said Emami believed that those who opposed the Islamic Republic "must all be treated to the blade."

The International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran believes that statements by persons such as Rouhollah Hosseinian and other religious, political, and media figures have had a significant impact in creating an atmosphere of support for official violence, and for the issuance of politically-motivated verdicts and sentences by the Iranian Judiciary. The Campaign notes that those who were directly involved in violence or caused harm to protestors and dissidents through organized activities are not the only individuals responsible, but also those, such as Hosseinian, whose statements helped promote and instigate official violence must be held accountable.

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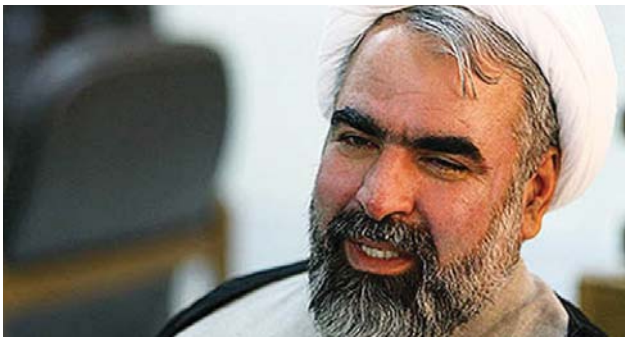

Background

Hojjat-ol-eslam Rouhollah Hosseinian was born in 1955 in Shiraz. He moved with his family at age five to an Abadeh village named Saghad, and finished his primary and middle school education in the same village. He entered Qom Seminary in 1970, continuing his education at Haghani School until 1981.

Previously, Hosseinian was the Head of the Center for Islamic Revolution Documents. He was appointed as Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's Security and Political Advisor in May 2008.

Ali Saeedi

Representative of Supreme Leader in IRGC

Ali Saeedi is the Representative of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). Saeedi vehemently defended the role of IRGC forces in post-election crackdowns and their use of violence on citizens, becoming one of the highest ranking Islamic Republic authorities to sanction the actions of the security apparatuses. IRGC forces arrested thousands of protestors, four of whom were murdered in Iranian prisons.

Eyewitness has confirmed violent attacks by Basij and IRGC forces against peaceful protesters. During trials of protestors and political prisoners since the June election, the IRGC has played a visible role in forcing confessions and applying pressure to Judicial officials to issue harsh sentences.

Saeedi's statements before the election and the subsequent actions of the IRGC serve as evidence of the government's preparation to meet protests with force. During a pre-election gathering of IRGC commanders, Saeedi demanded preventative measures, claiming that reformists intended "an overthrow through elections," a charge that can carry the death penalty. Since the election at least eleven people, in show trials of post-election protestors, have been convicted of "moharebeh," or "enmity against God." They received death sentences, and two of them were secretly executed. (i)

Months before the June elections, in December 2009, during a conference titled "Defending Against A Soft War," Saeedi supported using violence by government forces in the interest of "maintaining the regime." (ii) He further stated that more aggression and murders are acceptable in order to protect the regime, referring to the number of dead during the first three battles of Imam Ali after the emergence of Islam he said, "It is worth it to have 75,000 people killed for preserving the regime." (iii) Saeedi's comments as a highly ranked government official directly appointed by the Supreme Leader provided justification and the premise for the use of force by the IRGC and Basij in suppressing peaceful protests.

Hundreds of those arrested were not present in the protests and were arrested at their homes, most of them without any prior record of activities against the Islamic Republic of Iran. Additionally, human rights lawyers have told the Campaign that IRGC intelligence forces have made direct demands of Revolutionary Courts judges to issue harsh sentences for the post-elections protesters.

Several post-election detainees told the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran that they were mistreated and abused physically and psychologically after their arrest. They attest to being pressured to confess to acts they have not committed. One of these individuals was arrested two days after the elections on charges of participation in protests, even though he had not attended any of the gatherings.

He told the Campaign, "Immediately after my arrest, they tried to defeat me psychologically through insults and degradation. During the interrogations in the first week, kicking and slapping me, the interrogator who was from IRGC's Intelligence Unit repeatedly told me to confess to participating in the organization of the protests. But I hadn't left my house after the elections because I was sick. They said that if I didn't make confessions against the reformist leaders I would lose my job and would never be able to continue my education."

According to Iranian law, interference by military personnel in politics is prohibited. Without regard for the law, using his position with IRGC and his appointment by the Supreme Leader, Saeedi made claims that the presence of the IRGC in politics was necessary to suppress dissidents. Saeedi cited the second chapter of IRGC's Articles of Incorporation, under IRGC's mission statement as his reasoning that the IRGC is allowed "legal confrontation with operatives and movements that intend to sabotage, overthrow, or commit any other action against the Islamic Republic of Iran," and "legal confrontation with operatives who use force."

Saeedi claimed on 24 February 2010 that, "In recent post-election events, wherever the regime was faced with threats, the IRGC entered logically and legally. They helped the Ministry of Intelligence in the intelligence area and they helped the police forces in the national security area." (iv) He even gave the IRGC's performance against "threats" "the highest grade." In an interview on 27 July 2009, Saeedi invoked religious fervor by describing the murder of citizens as "shedding blood for Islam." (v) He asked, "Shouldn't we stand against those who come to streets and chant slogans under influence from the West, and protect Islam?" He likened the crackdown on protesters to the Battle of Saffein during Islam's early days, answering the question of who is responsible

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for people's lost lives as, "This is just like the message which was sent to Imam [Khomeini] from Qom during the Imposed [Iran-Iraq] War, asking him to end the war, [asking him] who will be responsible for the shed blood? Imam replied that we will provide the same answer as Imam Ali did to protect Islam during the Saffein Battle."

Background

Ali Saeedi succeeded Movahedi Kermani and served in the position of the Supreme Leader's Representative in the IRGC until 2005. After Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's election, Ali Khamenei, Iran's Supreme Leader, appointed him to the IRGC as his representative. The IRGC's Political Office, which according to several sources served as one of the main centers responsible for designing the post-election crackdown, operates under Saeedi's direction. Saeedi is a former member of Combatant Clergy Association, a conservative organization for the clerics.

Footnotes

i. Pace of Political Executions Accelerating, International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran, 28 January 2010,
http://www.iranhumanrights.org/2010/01/accelerating-executions

ii. Saeedi Supporting the Use of Violence Against Protestors, Radio Zamaneh, 12 January 2010,
http://zamaaneh.com/news/2010/01/_75_2.html

iii. Ibid.

iv. Saeedi Defending the Actions of the Government Against Protestors, Yazd Farda, 24 February 2010,
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v. Government Deserves Highest Grade for Actions: Saeedi, Asr Iran, 27 July 2009,
http://www.asriran.com/fa/pages/?cid=70358

Ayatollah Mohammad Taghi Mesbah Yazdi

Member of the Assembly of Experts

Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi is head of the Khomeini Education and Research Institute in Qom and a member of the Council of Experts. Over the past decade, he has become known as "the theoretician of violence," for his unabashed promotion and defense of state-sponsored violence against dissidents. Through his inflammatory statements, he has been a leading figure in instigating violence against peaceful protestors objecting to election results and human rights violations.

Following protests over the June 2009 Presidential election, Yazdi called all individuals who oppose the government, including election protestors, "corrupters on earth" and "mohareb," or "enemies of God," charges that are punishable by death under Iranian laws. Thirteen individuals have been charged with moharebeh during post-election trials.

Yazdi has publicly licensed acts against demonstrators and opposition groups by using his religious influence to support the infallibility of government officials. He is a staunch supporter of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, publishing support letters for both of Ahmadinejad's terms. (i)

In an August 2009 meeting with a group of Basij forces at the Imam Khomeini Institute, Yazdi said, "When the President is appointed and confirmed by the Supreme Leader, he becomes his operative and through this transition will receive the light…when the President receives the orders of the Supreme Leader, obeying him is the same as obeying God." (ii) Yazdi's assertion of Presidential infallibility characterizes protests over election results and any criticism of Ahmadinejad as moharebeh. In another speech, on 17 July 2009, in Mashad, Yazdi called peaceful protests against election results "sedition," saying some who opposed the Supreme Leader have attempted a "velvet revolution" through "riots." (iii)

In January 2010, in a meeting with IRGC commanders a few weeks before a group of arrested detainees were sentenced to death for moharebeh, Yazdi explicitly called election protests "corruption on earth" saying, "The sedition and events, which took place during the recent months in the country, have not been unprecedented throughout history and this won't be the last of them. Of course the types of slogans, actions, and covers are different, but they all share the same title--corruption on earth." (iv)

The International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran demands an objective investigation about the existence or lack thereof of any fatwa by Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi for the execution of political dissidents. Since Yazdi's name was mentioned as the religious leader who issued the fatwa for the chain murders of five intellectuals by Intelligence Ministry agents in 1988 as well as the 2000 assassination attempt on reformist Saeed Hajjarian, the Campaign expresses concern about the existence of such a fatwa justifying political executions. (v)

Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi's speeches are a clear promotion, propagation, and incitement to violence through public speech. His words have legitimized violence from his religious position. Though Yazdi did not have any administrative responsibilities during post-election crackdowns on protesters, his regard amongst Iranian security, intelligence, and judicial personnel is suspected as a reason for moharebeh sentences and the executions of dissidents.

Extremist cleric Ayatollah Mohammad Taghi Mesbah Yazdi has clearly advocated violence and the use of the death penalty to suppress dissidents. (vi) Considering that in many of the murders of dissidents after the 1979 Revolution, the footprints of fatwas made by certain extremist clerics have been established, the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran believes that Yazdi must be investigated and held accountable.

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Background

Born in 1934 in Yazd, Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi is the founder and director of the Imam Khomeini Education and Research Institute, a member of the Council of Experts, the High Council of Cultural Revolution, and the Qom Hawzeh Teachers Association, Head of the International High Society of Ahl-e-Beit, and a scholar at Qom Seminary. After the Islamic Revolution of 1979, Yazdi had an active role in the establishment of the Office for Coordination of Hawzeh and Universities. In 1990, he was elected as a member of the Council of Experts from the Province of Khuzistan, and in the subsequent elections for the Council of Experts, he was elected from Tehran.

Footnotes

i. Letters by Yazdi in Support of Ahmadinejad, Raja News, http://rajanews.com/detail.asp?lang_id=&id=39383

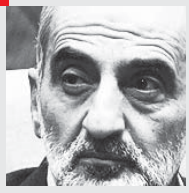
ii. Speech by Yazdi on Obeying the President, Farda News, 12 August 2009, http://www.fardanews.com/fa/pages/?cid=88589

iii. Lecture by Yazdi Calling Protests 'Sedition', MesbahYazdi.org, 17 June 2009, http://mesbahyazdi.org/farsi/?speeches/lectures/lectures31.htm

iv. Yazdi Calling Protests 'Corruption on Earth', Aftab News, 6 January 2010, http://www.aftabnews.ir/vdchqknw.23nxmdftt2.html

v. Akbar Ganji, in his trail in December 2000, named Yazdi as the individual who provoked the murders by issuing the requisite fatwa for them, calling him "the leader of Grey Eminences." Ganji wrote: "Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi issued the fatwa for the murder and massacre of the journalists. He also wrote a letter to Iran's Supreme Leader to uphold the execution sentences of Hashem Aghajari and prominent cleric Ahmad Ghabel. "After the 2001 chain murders in the city of Kerman, several Basij members, prosecuted for committing the murders, said that after hearing a speech by Yazdi they determined it was their duty by Sharia to kill those "whose blood should be wasted." In a letter to the court, Yazdi denied a specific fatwa for the five murders, but confirmed his speech about "guiding orders" and the necessity of the personal actions of Basij members in following "guiding orders."

vi. One of Yazdi's most controversial statements in the promotion of violence by the government in confronting opposition is: "If the realization of Islamic goals cannot be attained in any way other than violence, then it is necessary." Sobh-e Emruz Newspaper, June 7, 1999)



Hossein Shariatmadari

Managing Editor of Kayhan Newspaper

Hossein Shariatmadari, Editor-in-Chief of Kayhan Newspaper, is one of the individuals who first accused reformist presidential candidates of fomenting a velvet revolution during the vote count after the June 2009 presidential elections, and promoted violence against protestors. Shariatmadari's definition of a "velvet revolution" soon became the dominant concept used by the IRGC, Ministry of Intelligence, Basij, and police forces as a justification for cracking down on the post-election protesters.

On 14 June 2009, Kayhan Newspaper published an article claiming that information received by the newspaper indicated that, "The collection of scattered movements in the City of Tehran during the 24 hours after the presidential elections is a product of the plan by the reformists' riots and anarchy operations group in Tehran." (i)

Accusing reformist figures, Kayhan wrote, "According to the latest reports, this group has met several times during the past 24 hours with the effective participation of Mohsen Aminzadeh and Mostafa Tajzadeh, and is planning propagation of lies and rumors, as well as organizing hoodlums and gangsters for street riots." (ii)

Only hours after the newspaper was published, dozens of reformist political figures, several journalists, and campaign managers for reformist candidates Mir Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karroubi were arrested and imprisoned. Some of the arrested individuals told the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran that their arrest warrants did not contain their names and that the document was a blanket arrest warrant for many. Several arrested individuals, including prominent human rights lawyer Abdolfattah Soltani, have confirmed that the general arrest warrant, which did not have any names or specific charges on it, was signed by Tehran Prosecutor, Saeed Mortazavi.

During the days immediately following the elections and while street protests were taking place, Shariatmadari repeatedly attributed the public gatherings to foreign powers. (iii)

Kayhan's narrative about the post-election events was later used as a factual account by the Ministry of Intelligence and the IRGC to crack down on dissidents and to arrest, torture, abuse, and mistreat them in detention centers, forcing them to make false confessions resulting in long-term prison sentences for them.

On Tuesday, 15 June 2009, Kayhan Newspaper called the spontaneous post-election public protests "organized," and, stepping into the shoes of Ministry of Intelligence and the IRGC, announced that the main elements in charge of the protests were "completely" related to intelligence circles abroad. This newspaper never presented any evidence for its claims.

In a 16 June 2009 article entitled "Where Is the Command Room of The Riots?" Kayhan stated, "One of the most important discussions we must have about the recent unrest in Tehran is that these riots are completely organized and considerable money and a kind of coherent organization exist behind their scene. Considering the complete and thorough similarity of the plans implemented by certain elements both before and after elections to the color revolution models of Eastern Europe and Central Asia, as well as the existence of ample evidence about the coordinated efforts of the rioters and the fact that many of them are mercenaries, this view is now strengthened that the main elements responsible for these riots are completely related to intelligence centers abroad and of course identifying and confronting them is being seriously pursued at this time. The main problem of the planners of these riots right now is that first of all the riots did not spread at all and are limited to a few areas in Northern Tehran, and also the fact that the 25 million people who voted for Mr. Ahmadinejad would not [just] watch these scenes and with a single cue, they would end all rioters."

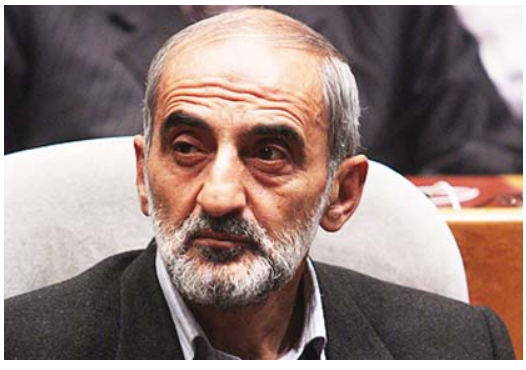
Concurrent with arrests of journalists such as Maziar Bahari, Kayhan repeatedly accused journalists of espionage for foreign states. (v) Several months after his arrest and imprisonment, Maziar Bahari was forced to make false confessions and after he was finally able to leave the country, he described the physical and mental coercion for extracting those confessions. In effect, during the post-election days Kayhan Newspaper practically acted as a part of the intelligence and security apparatus in confronting and suppressing journalists with claims which were never proven in a court of law.

Also during the post-election days, using provocative titles such as "A Wave of People's Vendetta Against Mir Hossein Mousavi", this newspaper attempted to rile intelligence and security forces to crackdown on the protesters. (vi) By assigning responsibility for the deaths of dozens of protesters on the streets to the critical candidates, Kayhan Newspaper brought up new charges which were never proven in any court of law.

The International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran believes that during those critical days, with the wide range of accusations Kayhan Newspaper made against political figures and groups, it played a pivotal role in laying the ground for and intensifying the crackdown of intelligence and security forces against the protesters. For example, on 24 June 2009, Kayhan wrote that money was distributed amongst the post-elections protesters. The newspaper further accused those close to Mir Hossein Mousavi of involvement in these actions. (vii) A large group of this reformist candidate's close supporters were arrested after the elections. The newspaper wrote:

"It is in the wake of such crimes, a wave of people's vendetta against Mir Hossein Mousavi rin increasing every day. Mir Hossein cannot dodge responsibility under the guise of participating in memorial services for the dead or childish actions such as lighting candles, etc. He cannot escape answering the question that if he hadn't insisted on breaking the law--which only means that he does not have any credible evidence [for his claims]--would the background and atmosphere and necessary conditions for all these crimes have been provided or not? All this while news and substantive evidence exists [showing] that

The International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran demands an investigation into the role of Hossein Shariatmadari in planning and directing the post-elections crackdown and the utilization of Kayhan newspaper in promotion of violence against peaceful protests, accusations and libel against legal dissidents, and support of violence against the protesters. The International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran also demands that considering the background of Kayhan Newspaper's Editor-in-Chief in security and intelligence agencies and his direct interference in cases such as the 2005 arrests of bloggers and similar cases, his relationship with security organizations be clarified and his role in manipulating public opinion toward implementation of goals and plans of intelligence organizations toward political objectives be further investigated.



during the recent days, large sums of money were distributed amongst the rioters and certain individuals who have all been identified have been busy organizing hoodlums and gangsters for creating insecurity on the streets. All these actions were done within the framework of supporting Mousavi and in significant instances of it, official members of his [elections campaign] headquarters and reformists close to him were involved."

While journalists such as Newsweek reporter Maziar Bahari and reformist newspaper journalist Amir Hossein Mahdavi were forced to make confessions, Kayhan Newspaper widely publicized contents of those confessions. In the meantime, independent lawyers and human rights organizations all refuted the credibility of such confessions. In one of its articles, Kayhan Newspaper published Amir Hossein Mahdavi's confessions and predicted that his confessions were "the first of their kind," a statement which attracted a lot of attention to the "prisoner confessions project." (viii) Over the next few weeks after this article was published, more confessions by reformist figures were published and broadcast on television, proving that Kayhan's "prediction" had been correct and that extracting forced confessions had in fact been seriously in progress in prisons.

Though people such as Mir Hossein Mousavi, Khatami, or Karroubi were never tried in a court of law, immediately after the elections, Kayhan's Editor-in-Chief began a campaign to claim that he had predicted the objections of the opposition candidates and that all this was a plan dictated to them by foreign powers. (ix) Kayhan Editor-in-Chief's statements indicated that the crackdown on protesters had been discussed several months prior to the elections. In many ways the statements closely resembled the indictment against some 100 individuals arrested during the post-election protests, which was read in court several months after the publication of this article. The similarities between Hossein Shariatmadari's statements and what was stated in the indictment also strengthens suspicions about the Kayhan Editor-in-Chief's coordination or cooperation with intelligence organizations or the influence this newspaper has on security organizations, all of which led to the crackdown on the protesters, which left dozens of people dead and hundreds injured.

Kayhan's Editor-in-Chief addressed the surprise of many about his predictions regarding the post-elections unrest by making accusations, which have never been raised in a court of law against the individuals named, stating:

"Many of those who were blaming Kayhan on Wednesday, 10 June 2009 about predicting the riots which would follow Mir Hossein Mousavi's defeat in elections, complainingly asking 'How do you know there would be riots?!.' Starting on Saturday 13 June 2009 in their telephone calls or visits, many would ask with surprise, 'How did Kayhan know that Mousavi's gang was planning to riot?' And our answer is that we didn't perform any miracles here! And it wasn't fortunetelling either! (x) Kayhan has only had a cursory look at the process of this story. All those who have carefully followed the recent events from a few months ago till now, and who have observed the undeniable attunement of those claiming reforms with American and Israeli circles, would reach the undeniable conclusion that the awful-sounding trumpet of the recent sedition is being played from the other side of the borders and only its loudspeaker is installed inside Mousavi's [campaign] headquarters. We have presented ample, undeniable evidence about this so far and all we have heard in return, instead of denials or reasoning, have been curses and profanities..."

In the same article, Kayhan's Editor-in-Chief accused Mir Hossein Mousavi of "murders of innocent people, arranging riots and fracas, and especially cooperation with foreign services for weakening the Islamic Republic regime," threatening trials and potential punishment. The quoted instances are only a small sampling of statements and positions reflected by Kayhan's Editor-in-Chief made during the days after the elections.

The International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran demands an investigation into the role of Hossein Shariatmadari in planning and directing the post-elections crackdown and the utilization of Kayhan newspaper in promotion of violence against peaceful protests, accusations and libel against legal dissidents, and support of violence against the protesters. The International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran also demands that considering the background of Kayhan Newspaper's Editor-in-Chief in security and intelligence agencies and his direct interference in cases such as the 2005 arrests of bloggers and similar cases, his relationship with security organizations be clarified and his role in manipulating public opinion toward implementation of goals and plans of intelligence organizations toward political objectives be further investigated.

Footnotes

i. Article in Kayhan Claiming Protests were Planned by Reformists, Kayhan News, 14 June 2009, http://kayhannews.ir/880324/2.htm#other206

ii. Article in Kayhan Accusing Reformists of Plotting Protests, Kayhan News, 14 June 2009, http://kayhannews.ir/880324/2.htm#other208

iii. Protests Are the Work of Foreign Powers, Kayhan News, 15 June 2009, http://kayhannews.ir/880325/2.htm#other204

iv. Where is the Command Room of the Riots?, Kayhan News, 16 June 2009, http://kayhannews.ir/880326/2.htm#other200

v. Journalists Are Spies for Foreign States, Kayhan News, 23 June 2009, http://kayhannews.ir/880402/2.htm#other208

vi. A Wave of People's Vendetta Against Mir Hossein Mousavi, Kayhan News, 24 June 2009, http://kayhannews.ir/880403/3.htm#other307

vii. Ibid.

viii. Amir Hossein Mahdavi's Confession, Kayhan News, 28 June 2009, http://kayhannews.ir/880408/2.htm#other209

ix. Protest Plans were Dictated to Reformists by Foreign States, Kayhan News, 28 June 2009, http://kayhannews.ir/880407/2.htm#other200

x. Ibid.

On the anniversary of the disputed June 2009 election and one year of unprecedented violence and repression in Iran, the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran is releasing this report naming fifteen leading officials responsible for carrying out the brutal repression against peaceful protestors and civil society activists. The 36-page report, Men of Violence: Perpetrators of the Post Election Crackdown, provides detailed profiles of fifteen officials who either implemented brutal policies of repression or instigated and promoted violence against protestors.
(The report is available in multimedia as well as print formats on the Campaign's website).
Although the Iranian Judiciary has moved swiftly in prosecuting dissidents and protestors in patently unfair trails, it has taken no steps to identify and hold responsible those committing widespread atrocities.

According to government's own accounts, at least 48 protestors died on the streets during the past year as well as four detainees who were murdered under torture at the Kahrizak Detention center.
According to Iranian human rights defenders, the number of those killed is much higher, but the government has intimidated the families of the dead regarding publicizing their names.

The Campaign calls on the international community, particularly countries where the fifteen human rights violators named in this report may travel to or hold financial assets, to implement travel bans against them and freeze their assets. These countries could particularly include member states of the European Union, Canada, UAE, and Malaysia.

INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN IRAN

http://www.iranhumanrights.org