

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

August 3

### **Iranian Revolutionary Court acquits four students, sentences two. (Iranian newspaper "Iran Daily").**

Islamic Revolutionary Court finally issued its rulings regarding six student activists arrested during the June unrest in a Tehran university. In the trial, Mohammad Sadeqian, Hasan Takabi, Reza Nuri and Hasan Tufani have been acquitted. The court sentenced Arsalan Shemirani to 10m rials and 30 suspended lashes and Mohammad Mehdi Farhangian to three months in jail and 50 suspended lashes. Mehdi Habibi, the Secretary General of the Islamic Association of Students at Amir Kabir University, is still in jail.

### **Two demonstrators found guilty of "war on God", face serious penalties. (Agence France Presse / AFP).**

Two people arrested during recent demonstrations in Shiraz have been found guilty of "warring against God", which carries heavy penalties including death. Local judiciary head Hossein Ali Amiri disclosed the verdict of the court but not the sentence. Amiri said the cases of the two men would be transferred to the supreme court, Iran's highest judicial authority. He said a total of 32 demonstrators were sentenced for damaging Shiraz town hall, and post office and telecommunications buildings. "They didn't have a ringleader and they weren't organised, but influenced by foreign satellite channels working for the counter-revolution," Abrar said. Amiri added that the judiciary released 43 others who were arrested during the demonstrations.

August 4

### **Human rights commission concerned over treatment of Iranian prisoners. (Islamic Republic News Agency / IRNA).**

The Islamic Human Rights Commission expressed concern about treatment of prisoners amid reports about physical attacks against prisoners which are accounted for torture.

### **Jailed journalist allowed brief hospital visit. (Iranian Students News Agency / ISNA).**

Akbar Ganji, who is now in jail, went to hospital because of the exacerbation of his illness. Akbar Ganji was taken to a hospital in Tehran for treatment with the consent

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of the prison doctor. Ganji is reportedly still not being allowed to make telephone calls to his home.

## **August 5**

### **Iran's supreme leader orders "clemency" for arrested students, some released. (AFP).**

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has told the courts to exercise "clemency" towards dozens of students arrested during demonstrations in June and July. Khamenei accepted the recommendations of his representatives in the country's universities, notably the University of Tehran, the focus of the unrest. They asked Khamenei to agree that students "facing the consequences" of their actions and "who had dissociated themselves from the trouble-makers and declared their loyalty to the Islamic Republic's regime should benefit from Islamic clemency". Those whose demands had solely concerned the university or were different from those responsible for the uprisings, or had shown "ignorance or total lack of judgement" should also benefit, they said. Khamenei agreed that clemency should be granted, saying it was up to the "competent authorities" to implement it. Khamenei's university representatives said the demonstrations "were part of a plot (against the Islamic Republic) that manipulated the predictable reaction of the general public."

**Reuters report on the same news on August 6:** Tehran's public prosecutor ordered the immediate release of nine students jailed during pro-democracy protests in June and July. The students, thought to be among several dozen arrested during the street protests, were to be freed in accordance with an order by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei for the judiciary to show leniency to jailed students. Judiciary officials have said that 4,000 people were arrested in the demonstrations in which hundreds of people took to the streets to protest against Iran's clerical leaders. More than half of those arrested were quickly released but legislators said that at least 30 students were being held in Tehran's Evin prison from the recent protests. Among the nine were Mehdi Shirzad, son of a reformist parliamentarian, and prominent student leaders Abdollah Momeni and Reza Ameri Masab.

**Iranian Students News Agency / ISNA report on the same news on August 7:** The news conference of a number of students detained during recent events was held at Evin Prison. This news conference was attended by seven of the nine detained students who are to be released. Their names are: Morteza Safa'i-Na'ini, Amir Hoseyn E'temadi-Bozorg, Reza Ameri-Nasab, Abdollah Mo'meni, Mehdi Shirzad and Mas'ud Karimi. These students said that they had volunteered to take part in the session and would answer any questions they felt like answering; they then described their views. While declaring that their activities were shaped by criticism and not subversion of the government, the students announced that the demarcation line between them and the opposition outside the establishment was a serious one. Peyman Aref and Ali Akbar Akrami-Araqi, two other students due to be released, refrained from taking part in this interview.

**Islamic Republic News Agency / IRNA report on the same news on August 7:** With the latest release of three students, all those jailed in Hamedan universities in connection with the June and July unrest are freed from prison now, a student

association official said. Nine students from Bu Ali Sina and Hamedan Medical Universities had been arrested in total, of whom six people had already been released and the rest were freed, secretary of the Islamic Students Association, Fakhroddin Heydarian, said. "Hamid Rahgozar, Reza Kakavandi and Morteza Hoseyn Zadeh were among the detained students in recent scuffles in the Bu Ali Sina university, who were released from jail after posting 200m rials bail each," he added.

**ISNA report on the same news on August 13:** Mehdi Habibi, the secretary of the Islamic Association of Students of Amir Kabir University, was released.

**Iranian newspaper *Nasim-e Saba* report on the same news on August 14:** Qazvin MP Seyyed Mohammad Hasan Abutorabi-Fard said that following talks with the Prosecutor-General of Public and Revolutionary Courts in Tehran Sa'id Mortazavi, two of the students arrested during the recent unrest, Mostafa Khosravi and Meysam Salehi, were released from Evin prison. He said that Ramin Rashedi, Mohammad Mehdi Farhangian, Armin Aslpuran and Seyyed Hamed Ebrahim-Kia were also released in the past few days, although their names were not been announced.

## August 8

### **Iran journalists strike in protest at journalist's death, wider clampdown. (AFP).**

Hundreds of journalists in Tehran downed tools in protest at a worsening clampdown on the pro-reform media and the death of an Iranian-Canadian journalist in custody in still unexplained circumstances. The six-hour strike from 4 pm to 10 pm was called by the reformist Iranian Centre for the Protection of Journalists (ICPJ). The reformist strikers demanded the removal of Tehran chief prosecutor Saeed Mortazavi. "We also demand that an independent fact-finding committee be established to inquire into the death of Ms. Zahra Kazemi and that its findings be published," said a list of demands handed out by the striking journalists. "The judiciary supports Mortazavi in Kazemi's case, so we hold them accountable for what he has done ... we in the parliament will follow up her case until the public opinion gets satisfied," said reformist MP Mohsen Armin. ICPJ chief Mohsen Kadivar said some 21 journalists are currently detained in Iran, most of them without charge or trial.

## August 9

### **Iranian court suspends provincial weekly. (IRNA).**

A press court in Qazvin has closed down a provincial weekly for the second time on charges of 'promoting depravity and publishing lies'. The court banned *Nameh-ye Qazvin* (Letter of Qazvin) from printing until further notice. The weekly's head, Ali Shahruzi, said that *Nameh-ye Qazvin* had been closed down for the second time only after publishing its second issue since the first ban. The press court lifted the temporary ban on *Nameh-ye Qazvin* in January after suspending it on charges of promoting 'depravity' and discrediting clerics. The weekly had been slapped with paying three million rials (375 US dollars) in cash fine. It had remained closed since last August after the Justice Department of Qazvin province charged it with printing 'insulting materials and inciting public opinion'. Shahruzi had also been accused of

'encouraging the youth to Western depravity in its articles which contradict moral decency' as well as 'spreading lies and distorting historical facts, spoiling reputation of the country's political and religious figures and undermining state organizations'.

**Head of reformist Esfahan cleric's office faces national security charge. (ISNA).**

The head of Ayatollah Jalaleddin Taheri's office was released on bail from Evin Prison at night. Mohammad Maddah announced that he had been released from Evin and said that the charge against himself was "acting against the country's internal security". He pointed out that the charges against him were not related to any student group but that they concerned his private affairs and associations. Having spent 19 days in detention, he said that he had been released on the payment of 250m rials [about 30,000 dollars] in bail.

**August 10**

**Arrest warrant issued for director of conservative daily. (ISNA).**

An arrest warrant has been issued for Hoseyn Entezami, the director of *Jam-e Jam* newspaper. Following investigations into several private complaints against *Jam-e Jam* and repeated summonses sent to the publication's director, Bench 6 of the prosecutor's office for government and press offences has issued an arrest warrant for Hoseyn Entezami. [The daily's licence holder is the *Voice and Vision of the Islamic Republic of Iran*, Iran's radio and TV organization.]

**Book's writer, publisher, reviewer, translator, state official sentenced. (Iranian newspaper *Aftab-e Yazd*).**

The judge at branch 1411 of Tehran's General Court has convicted those who wrote, published and reviewed the books "Women in Iranian Music" and "Women Behind the Screen, Men in Armour". According to the verdict, Banafsheh Samgis is to endure one year discretionary imprisonment for reviewing and writing about "Women in Iranian Music" in issue number 2098 of "Iran" newspaper. The following sentences were also given: Tuka Maleki, the author of "Women in Iranian Music", one-year discretionary imprisonment; Maghaze'i, the translator of "Women behind the Screen", 18 months discretionary imprisonment; Ja'far Homa'i, the head of Nay publications, one year discretionary imprisonment; Majid Sayyadi, the head of the Book Department at the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, one year of discretionary imprisonment and permanent ban from supervising publication of books or of holding similar cultural offices. On the basis of the court verdict, for the first four convicts, in view of their social standing and life history, 4/5 of the discretionary imprisonment terms has been suspended for two years, but the reduction does not include the director-general of the Books Department at the Ministry of Guidance. All the accused were found not to be guilty of insulting the prophet in view of the fact that there had been "no intention of insulting Islamic sanctities".

**Head of Iranian daily rejects propaganda charges, posts bail. (Iranian newspaper *Iran*).**

Managing director of the leading Persian daily *Iran* posted a bail of 500m rials after rejecting the charges of launching propaganda against the Islamic establishment and

publishing false news. Abdolrasul Vesal appeared before branch 3 of the prosecutor's office investigating press and government employees' offences along with his defence attorney, Gholamali Riahi, to answer charges filed against him by the public prosecutor. The mass-circulation paper had printed remarks by prominent pro-reform political activists and lawmakers, as well as a report stating that the Information Ministry is dissatisfied with the process of investigation into the death in custody of Iranian photojournalist, Zahra Kazemi, who worked for a Canadian publication.

## **August 12**

### **Political activist begins sit-in outside Tehran's Evin Prison. (Associated Press/AP).**

A liberal woman activist held a three-hour sit-in outside Iran's most notorious prison to protest the July death of an Iranian-Canadian photojournalist while in police custody and "lack of security" for prisoners. Azam Taleqani said her sit-in at Evin Prison in northern Tehran was a "symbolic" gesture of protest against the trampling of freedoms and the rights of prisoners by the ruling Islamic establishment in Iran. "I held a sit-in to protest the death in prison of Zahra Kazemi and the judiciary's failure to inform the public about who was behind the crime," Taleqani said. Taleqani said she was approached by prison officers, curious to know the reason for her sit-in. The officers asked her to leave, without forcing her.

### **Guardian Council rejects Convention Against Torture and Convention on Discrimination Against Women. (Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran).**

The Guardian Council rejected a bill of the Islamic Majlis which proposed that the Islamic Republic of Iran should join the Convention on Discrimination Against Women and the Convention Against Torture on the grounds that they are "contrary to the holy Shari'ah of Islam and the constitution".

## **August 15**

### **U.S. closes offices of Iranian group. (AP).**

Secretary of State Colin Powell ordered the closure of two offices in the United States connected to an Iranian opposition group the National Council of Resistance of Iran. He also ordered their assets frozen. Treasury Department spokesman Taylor Griffin said that nearly \$100,000 in financial assets belonging to the group was found in the United States and was frozen. The State Department has considered the People's Mujahedeen (PMOI) a "terrorist organization" since the Clinton administration. The U.S. government says the group, known as the PMOI (a.k.a. MEK) and People's Mujahedeen, is the same as National Council of Resistance, although some resistance officials say they are only close affiliates. It has been allowed to operate in the United States, where it often holds press conferences near the White House to accuse Iran of "making weapons of mass destruction and supporting terrorists". Federal agents ordered Jafarzadeh's office at the National Press Building in Washington closed, and shut down a People's Mujahedeen office elsewhere in the capital.

## **August 16**

### **Several Iranians die in regional dispute in Samirom. (Reuters).**

Eight Iranians were killed in central Iran during unrest caused by a local administrative dispute. Dispute left behind gutted houses, burned-out cars and streets littered with stones and broken glass in the town of Samirom in the province of Isfahan. Demonstrators had gathered outside the governor's office to protest about joining a proposed new administrative area. It was reported that the proposed new administrative zones had enflamed old tribal enmities, as they would cut one group off from allies in a region where tribesmen often carry arms. Protesters say they do not want to become part of new zone because of cultural and commercial ties in the area they are currently in. The crowd burned tyres and set cars and houses ablaze. Some government buildings were also attacked. A number of rioters were arrested. Some 150 people - about half police and half protesters - were also hurt in the town of Samirom.

## **August 17**

### **Former POWs protest living conditions, clash with police. (Iranian newspaper *Jomhuri-ye Eslami*).**

During the nationwide gathering of released POWs, a number of released POWs voiced their strong protest at the performance of the HQ for Monitoring the Affairs of Released POWs. During the ceremony some of the released POWs asked Mr Vakili, the head of the HQ, to respond to the point that their problems and hardships have not been solved. Mr Vakili asked them to send their problems to the HQ in writing. That response encountered a strong reaction from the released POWs. When the head of the HQ refused to respond to their verbal complaints the protesters began shouting slogans and beat him up. Law Enforcement Force personnel tried to prevent the released POWs from leaving. That resulted in clashes between Law Enforcement Force personnel and a number of protesting released POWs.

## **August 18**

### **Jailed activist granted leave to attend daughter's wedding. (ISNA).**

On the occasion of the birth anniversary of Her Holiness Fatemah Zahra [Prophet Muhammad's daughter], jailed reformist journalist Abbas Abdi has been granted temporary leave to attend the wedding of his daughter.

## **August 19**

### **Tehran City Council accused of dealing with outlawed political party. (Iranian newspaper *Jomhuri-ye Eslami*).**

The majority of more than 300 companies, who are in contracts worth billions with Tehran Municipality, are accused of being affiliated to the outlawed group, the Freedom Movement. The contracts were made when the reformists were in control of Tehran Municipality.

### **Iran's Supreme Leader pardons, commutes prison terms of women, teens. (IRNA).**

On the occasion of the birth anniversary of Fatimah al-Zahra, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamene'i pardoned or lessened the prison terms of women and those below 18-year old. The amnesty was granted as per a request from Judiciary Chief Ayatollah Mahmud Hashemi-Shahrudi. Those women sentenced to 15 years in prison and have passed one fifth of the term until 19 August will be pardoned. The divorced women who are bread winner of the family are among those to be freed. The amnesty also included those under 18-year-old. Inmates charged with public offences, crimes, drug-trafficking, prostitution, armed robbery, embezzlement and guilty of action against country's security are excluded from the amnesty.

### **August 23**

#### **Iran minister resigns over violence, conservative stonewalling. (AFP).**

Iranian President Mohammad Khatami accepted the resignation of his Minister for Higher Education, tendered last month in protest at the violent suppression of campus riots and the blocking of a key reform bill. Science, Research and Technology Minister Mostafa Moin is the first cabinet member to stand down since Khatami's reelection in 2001. The minister hit out at the "wave of attacks carried out by the partisans of violence and mean-spiritedness" on university campuses during a wave of student protests in June and July.

**Agence France Presse report on the same new on August 24:** Iran's reformist President Mohammed Khatami has appointed Reza Faraji Dana as his new minister for higher education (Science, Research and Technology Minister), following the resignation of Mostafa Moin.

### **August 24**

#### **Student association says no information on detained student. (Iranian newspaper *Aftab-e Yazd*).**

The secretary of the Islamic Association of the students of Khajeh Nasireddin-Tusi University said that they had no information on the situation of Ali Rahmatinezhad. The association said that no institution officially confirmed that Rahmatinezhad was arrested. Ali Rahmatinezhad had been arrested a week before when stopped by a Peykan. He was involved in a judicial case because of something he published in the student publication, "Faryad". He was detained for 16 days in 2002.

### **August 25**

#### **Iranian has fingers amputated in public. (AFP).**

An Iranian man's fingers have been amputated in public in Isfahan, central Iran, for multiple offenses of robbery, drinking alcohol and using drugs. It was reported that, Hossein Q., who allegedly had previous records in robbery, alcoholic drink

consumption and drug use, was traced and arrested after using a mobile phone he stole around March 2003.

**Two intelligence officers arrested over death of journalist. (IRNA).**

Two interrogators of Zahra Kazemi are accused of killing her, inspector of the Criminal Court said. He did not reveal the names of the two interrogators, but said that they were Information [intelligence] Ministry staffers. The inspector brought judicial justification for not making public the names of the interrogators, but, said that he ordered to detain them to hold the legal proceedings.

**August 27**

**Press freedom activist arrested. (IRNA).**

Isa Saharkhiz, managing editor of *Aftab* monthly was arrested. Saharkhiz's family said they were not aware of charges against Saharkhiz. Saharkhiz, a member of the Association to Defend Press Freedom, represents managing editors of the press in the Press Supervisory Board. He had been arrested [on charges of publishing anti-regime propaganda] in July but released one day later on bail.

**Agence France Presse report on the same news on August 28:** Leading Iranian press freedom campaigner Isa Saharkhiz was released after being held for several hours on charges of “illegal financial dealings”. He said he was questioned about claims by Iraj Jamshidi, editor of the daily economic newspaper “Asia”, that he gave Jamshidi "obscure financial favors" in return for discounts on advertising space in Jamshidi's paper. Jamshidi was arrested on July 7 and his paper shut down for publishing a photograph of Iranian opposition People's Mujahedeen (PMOI) leader Maryam Rajavi following her release from a French prison early July.

**August 31**

**Iran denies forcing women to divorce Afghan husbands. (IRNA).**

The Islamic Republic of Iran's embassy in Kabul strongly dismissed the claim by the Afghan press that Tehran forces Iranian women to divorce their Afghan husbands. Iranian embassy in a letter to Afghan Foreign Ministry said that Iran has not made such a decision but on the contrary has provided certain facilities for such families. It said that Tehran recommends Iranian and Afghan couples to register their marriage at notary offices based on the Islamic Republic of Iran's regulations

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