

## Chronology of Events in Iran, June 2003\*

### June 2

#### **Iranian Student Group refused rally permit. (Iranian newspaper *Toseh* and Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty RFE/RL *Iran Report*).**

Iranian government has refused to issue permission for a rally to the country's main politically active student group. The rally was scheduled for 9 July – the anniversary of the 1999 attack on a Tehran University dormitory by security personnel and vigilantes. Abdullah Momeni, secretary of the majority Allameh wing of the Office for Fostering Unity (OFU; Farsi: *Tahkime Vahdat*), said that exams end on 1 July and that because the summer holiday will have begun the rally must be held off-campus. Momeni said citizens are constitutionally entitled to hold rallies, and that by refusing to issue the permit the government is depriving them of the right to condemn the 1999 attack. It was previously reported that Iranian universities witnessed several violent incidents in recent weeks. Activities in Isfahan, Hamedan, and Tehran that were organized by the Office for Strengthening Unity were disrupted by rival conservative student groups.

### June 6

#### **Iranian police beat Azeri workers on hunger strike. (Azerbaijani newspaper *Ekspress*).**\*

Iranian security forces reportedly launched an attack on a group of workers on hunger strike at the Behshahr textile mill. The workers were beaten up and injured in the attack, according to the World Congress of Azerbaijanis. Workers were on hunger strike since they have not been paid for months. They also demand that their living standards and working conditions be improved. Tehran officials, who commented on this issue, accused the workers of being guided by foreign forces.

### June 10

#### **Student protests in Tehran. (Agence France Presse / AFP).**

Thousands of protestors packed an area around Tehran University's dormitories overnight, shouting slogans against the Islamic republic's leadership before being violently dispersed by security forces. In the first major student-led protest for more

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\* *Disclaimer: Reports contained in this document are selected from publicly available resources and edited by country experts. The information provided here is not, and does not purport to be, either exhaustive with regard to conditions in the country of origin surveyed, or conclusive as to the merits of any particular claim. Further information may be obtained from BO Ankara*

\* *Editor's note: This report has not been confirmed by any major news source.*

than six months, young activists gathered near the dormitories, defying several attempts by police and members of the hardline Islamist Basij volunteer militia to break up the gathering. "Cannons, tanks and Basij are useless" and "Free political prisoners" were among the milder anti-regime slogans shouted, as thousands of passing cars added to the noise with a cacophony of horns. The numbers of protestors swelled to thousands as they were joined by more participants, mostly young people, but also some families and residents of the capital from all social classes.

*Editor's note: The reports below are various accounts of the continuation of the same event for the following days, including those on demonstrations and related events in Hamedan, Mashhad, Tabriz, Esfahan, Shiraz, Urumiyeh, Sabzevar, Yazd and Ahvaz as well as Tehran. Other news for June 10 and the subsequent days will follow these serial reports.*

**Associated Press report of June 11 on demonstrations in Tehran:** Clashes erupted in Tehran as protests continued into a second day, with anti-riot police and vigilantes beating up teenage demonstrators who had taken to the streets to denounce supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Dozens of vigilantes on motorbikes chased down around 300 mostly teenage protesters, beating them with sticks in the streets outside the Tehran University dormitory in Amirabad district. The protesters, chanting, "Death to Khamenei," threw stones at anti-riot police, who threw them back. Around 200 students in the dormitory compound threw stones and molotov cocktails at the anti-riot police after they joined the vigilantes attacking the protesters. Several people were seen being carried away with head injuries. Following the protest, which lasted into the early hours, security officials warned that further demonstrations against the political leadership would not be tolerated. The mass arrests send the message that authorities will not put up with any backlash ahead of the fourth anniversary of an attack on a Tehran University dormitory.

**Iranian Students News Agency (ISNA) report of June 11 on demonstrations in Tehran:** The Information Minister reported the arrest of a 19-strong headquarters of "agitators". Information Minister Hojjat ol-Eslam val Moslemin Ali Yunesi said that 80 arrests had been made. He said that the arrested persons were chanting illegal slogans owing to "provocation by foreign elements, extremists and radicals inside the country". He said the Ministry had "clear evidence and documents to that effect". He said: "These people initiated actions in the middle of the night to attract outlaws and rogues, and they violated people's property. They even intended to attack the university, but were prevented from doing so by the security forces."

**AFP report of June 11 on demonstrations in Mashhad:** Eight members of the Iranian group Ansar Hezbollah, including a local leader, have been arrested in the city of Mashhad for attacking a student gathering. The group had allegedly attacked students protesting an Ansar assault the previous week on a gathering scheduled to include speeches from reformist deputies. Ansar Hezbollah has reportedly been targeting some of the 135 MPs who recently signed an open letter addressed to Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, urging him to give way to reforms or risk the future of the Islamic republic.

**Associated Press report of June 12 on demonstrations in Tehran:** Hundreds of protesters called for the death of Iran's supreme leader Ali Khamenei as thousands of onlookers watched, despite threats by the regime to crack down to end the

disturbances. The demonstrators concentrated in two areas, around Tehran University and near the Intercontinental Hotel, though the protesters had left the university area late June 11 night. Before they dispersed, police had prevented some two dozen pro-Khamenei vigilantes on motorcycles - at times from confronting the students. Thousands of people looked on, sometimes clapping with the protesters and taking up their chants. Residents near the university hospital left their doors open so that demonstrators could find quick shelter if the authorities cracked down. Similar scenes were evident near the hotel, where about 500 hard-liners on motorcycles chased down protesters, beating them with cattle prods and circling around, gunning their engines, witnesses said. Some onlookers struck back at the vigilantes, hitting them with their fists. Near the hotel, two motorcycles were set aflame. Riot police later rushed the crowd near the hotel, dispersing the demonstrators and sending the onlookers running. Even as it approached 2 a.m. June 12, traffic was bumper-to-bumper in downtown Tehran as curious residents stayed out to watch developments. Exiled opposition groups, on the other hand, have seized the opportunity created by Iranian youth, encouraging dissent through avenues like Los Angeles-based Persian TV channels. U.S. pressure on Iran, may have further emboldened those who hope to see the regime toppled.

**Reuters report of June 13 on demonstrations in Tehran:** Automatic gunfire was heard in Tehran as hundreds of Iranian pro-clergy militiamen, some armed with Kalashnikov rifles, attacked groups of people protesting against clerical rule. In the most serious violence since pro-democracy demonstrations started four days ago, witnesses also reported seeing riot police and hard-line vigilantes pulling young women out of cars and beating them with sticks. The youths had been throwing stones and chanting slogans including "Death to Khamenei". In a tense atmosphere in central Tehran, Islamic militiamen, mostly belonging to the hard-line Ansar-e Hizbollah group, manned checkpoints and looked carefully into vehicles which were circling the streets around the university campus. "They pulled some people out of their cars and beat them with their fists and sticks. Even young girls were beaten," a photographer at the scene said. "I've seen at least 10 injured people. One man had a knife wound," he added. Khamenei had called Thursday on vigilante groups such as Ansar and the Basij volunteer force linked to Iran's Revolutionary Guards "not to enter the scene."

**Agence France Presse report of June 13 on demonstrations in Tehran:** About 40 students were injured and 10 arrested in several hours of clashes at a Tehran university between demonstrators and Iranian police special forces, a student leader said. Another 100 were reported suffering from exposure to the tear-gas fired by the special forces.

**Iranian Students News Agency report of June 13 on demonstrations in Tehran:** Five people who were suspected of being connected with the Ansar-Hezbollah - some of whom were also carrying tear gas canisters - were identified by university students. They are held in the TV buildings nos. 14 and 15 on the campus. One of those arrested introduced himself as Ahmad Sa'idi, a sergeant in the Law-Enforcement Force. Another person who was connected with the Ansar and was arrested, introduced himself as Sadeq Zahedifar. He had blood on his face because he was beaten. He said that he was a sergeant at the 116th Shahid Namju police station. It is noteworthy that all of those five people were nabbed by university students and on the

campus. They are in good physical conditions. Two Law-Enforcement Force officers, with the rank of major, who entered buildings nos. 14 and 15 to take custody of the four people who had been nabbed, saw university students forming chains and chanting the slogans.

**Agence France Presse report of June 13 on demonstrations in Tehran:** About 40 students were injured and 10 arrested in several hours of clashes at a Tehran university between demonstrators and Iranian police special forces, a student leader said on the night of June 12-13. It was reported that about 40 students were injured, most of them only slightly. About 10 were arrested and another 100 are suffering from exposure to the tear-gas fired by the special forces. The students reportedly fought back with stones against the police forces, who were backed by the regime's Islamic volunteer militia, in the protest at Shahid Beheshti university. They also chanted slogans hostile to Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, including "Death to the dictator" and "Khamenei, step down from the throne."

**Agence France Presse report of June 13 on demonstrations in Tehran:** Islamic vigilantes used clubs and iron bars around a Tehran university campus overnight June 13-14 to disperse thousands of anti-regime protestors. Hundreds of members of the Basij volunteer militia, among the most fervent defenders of the Islamic regime, were seen chasing gatherings of demonstrators through streets surrounding Tehran university dormitories - the focal point of four consecutive nights of demonstrations. The area surrounding the dormitories remained sealed off in the early hours by hundreds of police. However thousands of cars full of residents hoping to join the protests managed to approach the facility through back streets.

**Associated Press report of June 13 on demonstrations in Tehran:** Hundreds of militants and security forces clashed with Iranians throughout the capital overnight, firing machine guns in the air and using tear gas and batons in ongoing violence aimed at putting down any public opposition to the country's regime. The clashes were the most intense and widespread of four consecutive nights of clashes in Tehran, which were sparked by university students and snowballed into broader displays of opposition to Iran's clerical establishment. Unlike previous nights, however, no protests against the "Supreme Leader" Ayatollah Ali Khamenei were seen, making it unclear what sparked the night's clashes involving hundreds of militants - some in groups of two to four, others on motorcycles - who beat pedestrians with batons, brandished knives or hurled rocks at crowds and homes. The largest crowds were concentrated around the Tehran University compound in the capital's Amirabad district, the scene of numerous clashes between students and security forces during recent nights. Hundreds of police had locked down the area earlier in the day, lining streets to prevent crowds of people from gathering and stopping suspect cars for spot searches. On June 13 night, packs of militants - often backed by security forces - rushed crowds of onlookers, beating them with batons and their fists in order to break up the crowds. Some of the militants were seen riding motorcycles and chasing pedestrians. The charred wreck of at least one the militant's motorcycle, apparently burned by ordinary Iranians, was seen lying in a street nearby the university. Witnesses said security officers fired machine guns in the air and tear gas at crowds to disperse hundreds of onlookers in a residential area two kilometers from the

dormitory. Reports of clashes came in from scores of locations throughout the capital, particularly in areas surrounding Tehran University's dormitory.

**Iranian Labour News Agency report of June 13 on demonstrations in Tehran:**

Tension and unrest erupted at the Shahid Beheshti University when a group of students left the campus. Some 60 students left the campus and clashed with the so-called plainclothesmen. It was reported that the students left the university campus at around 01:00 and made bonfires. People from the Valenjak neighbourhood were present around the campus. The Law Enforcement Force had no significant presence in the area.

Clashes intensified after plainclothesmen entered the Shahid Beheshti University campus. Some 100 students who had gathered at the dormitory clashed with the plainclothesmen who had entered the campus. Latest reports said some 540 students have clashed with the plainclothesmen outside the campus. The Special Guard of the Law Enforcement Force has also been engaged around the Shahid Beheshti University.

The Special Guard of the Law Enforcement Force has entered the men's dormitory of Shahid Beheshti University. At about 03:00, about 40 members of the Special Guard of the Law Enforcement Force, as well as plainclothesmen, entered the dormitory but were forced back as the result of students throwing stone. The report indicates that two students were detained, handcuffed and blindfolded for throwing stones. A number of students threw inflammable material at the plainclothesmen in an effort to push them back from the university dormitory.

**Iranian *Baztab* web site's report of June 13 on demonstrations in Tehran:** The director-general of Iranian Students' News Agency said: "The Law-Enforcement Force personnel severely beat me up with their batons during the events on the university campus on June 13. Dr Abolfazl Fateh said: "Law-Enforcement Force personnel threw stones at university students and swore at them. When I protested about this and said that what the Law-Enforcement Force was doing was wrong, a Law-Enforcement Force commander ordered them to attack me and I was severely wounded as a result."

**Iranian Students News Agency / ISNA report of June 13 on demonstrations in Ahvaz:** A group of young people in the Kianpars neighbourhood of Ahvaz staged a rally at night for supporting the student protests. After these protests, a group of plainclothesmen, known as the Ansar, took hostile action which led to confrontation between the two sides. The gathering ended at about 22:30 with the intervention of the security and law enforcement forces. A Law Enforcement Force official in Ahvaz said that a number of people have been arrested in this connection.

**Iranian Labour News Agency report of June 14 on demonstrations in Tehran:**

The Social Sciences Department at `Allameh Tabataba'i University witnessed a spontaneous gathering of students in protest to the recent events. The students of the Social Sciences Department at `Allameh Tabataba'i University, in protest to the recent events at universities and the incidents at the dormitory of the `Allameh Tabataba'i University, gathered at the department's grounds from noon, and setup platforms for free speech in order to announce their views.

**Iranian Labour News Agency report of June 14 on demonstrations in Tehran:**

The student dormitory at `Allameh Tabataba'i (Tarasht) University was the scene of clashes with the plainclothesmen early morning. A number of students from the dormitory blocked the Jalal Al-Ahmad highway as a result of which a group of special guards and plainclothesmen entered the Tarasht dormitory several hours later and clashes between students and these forces followed. A number of students from the dormitory were arrested and others were sent to the hospital, the report added.

**Associated Press report of June 14 on demonstrations in Tehran:** Further protests broke out in the town of Gohardasht but were stopped by 200 anti-riot police hours later. The Gohardasht protests sparked clashes that saw 100 hard-liners attack protesters. About three dozen people, mostly teenage girls, were arrested.

**Iranian Students News Agency report of June 14 on demonstrations in Tehran:** It was reported that there was an extremely heavy traffic in North-Karegar Avenue [Tehran University's area] between Laleh Park and Jalal Aal-e Ahmad intersection around the midnight. More than 50 motorcyclists riding pillion moved towards the south of North-Karegar Avenue, chanting "Allah-u Akbar" [Allah is the greatest]. Some 50 plainclothesmen chanting "Long live Hezbollah" were stationed next to a petrol station in the same road. They arrested those they believe are suspicious. Some of them were dressed in military camouflage. It was also reported that there was a very heavy traffic in Kordestan expressway. Along this expressway, near Akbari hill and ASP buildings, the Special Unit and some 50 demonstrators threw stones at each other.

**Iranian Fars News Agency report of June 14 on demonstrations in Tehran:** A warrant has been issued for the arrest of Sa'id Asgar and a number of his associates. Following the recent riots on the university campus and the role played by suspicious elements from outside the university in prolonging the clashes, Sa'id Asgar and a number of his associates were arrested on the orders of the Tehran Prosecutor-General Sa'id Mortazavi. They were charged with involvement in beating up university students in a number of dormitories.

**ISNA report of June 14 on demonstrations in Esfahan:** There have been unrest and sporadic clashes in downtown Esfahan. The clashes started about 22:00 [local time] on June 13 as plainclothesmen riding motorcycles appeared in sidewalks of Esfahan. The clashes continued until morning. The plainclothesmen are believed to be affiliated with the [vigilante group] Ansar-e Hezbollah. After clashes broke out between the plainclothesmen and a number of individuals, riot police entered the scene and dispersed them at upper Charbagh Avenue. As the Ansar forces continued their action, the windows of two vehicles carrying plainclothesmen were shattered. One of these vehicles had no identification plates. The Ansar forces had batons, radios and film and photography cameras. The protesters threw rubbish, stones, bottles and burned car tyres. A number of plainclothesmen prevented the reporters' presence in the scene and threatened to arrest them. There were some 80 to 90 plainclothesmen riding motorcycles. Eyewitnesses say between 80 to 100 people have been battered and arrested by plainclothesmen in various streets of Esfahan.

**Iranian Labour News Agency report of June 15 on demonstrations in Tehran:**

Two students who had taken part in demonstrations at Tehran University were arrested when leaving the university in front of the Law Enforcement Force officers.

**IRNA report of June 15 on demonstrations in Tehran:** The head of the Iranian police's information department, Ali Asghar Mahaki, said on June 14 that five banks, 22 cars and 34 motorbikes have been damaged during four days of student unrest from June 11-14. He further said that 60 people, including 32 law enforcement forces and 28 ordinary people, were wounded by stone-throwers.

**IRNA report of June 15 on demonstrations in Tehran:** The Commander of the Greater Tehran Law-Enforcement Force, Brig-Gen Morteza Tala'i, announced that 30 "hooligans and anti-social elements" were arrested in the early hours in connection with the recent riots in Tehran. According to the police chief, the arrests were made near Park Laleh in central Tehran.

**ISNA report of June 16 on demonstrations in Esfahan:** Governor of Esfahan, Qodratollah Nowruzi, confirmed the reports of unrest in the city on the night of 15-16 June. He said that there were scenes of unrest in the southern districts of the city and rioters attacked bank branches, cars and other public property. About 50 rioters were arrested in the city and they were being questioned by the police. Mohammad Hoseyn Ghazanfari, the governor of Meymeh, also confirmed that there were some riots in the district of Shahin-Shahr that night. He said: "Around 22:00 last night some rioters, misled by the counter-revolutionary press, attacked public buildings and some shops as well as bank branches in Shahin-Shahr. However, thanks to the timely response of the Law-Enforcement Force and our Basij brothers, the rioters were dispersed by 02:15 in the morning." He said that about 100 people were arrested.

**Iranian *Baztab* web site report of June 18 on demonstrations in Hamedan:** The unrest that started in Bu-Ali University in the city of Hamedan on the evening of June 16, continued until the morning of June 18. It was reported that on the evening of June 16, about 150 students of this university gathered outside the main gates chanting slogans and throwing stones at the Law-Enforcement officers. In the course of this clash, nine police officers were injured and 10 students were arrested. On the night of June 17, another group of students gathered outside the main gates of the university chanting slogans against the authorities of the state. They then moved towards girls' hostel in the campus, breaking window panes of the hostel. They set fire to a section of the hostel. They also reportedly attacked and smashed windows of the main budget building of the university.

**Azerbaijani TV station "Lider"s report of June 19 on demonstrations in Tabriz:** \* Tabriz students have joined the protest actions of Tehran students. Hundreds of students outside the faculty of chemistry at Tabriz University staged a rally, chanting slogans in Azerbaijani "Khatami, resign!" and "Freedom to nations!". The authorities brutally dispersed the rally and imposed a curfew in the city. The law-enforcement agencies attacked a dormitory and beat up protesters. There are seriously injured students.

**Agence France Presse report of June 20 on demonstrations in Tehran:** Protests appeared to have largely stopped in Tehran and provincial cities, bringing to an end more than a week of sporadic unrest that has been met with a tough police crackdown. On the 10th night of protests (June 19), fewer people were out in their cars around Tehran in contrast to previous nights that have seen thousands of people take part in

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\* *Editor's note: This report has not been confirmed by any major news source.*

bumper-to-bumper nocturnal demonstrations. There were also no immediate reports of major gatherings or unrest in other Iranian cities, which have seen major clashes between anti-government demonstrators and hardline Islamist vigilantes over the past few nights. The clampdown on the vigilantes has significantly reduced tensions.

**Agence France Presse report of June 20 on demonstrations in Tehran:** A top cleric called on Iran's judiciary to treat "rioters" arrested during 10 nights of anti-regime protests as "enemies of Allah" - a charge that carries the death penalty. "I ask the head of the judiciary and public prosecutors across Iran not to treat these people with compassion as they endangered the country's security. Islamic Sharia and our laws are explicit on what we should do with them," Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi said in a Friday prayers sermon. "The judiciary should deal with these people as Moharebs (those who fight Allah) and not as Mokhalef (those who oppose Allah)," he added, urging the courts to handle the detainees "quickly, meticulously, seriously and ruthlessly". Ayatollah Yazdi is a former head of Iran's judiciary and currently a prominent jurist sitting on both the Guardians Council and Expediency Council. Many radical demonstrators also chanted slogans against Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, a serious crime in the Islamic Republic.

**ISNA report of June 21 on demonstrations in Esfahan:** Although less widespread than the riots that took place between June 16-18, the unrest continued in Esfahan. A petrol bomb was thrown into a women's theological seminary in Esfahan on June 20. Rioters threw flammable material at and smashed the windows of Melli Bank branches on Ebn-e Sina Street, the Abhar branch, and the Jey Street, the bazaar, branch of the bank. Moreover, assemblies in which between 20 to 60 people took part, were held in Dehnow Street, Imam Street, Quds Housing Estate, Hamidiyeh Street, Atashgah Street, Radani Street and Kaveh Housing Estate. Those involved chanted slogans and set fire to tyres and some of them smashed the windows of the cars passing by. Moreover, another report from Esfahan indicates that the rioters set fire to a bus belonging to the Vahed Bus Company in Naser Khosrow Street.

**ISNA report of June 21 on demonstrations in Tehran:** The deputy for political affairs at the office of the governor-general of Tehran has said that the Tehran Justice Department was the institution that was responsible for the recent arrests of university students. Reza'i-Babadi stated that they did not know which institution was responsible for making those arrests. However, judging from the statements made by the prosecutor-general of Tehran, the arrests were made on the basis of a warrant issued by the prosecutor-general of Tehran.

**ILNA report June 22 on demonstrations in Esfahan:** The Political Office of the Governor of Shahin-Shahr has denied rumours that there was unrest in Shahin-Shahr or Fulad-Shahr, near Esfahan, last night. The Political Office of the Esfahan's Zarin-Shahr, which has Fulad-Shahr as one of its suburbs, also denied any knowledge of the matter. Mohammad Jazi, the Majlis deputy for Barkhar and Maymeh, also denied rumours about unrest in Shahin-Shahr. Namazi, the deputy for Lanjan, also denied rumours about unrest in Esfahan's Fulad-Shahr, and said: In the past few days there was some unrest in the area but there has been no fatalities. Furthermore, through the cooperation of officials and the law enforcement forces, there has been a quiet night. He added that some of the accused were recently arrested and were under interrogation.



**Reuters report of June 22 on demonstrations in Tehran:** Iranian student leaders said hundreds of students had been arrested after a wave of protests against Islamic Republic, and warned the crackdown could make them adopt more radical and violent methods. Around 30 student leaders, who came to parliament to protest the detentions, said that since June 19, 87 students had been arrested in Tehran, 250 in the city of Urumiyeh, 105 in the city of Sabzevar and 30 in Hamadan.

**Iranian newspaper *Iran Daily* report of June 22 on demonstrations in Tehran:** Tehran Province's police chief said that 520 people have so far been arrested and handed over to judicial authorities on charges of taking part in more than a week of unrest across Tehran. Brig-Gen Mahmud Japalaqi added that 18 of the detainees were women with criminal records. "Only 10 people out of the 520 detainees have been found to be students and the rest were hooligans," he said. The police chief also said that one of those arrested admitted having links with foreign TV channels, which have been accused of provoking violent demonstrations in Tehran. Japalaqi said the detainees are between 17-25 years old, adding that some 18 police officers have been injured during the recent incidents.

**ISNA report of June 23 on demonstrations in Tehran:** The director-general of security for the Science Ministry announced the names of Tehran University students who were arrested and released. They are as follows: Mohammad Bohrani, Sa'id Qaseminezhad, Amir Hoseyn E'temadi, Seyyed Mohammad Ajdadi-Hoseyni, Peyman Aref-Osku'i, Ali Reza Sadeqi, Seyyed Hamis Nabavi, Mohammad Javad Sedaqat, Karim Eskandari, Amin Bozorgian, Seyyed Mehdi Tajaddod, Mehdi Shirzad, Ruhollah Badri, Yasha Mohammadi, Ali Kazemi, Ahmad Moshakelati, Meysam Rashidi, Hasan Tufani, Mojtaba Najafi, Hojjatollah Abbasi, Meysam Talebi, Seyyed Baqer Zaki-Osku'i, Mostafa Khosravi, Ruhollah Rowhani. The names of the students who were released are as follows: Navid Hashemi, Mohammad Reza Jala'ipur, Taqi Amani, Mehdi Taqipur-Dorrineh, Khaled Bayazidi.

**ISNA report of July 23 on demonstrations in Mashhad:** The director-general of the Khorasan Justice Department Ali Akbar Yasaqi said that 60 per cent of those arrested in Mashhad were school pupils. Yasaqi said: "Most of the people who were arrested during the clashes did not have any political motives. They were only curious and they only appeared on the scene because they were influenced by satellite networks." During the recent clashes in Mashhad, 218 people were arrested. He said that 90 of those arrested were released by the Law-Enforcement Centre after giving an undertaking. The Law-Enforcement Force gave the names of 128 people to the Judiciary. 72 people were found innocent and released. Another five were released on their own recognizance. He said that eight of those arrested had records indicating that they had had links with "groups waging war on God" and the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (PMOI). He said that the third branch of the Mashhad Islamic Revolution Court would be responsible for investigating the cases of those arrested. Commenting on the case of the forces known as the Ansar-e Hezbollah of Mashhad, Yasaqi said that the head of the Ansar-e Hezbollah of Mashhad said that he was a student of a theological seminary. Therefore, his case was not deemed to lie within the purview of the court's jurisdiction and was sent to the Special Clerical Court. Furthermore, an ordinary court dealt with a case concerning the disruption caused by the leader of Ansar-e Hezbollah in Shahid Beheshti Hall. He protested about the

competence of the public court at the Appeal Court. He was a student of a theological seminary and on the basis of the inquiries made, it was decided that the Appeal Court had to send the case to the Special Clerical Court. Commenting on the role of other individuals in the group, he said: "if we have a first defendant in any kind of case, his accomplices and associates will also be investigated by a competent court. Therefore, the case of the other defendants connected with the group have been sent to the Special Clerical Court as well." Commenting on the release of the leader of the group, Yasaqi said he was released on bail.

**Iranian *Baztab* web site report of June 24 on demonstrations in Tehran:** An informed source said that Evin Prison was crowded following the large number of arrests after the recent unrest. According to the same source, the plight of the detainees is deplorable as their hygiene is not taken into consideration. Many of them are packed outside the cells in the corridors of various wings. At the same time, the Students Committee for Defending Political Prisoners, quoting its own sources in Evin Prison, reported that in view of the over-crowding, the prison authorities have asked the state officials to transfer some of the prisoners and stop sending any more detainees. On the basis of the same report, in addition to the public wings of the prison, all other wings allocated to the prisoners of the Information Ministry and the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps are full of detained students and other youngsters.

**AFP report of June 24 on demonstrations in Tehran and Yazd:** Said Mortazavi said that only 32 students were arrested in Tehran during the unrest from June 10-20, which saw a small student protest at Tehran university spiral into nightly anti-regime demonstrations and vicious clashes between protestors and hardline vigilantes. Another justice official said the 32 would not be released before trial. A small group of student activists from the Office to Consolidate Unity, a pro-reform group, staged a sit-in outside parliament to protest a wave of arrests of students. Authorities in Tehran have already announced the arrest of 470 people in the city, and 50 people in surrounding areas.

A security forces chief in the central province of Yazd, General Nabiollah Haidari, reported the arrest of 230 people in Yazd city. Most were aged between 18 and 20.

Hundreds of people have also been reported detained in Isfahan, Shiraz, Hamedan, Urumiyeh, Tabriz and Sabzevar, although most were said to have been quickly released.

**AFP report on the same news on June 27:** Iranian security forces arrested 4,000 people during the recent wave of anti-regime protests, and half of that number are still being held, the prosecutor general said. "In total, 4,000 people were arrested across the country, and 40 percent of those arrested were immediately freed," Ayatollah Abdolnabi Namazi said. "Currently there are 2,000 people who are still in prison, among whom there are not many students," the ayatollah added, giving the first official figures for the number of arrests across the country. In Tehran, epicenter of the June 10-20 demonstrations, he said 800 people were arrested.

## June 10

### **University students stage sit-in in Kashmar. (ISNA).**

Students at Islamic Azad University of Kashmar [in northeastern region of Iran] staged a sit-in so as to protest against the university's refusal to allow a literary meeting to go ahead. The university authorities refused to grant permission to the invited guests, including poets and writers from Mashhad and Kashmar, to attend the meeting. The students, therefore, staged a sit-in in protest and demanded that the university's chancellor should meet them to explain the reason for the refusal. After waiting for three hours the chancellor did not appear, but the vice-chancellor of the university came to meet the students. As a result the students called off their protest meeting.

### **Azeri journalist sentenced to prison. (Azerbaijan newspaper *Ekspress* and Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty RFE/RL *Iran Report*).\***

A court in Ardabil Province sentenced ethnic Azeri journalist Ali Suleimani to five years in prison or a 10-year internal exile in Rasht. In addition, after serving his sentence, Suleimani will not be allowed to visit Azerbaijan for 10 years. Suleimani worked for the *Shams-i Tabriz* newspaper. *Shams-i Tabriz* was closed in late December for stirring up "ethnic divisions," and its owner, Ali Hamed Iman, was sentenced to 74 lashes and a suspended two-year prison sentence.

## June 13

### **One killed and some 100 arrested in clashes in Shiraz. (ISNA).**

Following the clashes that took place at Shahid Chamran Boulevard in Shiraz at the night of June 13-14, Heydar Eskandarpur, the governor of Shiraz said that the gathering at Shahid Chamran Boulevard was primarily about a football match between Piruzi and Esteqlal football clubs. But it turned into anti-regime protests. The governor of Shiraz said that 100 people were arrested. He said: "The films of the clashes will be reviewed and those who have damaged public and private properties will not be released. They will be prosecuted as they have to compensate the damages." Eskandarpur said that four Law Enforcement personnel have been seriously injured in the clashes. Asked about an allegation of murder in the course of the clashes, the governor of Shiraz confirmed the victim's death, saying: "A wounded young man was taken to Namazi hospital last night. Later it was found out that he was killed with a knife or a metal object and that his death was not caused by shooting. Therefore, based on evidences, the murder of the 18-year-old man has nothing to do with the clashes of last night." Eskandarpur added: Those who took this young man to hospital did not offer any explanations and left the hospital immediately.

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\* *Editor's note: This report has not been confirmed by any major news source.*

## June 14

### **Political activist arrested for involvement in student protest. (Associated Press / AP).**

The judiciary ordered the arrest of three leading political activists and a student on charges of provoking student-led protests. Mohsen Sazegara and his son, Vahid, were taken to jail. Two other political activists - Reza Alijani and Taqi Rahmani - were also arrested on June 13. During arrests, police took papers, CDs, a family photo album and foreign cash belonging to him.

**Reporters Sans Frontieres report of the same news:** Two journalists are arrested in Tehran on a charge of meeting secretly with students in order to support their protest movement. The two journalists are Taghi Rahmani of the weekly *Omid-e-Zanjan* and Reza Alijani, editor of the monthly *Iran-e-Farda*. They were arrested on the orders of the Tehran prosecutor, Said Mortazavi, who also ordered the arrest of a third journalist, Hoda Saber, on the same charge of meeting secretly with students with a view to supporting the wave of anti-government protests that began in Tehran's main university campus. A revolutionary court sentenced Rahmani, Alijani and Saber to prison terms of eleven, six and ten years respectively on 10 May, but they had not yet begun serving their sentences. They and four other journalists were also stripped of their civic rights for 10 years. Their arrests today were not related to these convictions.

**Iranian newspaper *Tose'eh* report on the same news:** Mohammad Sharif, one of the lawyers of the four detained national-religious activists rejected the charges against them raised by the Tehran prosecutor. Mohammad Sharif rejected the claim that these four people had been present in the recent student protests. He added: "As one of the lawyers of these four individuals, I remind the Tehran prosecutor of his responsibility regarding their present situation and the conditions in which they are held so that the issue is not neglected again this time." He said that each one of his clients is held in non-standard solitary cells for a long time.

## June 15

### **Iranian dissidents issue damning declaration against "absolute power". (AFP).**

A group of 248 Iranian dissidents issued a scathing declaration stressing the right of the people to criticise the Islamic republic's leadership and describing the holding of absolute power as "heresy". "The people have the right to fully supervise the action of their rulers and to advise and criticize them, as well as to dismiss or oust them if they are not satisfied with them," said the declaration, which was signed by reformists, liberals, journalists, intellectuals and several clerics. "Sitting or making individuals sit in the position of divine and absolute power is a clear heresy towards God and a clear affront to human dignity," said the strongly-worded declaration. Among the signatories to the letter was Hashem Aghajari, who was sentenced to death last year on charges of blasphemy after he questioned the right to rule of clerics. Other signatories were close allies of embattled President Mohammad Khatami, student activists, journalists, prominent academics and members of the banned-but-tolerated Iran Freedom Movement (IFM). Also on the two-page list of names that followed the

one-page letter were relatives and supporters of top dissident cleric Ayatollah Hossein Ali Montazeri. The declaration also backed a recent open letter signed by 135 reformist members of parliament, which called on Khamenei to give way to reforms or risk the survival of the regime. Authorities had banned the publication of that letter. "It is sad that MPs who wrote a very respectful letter to the supreme leader were insulted and in some cases their offices were set on fire," the signatories complained before backing the MPs' petition.

## **June 16**

### **Afghanistan, Iran and UN to sign agreement on refugees. (AFP).**

Afghanistan, Iran and the UNHCR signed a tripartite agreement in Tehran on voluntary return of refugees, a UNHCR spokeswoman said. "The new tripartite agreement is a follow-up to last year's agreement signed in March 2002," Maki Shinohara said. "This time, the parties have agreed to continue assisting the voluntary repatriation of Afghans until 2005," she said. Kabul and Tehran would hold regular bilateral discussions to address concrete issues concerning returns. The agreement is expected to allow the returns to be gradual so as not to overwhelm the fragile economy of Afghanistan. The agreement also referred to a new system to resolve commercial disputes between Afghan refugees and Iranians, which had been an obstacle for some would-be returnees. Iran decided on May 27 to strip hundreds of thousands of Iraqis and Afghans of their refugee status. A total of 306,000 refugees have returned from Iran under the assisted return scheme launched in March 2002 and another 154,500 have made their own way home.

### **Teachers and writers urge Khamenei to accept democratic reform. (AP).**

More than 250 university teachers and writers added their voices to students' demands for democratic reforms in Iran, telling supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei he must answer to the people and abandon the idea that he is God's unchallenged representative on Earth. The reformists' statement is published in the newspaper "Yas-e-nou". The signatories included two aides to reformist President Mohammad Khatami: Saeed Pourazizi, an official in the president's office, and Saeed Hajjarian, who is widely regarded as the architect of Khatami's reform program.

## **June 17**

### **Syria extradites two Mojahedin Khalq Organization members to Iran. (Iranian newspaper *Kayhan*).**

The government of Syria has extradited to members of the Iraq-based armed opposition group People's Mojahedin Organization (PMOI) to Iran. PMOI reportedly asked British Prime Minister Tony Blair to intervene in the matter as the two individuals are British citizens.

## **June 18**

### **Two national-religious activists arrested. (ILNA).**

Two activists, Mohammad Reza'i and Ali Asghar Sadeqi - who are said to be close to the national-religious tendency - have been arrested. Mohammad Reza'i is affiliated with Dr Shariati Research Bureau, and Ali Asghar Sadeqi is a member of the Majlis Research Centre. They have been transferred to an unknown place.

### **Police close down vigilante hangouts. (Iran News web site).**

Police have shut down two unauthorized shops owned by conservative vigilantes affiliated with a small radical group. Seyyed Mohammad Hoseyni, deputy head of the Department for Supervising Business Locations, said that the two centres, located in the suburban city of Shahr-e Rey, were used by the group. He identified the hangouts as a coffee-house and a grocery store frequented by vigilantes including Sa'id Asgar. Conservative gang leader Asgar was sentenced to 2 years in prison in the year 2000 for the attempted assassination of reformist politician Sa'id Hajjarian, but was released after serving only half of his sentence. Hoseyni said the two locations were closed down because neither had a permit to operate.

## **June 19**

### **Reformist student leader arrested by plainclothesmen. (Iranian Labour News Agency / ILNA).**

Mehdi Aminizadeh, a member of the Office to Foster Unity's central committee, was arrested by a number of plainclothesmen. Aminizadeh was arrested outside Hoseynieh Mosque in north Tehran at the end of a memorial ceremony held for Dr Shariyati.

## **June 20**

### **Armed attack against Basij, morals police base in. (AFP).**

A group of armed men carried out two armed attacks on a base of the Basij militia and morals police near the city of Esfahan, resulting in five people being injured and 21 arrested. The attacks occurred in the town of Dizicheh. The attackers carried out the first raid on June 19 and managed to steal a weapon. The next evening, armed people attacked a Basij base and in the clashes five people were injured on both sides.

## **June 22**

### **Families of detained students stage sit-in at Majlis, university. (ILNA).**

The families of detained students staged a sit-in in front of the Tehran University's central building on June 21 and at the Majlis on June 22.

**Ethnic Azeri reporter in Iran arrested in student protest action. (Azerbaijani newspaper *Yeni Musavat*).**\*

The Congress of World Azerbaijanis said that another journalist has been arrested in Iran's student protest action. A freelance reporter, Insaf Ali Hidayat, arrested three days ago by the Tabriz police, was subjected to violence and cruel treatment. He received cuts in the head. At a meeting with his wife, he said that the Tabriz police tortured, abused and insulted him.

**June 24**

**People's Mujahedeen among people arrested during Iran unrest. (AFP).**

A number of members of Iran's outlawed armed opposition group, the People's Mujahedeen (PMOI), were reportedly arrested during a recent wave of unrest in the Islamic republic, Tehran's chief prosecutor was said.

**June 26**

**Reformist students leader "abducted" by unknown assailants. (Iranian *Baztab* web site).**

Abdollah Mo'meni, the secretary of Allameh University Association, affiliated to the Office for Fostering Unity, was allegedly abducted by some unknown individuals shortly after leaving a joint meeting of the association and Tehran's city council at Teacher Training University last night.

**Iranian newspaper *Aftab-e Yazd* report on the same news on June 29:** Ali Akbar Mohseni, secretary-general for security at the Ministry of Science, said that no list or names was handed over by the security officials of the Ministry of Science and universities to the Tehran prosecutor. Saying that he was unaware of the latest situation concerning Abdollah Mo'meni, secretary of the Allameh University branch of the Office for Fostering Unity, on whose whereabouts there have been no reports since June 26, he said that he was not detained by the Intelligence Ministry.

**Political activist arrested. (ILNA).**

Hamid Asefi, a political activist, was arrested. A source close to this political activist confirmed the arrest but said he was not aware of the reason behind it.

**June 27**

**Esfahan university students on hunger strike. (ISNA).**

It is five days that some members of the Islamic Society of the students of Esfahan University and Medical Sciences University are on hunger a strike. These students started their hunger strike five days ago in protest the arrest of a number of students of the university.

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\* *Editor's note: This report has not been confirmed by any major news source.*

**June 28**

**Regime opponent allegedly dies under torture. (Student Movement Coordination Centre for Democracy in Iran / SMCCDI).\***

"Bagher Parto", allegedly a member of the "Azarakhsh" (Thunder) network, died under custody of the Shiraz Pasdaran Corp. He was reportedly arrested on June 16th. He was allegedly tortured in order to denounce other members of "Azarakhsh" (Thunder) network and to make televised confessions on links with the Israeli and US intelligence services.

**Four MPs stage sit-in in protest at treatment of students. (IRNA).**

Four Iranian MPs defied Judiciary officials' threats to arrest some parliamentarians on charges of provoking recent unrest and started a two-day "self-imprisonment" in parliament in protest to the way police treated students. Meysam Sa'idi, Fatemeh Haqiqatju, Reza Yusefian and Ali Akbar Musavi-Kho'ini blasted Judiciary and police officials for allegedly failing to deal with "vigilantes" for attacking students.

**June 30**

**Unidentified motorcyclists throw hand-grenades at public buildings. (Iranian *Baztab* web site).**

Two places were attacked by assailants, which were a fuel distribution depot at Khayyam cross-road and Nabovvat Square in Tehran. The assailants threw the hand-grenades while passing on motorcycles at high speed.

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\* *Editor's note: This report has not been confirmed by any major news source.*