

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/iran-freedom-of-information-still-18-06-2014,46470.html>

Middle East/North Africa - Iran

No progress

Freedom of information still flouted a year after Rouhani's election

18 June 2014

Reporters Without Borders condemns the lack of progress for freedom of information and the unacceptable conditions in which journalists and netizens are still detained a year after the moderate conservative Hassan Rouhani's election as Iran's president on 14 June 2013.

On this sad anniversary, RWB is very concerned about the situation of media freedom and the fate of journalists and netizens in Iran.

Addressing Rouhani [in a press release a year ago, on 18 June 2013](#), RWB voiced its hope that detained journalists and netizens would be freed: "Your campaign promises included references to a desire to work for freedom of expression and media freedom, and the release of all political prisoners. These firm undertakings encouraged progressives, especially young people and women, to vote en masse for you. It is now your duty to keep these promises, and to ensure that they are not empty, meaningless words."

A year later, RWB is saddened and dismayed to see no change in the situation it described in [November 2013, after Rouhani's first 100 days in office. There has been no significant improvement in freedom of information](#).

With 58 journalists and netizens in detention, Iran is still one of the world's five biggest prisons for news and information providers. A total of 25 have been arrested since 24 June 2013. The authorities have also closed 14 news media temporarily or definitively in the past year.

This wave of arrests follows a similar one five years ago after President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's disputed reelection in June 2009, when the authorities cracked down on the ensuing protests.

Those arrested in 2009 and given sentences ranging from six to 20 years in prison included **Kivan Samimi Behbani, Ahmad Zeydabadi, Bahaman Ahamadi Amoe, Masoud Bastani, Said Matinpour, Mehdi Mahmudian, Heshmatollah Tabarzadi, Mohammad Davari, Sakhi Righi and Hossein Ronaghi Malki**.

"Freedom of information will not be guaranteed in Iran as long as the authorities continue to systematically jail journalists and netizens," said Réza Moïni, the head of the Reporters Without Borders Iran-Afghanistan desk.

"More than 50 journalists have been the targets of judicial proceedings in the past year. This judicial intimidation has been compounded by financial and administrative pressure on independent and opposition media. President Rouhani is the constitution's guarantor and is responsible for its application. If he is opposed to these repressive and unconstitutional practices, it is up to him to stop them."

Continuing persecution

The latest victims include **Saba Azarpeyk**, a journalist with the monthly *Tejarat-e-Farda* and the daily *Etemad*, who was arrested on 28 May. The reason for his arrest and his current place of detention are still unknown.

Saraj Mirdamadi, who has worked for several media including *Hayat-e-No*, a daily closed in January 2003, and *Zameneh*, a radio station based in the Netherlands, was arrested on 10 May and is being detained illegally at the behest of the Revolutionary Guards.

Journalist and Centre for Human Rights Defenders spokesperson **Narges Mohammadi** was summoned for questioning at the prosecutor's office inside Tehran's Evin prison on 1 June and, at the end of her interrogation, was told that she is banned from travelling abroad.

Arrested in the northern city of Zanzan in April 2012 to begin serving a six-year jail sentence in Evin prison, Mohammadi was released three months later on bail of 600 million toman (480,000 euros) so that she could receive badly needed medical treatment.

Journalist and documentary filmmaker **Mahnaz Mohammadi** was sent back to Evin prison on 7 June to serve the five-year jail sentence she received at the end of an unfair trial last year. She is ill and should be under medical supervision. **Costa-Gavras, Bertrand Tavernier** and Cannes film festival president **Gilles Jacob** [are among the first 500 people to sign a petition for her release that the French Association of Filmmakers launched on 16 June](#).

These four journalists are typical examples of the injustices and persecution to which journalists and netizens are constantly subjected by the judicial system and the various intelligence agencies.

[One of the world's most repressive countries as regards freedom of information, Iran is ranked 173rd out of 180 countries in the 2014 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index.](#)

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