

Iran Media-Monitoring Study

1 July–30 September 2007

By Victor Kattan^{*}



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1. Introduction

The aim of this second media-monitoring study is similar to the first: to analyse how the local and the international media report human rights stories from Iran. The objective of these studies is to identify and analyse any disparities in the reporting of human rights stories in Iran, in order to gain an overall picture of the way in which such stories are reported there and in the other countries being monitored. The third report will compare and analyse the findings of these two studies.

There is a separate chapter in this report devoted to the Iranian media (chapter five), as it was thought that separating it from the Western media would aid the reader. A number of national rapporteurs (from Austria, Canada, France, Germany, Iran, Italy, Poland, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the USA), including three additional rapporteurs (from Australia, Spain and Turkey), monitored the papers outlined below for three months in 2007 and wrote monthly reports, which they then analysed. The participants in the present study included:

Australia—Kristi Cooper
Austria—Lena Kayhan-Rad
Canada— Salman Haq
France—Amy Herrick
Germany—Martina Warning
Italy—Pejman Abdolmohammadi
Iran—Kourosh Taheri
Poland—Anna Tomaszewska
Russia—Victoria Rogova
Spain—Iñaki Garcia Blanco
Turkey—Sezin Lalecelir
United Kingdom—Victor Kattan
USA – Brian Oliner

The newspapers listed below were monitored on a daily basis for human rights stories on Iran from 1 July to 30 September 2007(excluding weekends and public holidays):

Australia: **Australian, Australian Financial Review, Daily Telegraph, Sydney Morning Herald and West Australian.**
Austria: **Die Presse, Der Standard, Die Neue Krone and Österreich.**
Canada: **The Globe and Mail, The National Post, The Toronto Star and La Presse.**
France: **Le Monde, Le Figaro and Libération.**
Germany: **BILD, Die Welt, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Der Spiegel and Die Zeit.**
Italy: **La Repubblica, Il Corriere della Sera and Il Giornale.**
Poland: **Super Ekspres, Fakt, Gazeta Wyborcza and Dziennik Polska Europa Swiat.**
Russia: **Izvestiya, Kommersant, Komsomolskaya Pravda, Nezavisimaya Gazeta, Rossiiskaya Gazeta and The Moscow Times.**
Spain: **ABC, El Mundo, El País and La Vanguardia.**
Turkey: **Hurriyet Daily, Sabah Daily, Milliyet Daily, Zaman Daily and Turkish Daily News.**
United Kingdom: **Daily Mail, The Guardian, The Sun, Financial Times, Daily Telegraph, Daily Express and The Times.**
USA: **Chicago Tribune, Los Angeles Times, New York Times, USA Today, Wall Street Journal and Washington Post.**

These newspapers were chosen on the basis of their circulation figures and their accessibility. Most of the papers were monitored online or via Lexis Nexis. In addition to the newspapers mentioned above, the following news outlets were monitored on a daily basis to ascertain which stories were not being picked up by the printed press (this list is not exhaustive):

[Agence France-Presse](#)
[Amnesty International](#)
[Associated Press](#)
[BBC News Online](#) and [BBC Monitoring World Service](#)
[Human Rights Watch](#)
[Iran Focus](#)
[Iran Press Service](#)
[Islamic Republic News Agency](#) (IRNA)
[Iran Students News Agency](#) (ISNA)
[Reporters Without Borders](#) (also known as *Reporters Sans Frontiers*)
[UN News Service](#)

The author of this report received press reports from the British Embassy and UNICEF in Tehran after his field trip to Iran in March 2007, where he met with officials from the Government, UN agencies, journalists, NGOs and diplomats.

Note on terminology: The term 'Western press' or 'the West' is used interchangeably to refer to Australia, Europe (including Turkey) and North America.

Abbreviations

ISNA: Iranian Student's News Agency
IRNA: Islamic Republic News Agency
IRIB: Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting
ILNA: Iranian Labour News Agency

2. Summary of Findings

- The Iranian and the Western press were both concerned with the rising number of executions in Iran.
- The reformist Iranian newspapers were more likely than the hardliner papers to report on stories that touch upon human rights issues.
- The issue of minority rights is routinely ignored by the Iranian papers.
- Of the Western countries whose newspapers were monitored, the US published the most stories, followed by Turkey, the UK, Spain, Germany and Canada.
- Newspapers from former Communist countries reported very little in the way of human rights stories from Iran.
- Of the Western newspapers being monitored, the **Guardian** published the most human rights stories on Iran, followed by **Der Speigal**, the **LA Times**, the **New York Times**, the **Washington Post**, **Der Standard**, **ABC**, **Hurriyet Daily**, **La Presse**, **Zaman Daily**, **El Pais**, the **Globe and Mail**, **Il Corriere della Sera**, **Dziennik Polska Europa Swiat**, **El Mundo**, **La Vanguardia**, the **Milliyet Daily** and the **Toronto Star**.
- With the exception of the Turkish media, human rights stories in Iran are not considered particularly newsworthy by the Western press.
- There needs to be a link between a particular human rights story in Iran and a person/event in the West for it to be headline news.
- A newspaper is more likely to report on the human rights situation in Iran if they have a reporter based in the country.

3. The Media Monitoring Study

3.1 Scope of Study

The types of human rights violations in Iran reported by the media there and in the West will be highlighted in this part of the report under the following topics: Right to Life/Enforced Disappearances; Torture, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment; Right to Liberty and Security; Freedom of Movement; Right to Fair Trial; Right to Respect for Private and Family life; Freedom of Thought, Conscience and Religion; Freedom of Expression; Freedom of Assembly & Association; Right to Adequate Housing; Right to Work and Rights in Work; Cultural Rights; Right to Education (and student life); Women's Rights; Minority Rights; and Children's Rights.

In addition to those human rights stories that were reported, those stories that were not reported are also considered. These include stories which were reported on newswires and websites but which were not picked up by the printed press. Hyperlinks have been provided to the original stories where possible.

For a brief explanation of how news stories are categorized, see chapter 3.1 of the first media-monitoring study, which is available by clicking [here](#).

3.2. The Media in Iran

It is important to note from the outset that there is no freedom of the press—as we would understand this in the West—in Iran. This is because there are a number of laws which regulate what journalists can and cannot do when it comes to disseminating information in print, online, in the broadcast media and on the radio.

Restrictions on the media in Iran are stipulated in the [Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran](#), (see Articles 3, 9, 24, 168 and 175). As is evident from reading through the Constitution, the media in Iran (broadcast, print and radio), are not only restricted from reporting on or commenting upon certain events, but they are required to propagate the virtues of Islam and Islamic culture through the 'proper use' of the mass media.

Moreover, there are media restrictions contained in the [Press Law of March 19, 1986](#). This law does not merely prohibit what journalists can write or say, but it actually requires them to undertake their profession in a particular way. Iranian journalists are not merely censored for what they write, but they are obliged to advance the objectives of the Islamic Constitution and to campaign against 'manifestations of imperialistic culture'. This double obligation (to act in a particular way and to refrain from writing about certain things) is also reflected in the Constitution.

The Press Law also provides in Article 12 that a 'Supervisory Board' will 'examine press violations directly'. Consequently, self-censorship in Iran is endemic as journalists constantly have to be aware that what they write might fall foul of the censors.

Media restrictions are also contained in a series of Internet laws passed in 2001 and subsequently, which put the Government in exclusive charge of supervising all Access Service Providers across the country. For a report on these Internet laws, click [here](#).

This legislation provides that all Internet Service Providers must install and use filtering systems to block access to 'forbidden immoral and political websites and other undesirable sites'.

According to a [report](#) by the [OpenNet Initiative](#), Iran, along with China, is among a small group of States (such as Cuba, Myanmar, North Korea, Syria, Tunisia and Uzbekistan) with the most sophisticated State-mandated media-filtering systems in the world. The Iranian Government considers it a crime to publish on the Internet any material in conflict with or insulting Islam, the revolution's values, the thoughts of Imam Khomeini and the Constitution, material that propagates a good image of illegal groups, that is immoral and advertises smoking, or insults State officials.

Radio and television are directly controlled by the Government. The appointment and dismissal of the head of the Radio and Television of the Islamic Republic of Iran rests with the leader, Ayatollah Khamenei.

3.3 Important Developments

Iran's attitude towards human rights can be summed up in the words of President Ahmadinejad before the UN General Assembly on 26 September 2007, which was reported by almost all of the newspapers covered in this study, although they were too general to place under a particular human rights category. He denounced the 'bullying powers' (that is, the West), which he claimed violated human rights, and accused them of spreading insecurity and destabilization around the world. Before he gave his address, he also expressed doubts about the Holocaust, dismissed Israel's right to exist, denied the existence of gays in Iran and questioned whether al-Qa'ida was behind the terror attacks of 11 September 2001 in a debate at Columbia University.

A video of his debate at Columbia University, with university president Lee Bollinger, is available online at [YouTube](#) by clicking [here](#).

Iran's spat with Canada at the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva in September is also revealing. During the exchange of words between the Canadian and Iranian envoy, the latter remarked that Canada's own record should be scrutinized for its 'social exclusion policies, blatant racism...police brutality, unlawful detention, torture and deaths in custody, violence against women and children and indigenous people who being treated second class (*sic*)'.

A representative of **Amnesty International** in Canada described the comparison between Canada and Iran as 'nonsensical' and noted Iran's escalating rate of executions which included child offenders, death by stoning and the disappearances of union leaders and journalists. The UN High Commissioner also noted Iran's execution of juveniles as violating the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* and Iran's need to tolerate peaceful public expression. This story was reported by the [Toronto Star](#) (Canada).

It would seem that Iran views the whole concept of human rights as a political tool to be used and abused in its ideological war with the West. During the second media-monitoring study (July–September 2007), there was a sharp increase in the number of public executions in Iran, including death by hanging, flogging and stoning, which included minors, compared to the first media-monitoring period (January–March 2007).

For an in-depth report on executions by stoning in Iran, [click here](#).

4. The Media, Human Rights and Iran

4.1 Right to Life/Enforced Disappearances

On 9 July, **Agence France-Presse** and **ISNA** said that Iran hanged a rapist in the city of Isfahan.

On 10 July, **Amnesty International** expressed outrage at the reported execution by stoning of Ja'far Kiani on 5 July in the village of Aghche-kand, near Takestan in Iran's Qazvin province. The organization urged the Head of the Judiciary, Ayatollah Hashemi Shahroudi, to intervene immediately to prevent the execution by stoning of Mokarrameh Ebrahimi, a woman convicted in the same case. This was reported on the same day by [Der Spiegel](#) (Germany), [Der Standard](#), [Österreich](#) (both Austria), [Le Monde](#) (France), [La Vanguardia](#) (Spain), [Hurriyet Daily](#) (Turkey) and the [Daily Telegraph](#) (Australia). It was reported on the following day by **ABC** (Spain), the [Daily Mail](#) (UK), the **Chicago Tribune**, the **LA Times**, the **New York Times**, the **Washington Post** (all US) and [Gazeta Wyborcza](#) (Poland). On the same day, the **Associated Press** said that the Republic of Ireland had summoned its Iranian Ambassador over the stoning and **Agence France-Presse** said that Iran's judiciary had launched a probe into the judge who ordered the stoning to death of a man convicted of adultery despite a suspension of such executions. It also reported that Canada, Norway and Sweden summoned their Ambassadors to Iran and that UN Human Rights Commissioner Louise Arbour condemned the stoning.

On 12 July, the **Guardian** (UK) published an article in which it reported that Iran is to defy western criticism over its human rights record [by executing 20 sex offenders and violent criminals](#), days after a man convicted of adultery was stoned to death. On the same day the [Hurriyet Daily](#) (Turkey) reported on the exasperation of the international NGO community over Iran's use of stoning as a capital punishment. The **Sabah Daily** (also Turkey) reported that 12 people were hanged in Tehran [for rape, criminal acts, abduction and selling drugs](#).

On 15 July, the **Sydney Morning Herald** (Australia) reported that an Iranian woman who killed her husband and paid two men to murder three of her in-laws [had been hanged along with her two accomplices at an execution](#) watched by thousands of people.

On 16 July, **Associated Press** said that a top Iranian official (Mohammad Javad Larijani, the head of the Iranian judiciary's human rights committee), defended the use of execution by stoning after a sentence was carried out on an adulterer, saying the punishment was legal and in line with Iran's rights commitments.

On the same day, **IRNA** announced that three men were hanged in public, in the north-western Iranian province of East Azerbaijan. They were accused of murder. According to **IRNA**, another man was also hanged in public in the southern province of Fars. 22-year-old Navid Parham was accused of murder and robbery.

On 18 July, **Agence France-Presse**, **Amnesty International** and the [Daily Telegraph](#) (Australia) reported that Iran halted the execution of a teenager who murdered a drug dealer

while still a minor, giving his family 10 days to reach a financial settlement with the victim's kin. Sina Paymard, 19, who suffers from manic depression, was going to be hanged for murdering the 32-year-old man in a fight over drugs three years ago.

On 19 July, the **Daily Mail** (UK) published a short report about an Iranian convert to Christianity who was saved from being deported from Britain to Iran amid fears [she would be stoned to death in her home country](#). Iran's Revolutionary Islamic Court has issued a death sentence against the 30-year-old woman, stating that she has been convicted of 'apostasy' and 'evangelising Christianity' and will be stoned to death should she ever return to Iran.

According to reports in **IRNA** on 22 July, Iranian authorities hanged 12 people in Tehran. They were accused of kidnapping and drug trafficking. Tehran's chief prosecutor, Saeed Mortazavi, announced that four other individuals were hanged in Tehran in the previous week on similar charges. On the same day, **Amnesty International** warned that Mosleh Zamani, who was sentenced to death in 2006, is facing imminent execution. He was reportedly found guilty of abducting a woman some 10 years older than him, with whom he was allegedly having a relationship, and forcing her to have sex with him.

On 23 July, **ABC**, [El Mundo](#) and [La Vanguardia](#) (all Spain) reported that 12 people had been hanged in Iran after being accused of adultery, kidnapping and homosexuality. Iran's State-owned television broadcasted the execution, following the convicted people until they were executed. The room where they were hung was shown as well, where three blue ropes were hanging, waiting for the executions.

On 26 July, **IRNA** reported that Iranian authorities hanged a man in public in the northern province of Mazandaran. He was accused of rape.

Seven Iranians were hanged in Khorassan for rape, robbery and kidnapping on 1 August according to reports in **Die Presse** (Austria), **La Presse** (Canada), **ABC**, [El Mundo](#) (both Spain) and [BILD](#) (Germany). In an editorial in **Die Presse** the Austrian Government is criticized for its decision to press ahead with a controversial gas project with the Iranian Government when Iran is executing people and committing egregious violations of human rights. On 2 August, the same newspaper published [a more detailed article on the executions](#) as did the Austrian paper **Österreich**, [La Vanguardia](#) (Spain), the **National Post** (Canada) and [The New York Times](#) (US). This story was reported on 3 August by [Gazeta Wyborcza](#), [Dziennik Polska Europa Swiat](#) (both Poland), **La Repubblica**, **Il Corriere della Serra** (both Italy) and by the **Daily Express** and **The Times** (UK which reported that ['Thousands of Iranians, including children, watched in fascination and horror as two men convicted of murdering a hardline judge were hanged in Tehran yesterday, the first public executions in the capital for five years.'](#)

A commentary appeared in **Die Welt** (Germany) on 5 August [criticizing the lack of resolute reactions of German politicians and the public to the recent executions and death penalties in Iran](#).

On 6 August a lengthy report appeared in **BILD** (Germany) on the public executions taking place in 'medieval' Iran. The paper noted that the hangmen [were carrying German guns](#) of the type 'MP 5' and the Heckler&Koch rifle 'G3' which Iran has had a licence to produce ever since the 1960s when the Western-friendly shah was ruling the country. On the same day **Il Corriere della Serra** (Italy) reported that in response to the outcry over the executions, Mohammad Hosseini from the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that Europe should mind its own business. In a commentary the **Wall Street Journal** (US) reported that Iran was

suffering from the biggest wave of executions since 1984 and that the hangings and targeted 'disappearances' [are designed to neutralize trade unions leaders, student activists, journalists and mullahs opposed to the regime.](#)

On 8 August, **Die Presse**, **Der Standard** and **Österreich** (all Austrian) published the same article from an **APA** report lamenting that in spite of the international criticisms levelled at Iran it was [still executing people in public](#). A similar report also appeared in **ABC** and **El Mundo** (Spain).

A commentary appeared on 11 August in the **National Post** (Canada) pointing out that 'Iran now executes more people every year than any country except for China.'

On 13 August **La Presse** (Canada) reported that 'About fifty demonstrators protested in front of the Canadian Human Rights Monument in Ottawa to denounce the death penalty in Iran.'

Agence France-Presse reported that on 15 August Iran hanged two men convicted of murder.

The **Toronto Star** (Canada) on 20 August reported that the number of people Iran is executing this year will soon top the total number of people executed in 2006.

A [commentary](#) appeared in the **Daily Telegraph** (UK) on 24 August on the surge of public executions in Iran.

On 27 August **Frankfurter Allgemeine** (Germany) published a [commentary](#) on public executions in Iran.

A report appeared in **Der Spiegel** (Germany) on 30 August noting that although most States have legislated against the death penalty, the number of people being executed worldwide is actually increasing. [Iran executes the largest number of people, after China.](#)

On 1 September, [Hurriyet Daily](#) (Turkey) reported that 10 people had been hanged in Iran while thousands of people looked on.

Zaman Daily (Turkey) reported on 3 September that [Iran hanged a man in public](#) for killing a judge.

On 5 September, [Die Zeit](#) and [Der Spiegel](#) (both Germany), and [Hurriyet Daily](#) and [Sabah Daily](#) (both Turkey) reported that the Iranian judiciary had executed 21 people in public. In the Eastern province of Chorasán Rasawī 17 drug smugglers were hanged and four were executed in the southern Iranian city of Shīras, where a huge crowd watched the event. This was also reported by **ABC**, [El Pais](#) and [El Mundo](#) (all Spain), by the [Milliyet Daily](#), the [Zaman Daily](#), [Turkish Daily News](#) (all Turkey), the [New York Times](#), the **Washington Post** (both US) and the **Guardian** (UK) on the following day.

Also on the 5 September, **Die Welt** (Germany) reported that an Iranian women sentenced to death for her homosexuality was fighting deportation proceedings in Germany arguing that [she will be stoned if sent back to Iran](#).

On 11 September, **Agence France-Presse** reported that Iran hanged two rapists separately in the Shiite religious cities of Mashhad and Qom.

Iran was criticized at the UN Human Rights Council on 13 September, according to a **Reuters** report, for the rising number of executions there.

Zaman Daily (Turkey) published a report on 14 September which said that [Iran hanged three people in the south-east of the country \(in Khuzestan\) for carrying out a bomb attack](#) which left six people dead.

La Presse (Canada) reported on 16 September that 79 people were executed during the summer in Iran; 27 of these executions were done in public; and the executions were conducted in 17 different cities across the country.

On 17 September, Louise Arbour, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights said that Iran should immediately halt the execution of children, according to a report by the **Associated Press**.

On 19 September, **Spiegel** (Germany) [published an interview with ex 'Miss Canada' Nazanin Afshin-Jam](#) who was born in Tehran in 1979. Shortly after the Islamic revolution, she fled to Canada with her family. In the interview Afshin-Jam talks about her campaign against child executions in Iran. She has set up a [website](#) dedicated to the cause.

On 27 September, the [Daily Telegraph](#) and the **Western Australian** (both Australia) published a report from **Reuters** which said that Iran hanged three men in public today for raping and robbing 12 young women, most of them university students. Adi Jafartabar, Mirhadi Mirtaghi and Seyyed Shoja Mousazadeh were executed in front of thousands of spectators at a sports complex in the northern city of Babol. This story was also reported by the [Hurriyet Daily](#), the **Sabah Daily**, the [Zaman Daily](#) and [Turkish Daily News](#) (all Turkey). **Dziennik Polska Europa Swiat** (Poland) and the **Guardian** (UK) reported it on the following day.

4.2 Torture, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment

On 3 July, **Amnesty International** said it feared that Iranian Kurdish journalist and human rights defender Mohammad Sadiq Kabudvand was being detained in Evin prison. They said that he was arrested on 1 July at his place of work in Tehran by plain-clothed security officers and that they were concerned that he may be at risk of torture and ill-treatment.

On 30 July, a [review of the book *Prisoner of Tehran* by Marina Nemat](#) was published in the **Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung** (Germany).

A report appeared in **Il Corriere della Sera** (Italy) and in the **Daily Mail** (UK) on 23 August saying that an Islamic court [has condemned a 20-year-old man, Saeed Ghanbari, to be lashed 80 times for drinking alcohol and having illegal sexual relations](#) (the link includes a photo of a public lashing which accompanies the article in the Mail).

Iran chopped off the hands of two men in Mashad according to a report by **IRNA** on 12 September. The men had been charged with repeated robbery. Each man had one hand amputated.

4.3 Right to Liberty and Security

On 1 July, three short paragraphs appeared in **Die Welt** (Germany) about German nationals [imprisoned abroad](#). Two of the three paragraphs concerned Iran.

On 2 July, the **International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)** and the **Iranian League for the Defence of Human Rights (LDDHI)** [expressed their deep concern](#) at the arbitrary detention and sentencing of Ayatollah Mohammad Hossein Kazemini Boroujerdi and a group of his followers in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

On 11 July, a report appeared in the **LA Times** (US) saying that Iran's judiciary [had broadened its investigations of two detained Iranian Americans](#). There are total of four Iranian-Americans being either detained or not allowed to leave the country during investigations into charges of endangering national security and trying to create a soft revolution in Iran. This was also report on the same day by the **Washington Post** (US).

On 16 July, **Der Spiegel** (Germany) reported that Iran's State television [broadcast images of two detained Iranian-American academics apparently confessing to acting against national security](#) and spying.¹ On the following day, this story was reported in a short paragraph which appeared in the **Guardian's** (UK) international pages, from **Reuters**. It was also reported by the **Associated Press**, the [Daily Telegraph](#), the [Sydney Morning Herald](#), **West Australian** (all Australian), the **Chicago Tribune**, the **New York Times**, the **Washington Post** (all US), [El Pais](#) (Spain), **La Repubblica**, **Il Corriere della Serra** (both Italy), [Zaman Daily](#) (Turkey) and the **Globe and Mail** (Canada). Three related reports on the débâcle also appeared in the **LA Times** (US). These concerned the airing of the confession which was announced [before](#) it took place and [afterwards](#). The paper also [interviewed Stéphane Lherbier](#) who was detained in Iran for 15 months before being released from captivity (for more information, please see the first media-monitoring report). It was condemned by **Amnesty International**. The television broadcast was reported by **USA Today** (US) and [Le Figaro](#) (France) on 18 July.

¹ Haleh Esfandiari, of the Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars, and Kian Tajbakhsh, a consultant with the Open Society Institute founded by the billionaire investor George Soros were detained separately in May while visiting Iran from the United States. Iranian officials accuse them of supporting US efforts to carry out a 'velvet revolution' in Iran.

On 19 July, the **Guardian** (UK) reported that the two Americans detained by Iran for alleged spying [admitted involvement in US-backed pro-democracy projects](#) but stopped short of making full confessions. The **New York Times** (US) published a lengthy commentary on the issue. Also, on the same day, [The Wall Street Journal](#) (US) published a wide-ranging commentary on the general human rights situation in Iran. The **Washington Post** (also US) published a commentary by the daughter of Haleh Esfandiari (the dual Iranian–US national being detained by Iran) denouncing the video of her mother.

An [in-depth report](#) appeared in **Der Spiegel** (Germany) on 20 July about the detention of the Iranian-American academics and it was reported on the same day by the **Hurriyet** and **Milliyet** newspapers (both Turkey). A report also appeared on the same day in the **Times** (UK) saying that [‘Iran poked a finger in the eye of the White House last night’](#) when it aired footage of two detained academics who admitted that they had links to US groups that wanted change in the Republic. This was reported by **Le Monde** (France) on the following day.

Der Spiegel (Germany) reported on 5 August that [more than 200 fans attending a Western-style rock concert near Karaj, Iran were arrested for breaking Sharia law](#). This was reported on the following day by the **Toronto Star** (Canada) and the [Guardian](#) (UK).

On 6 August, [Reporters without Borders](#) called for the release of Soheil Assefi, a journalist who was arrested when he presented himself to a Tehran court on 4 August in response to a summons. Neither his family nor his lawyers know where he is being held or what he is charged with. Officials from the prosecutor’s office searched his home on 31 July, taking personal documents and his computer’s hard disk.

On 21 August the **National Post**, **La Presse** (both Canadian), [Die Zeit](#), [Der Spiegel](#) and [Süddeutsche Zeitung](#) (Germany), **ABC** (Spain), the **Wall Street Journal** (US) and **Le Monde** (France) reported that Haleh Esfandiari had been released on bail. On 22 August the **Toronto Star**, the **Globe and Mail**, **La Presse** (all Canadian), [El Mundo](#), [El Pais](#) (both Spain), the [Guardian](#), the **Financial Times** (UK), the **Chicago Tribune**, the **LA Times**, [The New York Times](#), [USA Today](#), the [Washington Post](#) (all US) and **Il Corriere della Sera** (Italy) reported the same story, adding that Iranian Nobel Peace Prize winner Shirin Ebadi has vowed to prove Esfandiari’s innocence in court. However, on 23 August the **Toronto Star** (Canada) and the [Washington Post](#) (US) reported that Esfandiari had no passport and had not been allowed to leave the country.

According to a report in the 20 August edition of the **Globe and Mail** (Canada) Montreal-based documentary filmmaker Mehrnoushe Solouki, arrested in Iran seven months ago while filming a documentary about the Iran–Iraq war, was injured in a ‘suspicious’ motorcycle hit-and-run last month in Tehran after being released from prison. Although she is a French national, a friend reported that Ms Solouki is unable to seek long-term shelter with the French embassy as Iranian officials only recognize her as an Iranian citizen.

On 3 September, the [New York Times](#) (US) reported that Esfandiari left Iran after a judge ordered the authorities to return her passport to her possession. This was reported by **El Pais** (Spain), the [Zaman Daily](#) (Turkey), the **Guardian** and the [BBC News website](#) (both UK) as well as **Agence France-Presse** on the following day. It was reported by the **Financial Times** (UK) on 5 September.

According to a 6 September report in **Le Monde** (France) Mehrnoushe Solouki, of dual French/Iranian nationality has been kept in Iran against her will by the authorities for more than six months. On the 17 February Solouki was arrested in Teheran while working on a film

that included eyewitness accounts of the executions and political repression that occurred in Iran in 1988 (which resulted in 4–6,000 victims). She is currently holding herself up in the French Embassy in Tehran.

On 18 September, **Radio Free Europe** reported that their correspondent Parnaz Azima left Tehran after being held there as a virtual prisoner for more than seven months. This was reported by the [Los Angeles Times](#) (US) on the following day. A brief report on Ms Azima's detention appeared in the [New York Times](#) (US) on 5 September, and on 19 September the same newspaper reported that [she had been released](#). The **Washington Post** (also US) published a [commentary](#) on her detention on 19 September.

The **Associated Press** and the [Washington Post](#) (US) reported on 20 September that Iran released Kian Tajbakhsh, an urban planning consultant with the Soros Foundation's Open Society Institute after the scholar spent four months in prison.

On 24 September, **Amnesty International** announced that Cleric Hadi Qabel was arrested by Special Court for the Clergy (SCC) officials at his home on 12 September in the city of Qom, southwest of Tehran. They said that his whereabouts were unknown and that he was at risk of torture.

[The New York Times](#) and the [LA Times](#) (both US) reported on 25 September that Iran released on bail a fourth Iranian-American national who had been jailed since May on security-related charges. Ali Shakeri, 59, a California-based peace activist and businessman, was released after his family posted a bail of about \$107,000.

4.4 Freedom of Movement

On 26 July, the **Financial Times** (UK) reported that [Iran had slowed down the deportation of illegal Afghan immigrants](#) after protests from Kabul that the Afghan economy could not cope with more hungry people or provide them with shelter and jobs.

4.5 Right to a Fair Trial

On 1 July, **Agence France-Presse** reported that Iran's Supreme Court held a new appeal hearing into the death in custody four years ago of Iranian-Canadian photographer Zahra Kazemi that has strained ties with Ottawa. The lawyers representing Kazemi's family exposed flaws in the appeal court's verdict, including the fact that murder had not been investigated.

The Iranian Supreme Court ended its investigation into the death of Iranian-Canadian photojournalist Zahra Kazemi, **La Presse** (Canada) reported on 2 July.

On 3 July, the **Globe and Mail** (Canada) published a three-paragraph report on a new appeal hearing into the death in custody four years ago of Iranian-Canadian photographer Zahra Kazemi, a case that has strained ties with the Canadian Government. The judge announced that the court would announce its decision in a week.

On 11 July, the **Toronto Star** (Canada) published a two-paragraph statement from [Reporters Without Borders](#), calling on Iran to reopen a trial into the murder of Iranian-Canadian photojournalist Zahra Kazemi. Four years ago, Kazemi died of a fractured skull and brain haemorrhage after being apprehended by the Iranian secret police. She was arrested after taking pictures of a protest outside a Tehran prison.

4.6 Right to Respect for Private and Family life

Men can now accompany their wives into the operating theatre when their wives give birth to their children in order to reduce the caesarean birth rate in Iran according to a 24 July report in the [Milliyet Daily](#). This was held to be in compliance with Islamic law.

The **Sydney Morning Herald** (Australia) published a report on 11 September on the story of Nazanine Aghazadeh who drove a black jeep, lived in the exclusive Farmanieh district in North Tehran and held promiscuous, cocaine-fuelled parties for her wealthy friends on the outskirts of the Iranian capital. One night her home [was raided by the religious police](#) and she was sentenced to whipping. She has since left Iran and now lives in Dubai.

On 26 September, the **Guardian** (UK) published three reports on homosexuality in Iran, provoked by President Ahmedinejad's comments that it doesn't exist in the country. One of these reports noted that ['Iran has between 15,000 and 20,000 transsexuals, according to official statistics, although unofficial estimates put the figure at up to 150,000. Iran carries out more gender change operations than any country in the world besides Thailand.'](#)

4.7 Freedom of Thought, Conscience and Religion

Nothing to report.

4.8 Freedom of Expression

On 3 July, [Reporters without Borders](#) condemned the arrest by the Iranian authorities of three journalists. 'The Iranian regime is one of the most repressive in the world towards the media', they said.

On 4 July, the [Financial Times](#) (UK) and the [LA Times](#) (US) published an article about the Iranian judiciary's decision to shut down a reformist newspaper (called Ham-Mihan), which is critical of the Iranian President Ahmadinejad.

On the same day, [www.baztab.com](#) published [comments](#) by Ham-Mihan's attorney saying that the ban on Ham-Mihan had 'no legal basis'.

On 5 July, a report appeared on [www.roozonline.com](#) which said that the publication licence of Mosharekat newspaper (which is a reformist newspaper), the official organ of Islamic Participation Party (Hezbe Mosharekat Islami) was [revoked](#).

On 9 July, the [Guardian](#) (UK) and [Il Corriere della Serra](#) (Italy) reported that allies of Iran's president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, have accused the media of trying to depose him in a 'creeping coup'. This story was reported by [Milliyet Daily](#) (Turkey) on the following day.

On 11 July, [Der Standard](#) (Austria) [published a story](#) on the ban on Ham-Mihan newspaper.

On 12 July, [Reporters without Borders](#) [deplored](#) the arbitrary and repressive methods of a regime whose culture minister recently accused the media of promoting a 'creeping coup' against the Government.

On 13 July, [Le Figaro](#) (France) published a lengthy commentary on the denial of human rights in Iran concerning the shutting down of newspapers and websites and the restrictions on women's clothing by Delphine Minoui.

On 24 July, [Agence France-Presse](#) published comments by Ahmad Reza Radan, the head of Tehran's police force, saying that Iran is to launch a new crackdown on slack dressing that targets both men and women whose clothing and haircuts are deemed to be un-Islamic. This story was republished in the [Globe and Mail](#) newspaper (Canada) and in the [Milliyet Daily](#) (Turkey). The following day [ABC](#) (Spain) published a commentary on the issue as did the [LA Times](#) (US) and [Turkish Daily News](#) (Turkey) which published a [very interesting commentary](#) from [AFP](#).

On 31 July, [www.roozonline.com](#) reported that 40 lawmakers wrote a letter to President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, [criticizing him for the recent ban of Ham-Mihan daily](#) and the filtering of [ILNA](#). The Seventh Majlis ('Parliament') deputies also called on the President to put an end to the curtailment of free speech in Iran.

On 6 August [La Vanguardia](#) (Spain) was the only paper to report that one of the leading Iranian TV presenters was forced 'to take a holiday' after having criticized the chief of Tehran's police in a programme.

[Der Standard](#) (Austria), [El Pais](#) and [La Vanguardia](#) (both Spain) reported on 6 August that the Iranian authorities have shut down 'Shargh' for the second time in a year after the paper published an interview with a lesbian Iranian woman who lives in Canada. This was reported by the [Guardian](#) (UK) on the following day. On 8 August this story was reported by [The New](#)

[York Times](#) (US). On 9 August the same newspaper reported that this was condemned by **Reporters Without Borders**. This was reported by [Gazeta Wyborcza](#) (Poland) on the following day. On 15 August **Der Standard** (Austria) reported that **Reporters Without Borders** called on the UN to demand the release of two Kurdish journalists, Adnan Hassanpour and Hiva Botimar. This was also reported by **La Presse** (Canada).

The **National Post** (Canada) published a report from **AFP** on 25 August which reported that 'in the past 15 days Iranian police have closed down 13 barber shops for giving men spiked or heavily gelled "Western" hairstyles deemed un-Islamic.' This story was reported on the previous day by [El Pais](#) (Spain), which cited a report in the **Guardian** (UK) which is available [here](#).

On 27 August [Reporters without Borders](#) said that it was worried about the state of health of journalists Adnan Hassanpour and Abdolvahed 'Hiva' Botimar, who are under sentence of death and who began their 42nd day on hunger strike.

On 4 September, [Roozonline](#) reported that Former president Hashemi Rafsanjani joined the long list of 'banned' authors after the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance [confiscated and collected from bookstores the latest installment of his multi-volume memoir, entitled Towards Fate](#).

Die Presse, [Der Standard](#) (both Austria) and [Spiegel](#) (Germany) reported on 17 September that the Iranian Government had blocked access to Google and its Gmail service.

On 24 September, [Der Standard](#) (Austria) reported that the conservative website Baztab, which is close to Mohsen Rezaei (former head of the Revolutions Guards Corps), was banned by Iranian authorities. The online paper had already been banned in February for 'violating the constitution and posting false news', although it was lifted in March. The website had repeatedly criticized Ahmadinejad's foreign and economic policy.

4.9 Freedom of Assembly & Association

Nothing to report.

4.10 Right to Adequate Housing

Nothing to report.

4.11 Right to Work and Rights in Work

On 12 July, the [International Transport Workers' Federation](#) appealed for the release of an Iranian union leader who reportedly was kidnapped. Mansour Osanloo, leader of a bus workers union, 'is still in custody somewhere by agents unknown', [the Federation said](#).

The **Guardian** reported on 29 August that University lecturers in Iran [are to be forced to tell security authorities of all foreign trips in advance](#) in a move aimed at preventing them from being recruited as Western spies. The restriction will extend to private tourist journeys and pilgrimages, as well as academic trips funded by foreign institutions. It follows official accusations that the West is trying to exploit Iranian academics for espionage purposes.

4.12 Cultural Rights

According to a report published by **IRNA** on 2 July, the Majlis Research Center has warned against the increase in the average age of marriage among Iranian youth, which has created many social problems. Unemployment, housing problems and cultural differences have been blamed for the rising trend. The average marriage age has increased from 26 years for boys and 23 years for girls in 1996 to about 30 for boys and 28 for girls in the year to March 2007.

Die Zeit (Germany) published an article on 5 August about the Berlin-based Iranian artist Leila Pazooki's struggle to open an art exhibit in Tehran. Although she eventually succeeded with help from the German embassy she says that [she feels her art is not being interpreted for what it is, but in the light of her Iranian background](#).

On 26 August **La Presse** (Canada) reported that a German symphony orchestra will perform several concerts in Tehran as part of a cultural exchange between the two countries. The female German musicians will play with their heads covered and the programme was vetted by the Iranian authorities. It will be the first concert by a Western orchestra since the Iranian Revolution in 1979.

The **Guardian** (UK) reported on 3 August that Iran's former president, Mohammad Khatami, had suffered a blow to his political standing by being pictured apparently [shaking hands with women](#) in breach of Islamic convention.

A report by Henryk M Broder in the 31 August edition of **Der Speigal** (Germany) strongly criticized the performance of the German orchestra in Teheran, [comparing it to the performances which took place in concentration camps in Germany during the Second World War](#).

ABC (Spain) published two critical reports on 17 September on sexuality and Islam in Iran as well as on gender rights and the obligation on women to wear headscarves.

On 19 September, **Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung** (Germany) published a story written by Alexander Westhoff who had to enter into a 'temporary marriage' to go on holiday to Iran with his Iranian girlfriend. Westhoff had to convert to Islam to get married to his girlfriend and he described [the process of converting to Islam](#) in his article.

On 22 September, the [Globe and Mail](#) (Canada) reported in a special archive edition that 25 years ago, Iranian legislators ruled that kissing for pleasure must stop and was considered a moral offence officially outlawed by the Parliament. The ban was expected to run for an experimental period with a punishment of 100 lashes for first-time offenders. Also included on the list of moral offences officially outlawed were homosexuality and drinking alcohol.

4.13 Right to Education (and Student Life)

On 2 July, Iranian newspaper **Sharq** reported (courtesy of BBC Monitoring Middle East) that The Central Council of the Student Guild for the Office for Fostering Unity [Daftar-e Tahkim-e Vahdat] has written to professors, elites, political and civil activists, and human rights associations a letter complaining about students being banned from studying and professors being expelled from teaching. As an “outstanding example” they highlight the “starred students” who have been banned from class and professors who have been obliged to accept retirement.

On 10 July, **Agence France-Presse** and **ILNA** said that Iranian police had arrested six members of a reformist student group staging a sit-in protest on the anniversary of bloody student unrest eight years ago.

On 19 July, **USA Today** (US) published a story from the **Associated Press** about the Iranian policemen and plain-clothes security agents [who broke up a sit-in marking the anniversary of a bloody raid on a Tehran university dormitory](#). Fifteen students and a mother were beaten and detained. Iran had banned street protests to mark the anniversary of the 9 July 1999 raid. The students had organized the sit-in at Amir Kabir University to protest about the continued detention of eight students who have been in custody since May. Nine other students and a mother were detained later when police forces forced their way into offices of the student group.

On 27 July, a report appeared in the **Guardian** (UK) about a letter sent to Iran’s judiciary chief, Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi, from the parents whose children [have suffered physical and psychological abuses](#) since being incarcerated in Tehran’s Evin prison. They were among eight students from Amir Kabir University arrested for allegedly publishing anti-Islamic articles.

[Roozonline](#) published a report on 4 September about a demonstration by a group of unhappy teachers in front of the Majlis building (Iran’s parliament), [protesting against the imprisonment of activist teachers](#).

4.14 Women’s Rights

On 2 July, **Süddeutsche Zeitung** (Germany) published a report on the campaign ‘One Million Signatures’, [seeking to bring an end to discriminatory laws against women](#) in Iran.

On 3 July, **Der Standard** (Austria) [interviewed Nayereh Tohidi](#), a Professor at California State University, who is one of the most prominent members of the Campaign 'One Million Signatures Demanding Changes to Discriminatory Laws'. In the interview she talked about the peaceful protest of Iranian people who stand behind the campaign.

On the same day, **Reuters**, **Agence France-Presse** and **ILNA** reported that Iran has sentenced a women's rights activist to flogging and to almost three years in jail for taking part in a 2006 protest over 'discriminatory' laws. Delaram Ali was sentenced to 10 lashes and two years and ten months in jail for 'participation in an illegal gathering', 'propaganda against the system' and 'disturbing public order'. She was one of 70 people arrested in June 2006 in a protest at a Tehran main square against articles in Iranian law which are seen as discriminating against women.

On the same day, an article appeared on the Iranian website www.baztab.com which published [comments](#) by the Head of Iran's Judiciary, Chief Justice Ayatollah Mahmoud Shahroudi, in which he said that 'the alleged defenders of women's rights in the West have betrayed women the most'. His exact words were: 'Islam has given the highest status to women and strongly supports their rights, dignity and their social status. The Western advocates of women's rights mainly in the contemporary era have committed the severest betrayal of the rights of women.'

On 4 July, the **LA Times** (US) reprinted a report from **Reuters** about the Delaram Ali story as did [Hurriyet Daily](#) (Turkey). This story was also reported on 13 July by [Dziennik Polska Europa Swiat](#) (Poland).

On 5 July, the **Associated Press** published comments by Iran's leader in which he signalled a willingness to reinterpret Islamic law more favorably to women's rights but not by following Western conventions. These comments appeared on his [personal website](#). This was reported by [Zaman Daily](#) (Turkey) on 7 July.

On 17 July, **Reuters** published comments by an Iranian official in which he said that Iranian police will intensify a crackdown on women flouting the Islamic dress code. On the same day, a short report appeared in **Dziennik Polska Europa Swiat** (Poland) saying that Iran has a women's national team for polo. They practise in Azadi in Teheran and in last year's World Cup in Amsterdam [they came in 12th place](#), which was better than the USA.

The Polish newspaper **Dziennik Polska Europa Swiat** reported on 21 August that [300,000 women signed a petition for equal rights](#).

On 24 September, **Hurriyet Daily** (Turkey) published a commentary on the situation of Turkish women and Iranian women, focusing on the [headscarf issue](#) (that it is prohibited in Turkey and compulsory in Iran).

4.15 Minority Rights

On 6 July, **Der Standard** (Austria) reported via the **Austrian Press Agency** that the Iranian authorities arrested Kurdish human rights activist Sadiq Kabudvand without providing any reason for his arrest.

On 16 July, **Amnesty International** said that two Iranian Kurdish journalists and human rights defenders were [arrested earlier this month](#). Mohammad Sadiq Kabudvand, Chair of the Kurdistan Human Rights Organization (RMMK), was taken from his workplace in Tehran by plain-clothed security officers on 1 July. He was facing a one-year prison sentence because of articles he had published in the now-banned *Payam-e Mardom-e Kurdistan* (Message of the People of Kurdistan).

On 24 July, **ABC** (Spain) published the comments of Reporters without Borders, denouncing the decision of the Revolutionary Tribunal in Marivan to sentence two Kurdish journalists to death.

On 25 July, **Amnesty International** said that two Kurds, Adnan Hassanpour and his cousin Abdolwahed (known as Hiwa) Butimar, have been sentenced to death. No reason was given.

The [Hurriyet Daily](#) (Turkey) reported on 31 July that two Kurdish journalists were sentenced to death by hanging by a court order on 16 July as did [Der Speigal](#) (Germany) and [Der Standard](#) (Austria). On the same day, [www.roozonline.com](#) published an article online saying that in response to death sentences handed down to two Kurdish journalists and a new wave of government oppressive measures targeting activists, the Center for the Defense of Human Rights in Kurdistan and Chaak Organization called on the people of Iranian Kurdistan, political parties and activists in all areas to protest the violation of human rights in Kurdistan [by taking part in a mass strike](#).

This story was reported by **Il Giornale** (Italy) and the **Associated Press** on the following day.

On 3 August, the **EU** called on Iran to stay the execution of the two Kurdish journalists. 'The EU is especially concerned about the death sentences on the two Kurdish journalists, Adnan Hassanpour and Abdolwahed Boutimar', said a declaration by the EU's Portuguese Presidency.

On 16 August, a report appeared in **Le Monde** (France) saying that hangings, arrests, newspaper closings and other forms of repression are hitting Iran hardest in the areas of the country where there are ethnic and religious minorities. This is particularly the case for the 6 million Iranian Kurds who live in the border provinces with Iraq and Turkey.

4.16 Children's Rights

Nothing to report.

5. The Iranian Press

5.1 Right to Life/Enforced Disappearances

On 2 July, **Aftab-e-Yazd** reported that seven people found guilty of rape, immorality, kidnapping and theft were hanged in Mashhad. It also reported that two other people were hanged in Zahedan for opening fire on city police, resulting in the deaths of two officers. Also on the same day, **ISNA** reported that the 28-year-old man found guilty of murdering Justice Jafarpour would be hanged. **Etemad** reported his execution on 4 August.

On 3 July, **Aftab-e-Yazd** reported that a man was executed for rape in Isfahan. It was also reported that the man had confessed to watching pornographic videos as a source of motivation.

On 8 July, **Aftab-e-Yazd** reported that Shahla Jahed's death sentence for the murder of Laleh Saharkhizan had been upheld on appeal at the 3rd Branch of the National Court of Appeal. On the same day, **ISNA** reported that a man who had been found guilty of kidnapping and armed robbery was hanged in Zahedan.

ISNA published an interview on 10 July with Prosecutor General, Mr Douri-Najafabadi, who explained that because *Qisas* (retaliatory decree of execution) is technically an individual right as opposed to a right of the State, international institutions should differentiate between such decrees and State-mandated executions. He stated further that Iranian prisons are torture-free. In **Etemad** on 14 July, Mr Douri-Najarabadi reiterated the importance of distinguishing between execution and an individual's right to impose the Islamic punishment of *Qisas* on a criminal offender.

On 11 July, **Ressalat** reported that 20 people found guilty of rape, 'intrusion into God's boundaries' and homosexuality would be executed in Tehran. A spokesman for the judiciary explained that a further 15 rapists and homosexuals were facing accusations at the Tehran Criminal Court. He also stated that the prosecution would be seeking the death penalty for disturbers of the public peace in the future and mentioned that 100 people were arrested following an uprising in response to fuel rationing.

ISNA reported on 15 July that the execution of a minor named Sina Paymard had been postponed for a second 10-day period. Apparently, the family of the murdered victim agreed to waive their right of retaliation in exchange for a payment of 150 million Toman.

On 30 July, **Aftab-e-Yazd** reported that, according to the Public Prosecution of the Tehran Common and Revolutionary Courts, Hossein and Majid Kavousfar would be hanged for the murder of Justice Moghadas. **Etemad** reported their execution on 4 August.

Etemad reported on 22 July that a 34-year-old man found guilty of murdering children in Pakdasht County, near Tehran, would be hanged in four days pursuant to Islamic jurisprudence.

On 23 July, **Etemad** reported that 12 men found guilty of rape and kidnapping were executed in Evin Prison. It further explained that, according to Chief Prosecutor Mortazavi, another 17 people in Evin were awaiting decisions on their execution.

Etemad reported on 31 July that the 71st Branch of the Tehran Criminal Court approved a retaliatory decree of execution (*qisas*) against a 26-year-old women found guilty of murdering her mother.

On 4 August, **Etemad** reported that a 27-year-old man and a 22-year-old man who were found guilty of killing Justice Moghadas were hanged in Tehran. It also reported that seven people were hanged in Mashhad for rape. **Etemad** and **Ressalat** both reported that Branch 71 of Tehran Criminal Court found Amir Hossein, 28, guilty of murdering Justice Javad Jafarpour of Gharchak Varamin and sentenced the former to death by hanging. **Kyhan** published this story one month later, on 3 September.

Etemad reported on 7 August that, according to the Chief Prosecutor of Gonbad-e-Kavous, the retaliatory decree of execution (*Qisas*) imposed upon the murderer of a NAJA soldier would be put to effect without delay.

On 12 August, **Etemad** reported that, according to an announcement of the Justice Department of the Province of Sistan-Baluchestan, three individuals found guilty of disturbing the public peace were hanged in Zahedan, as required by divine law. **Etemad** also reported on 12 August that a man found guilty of murdering his mother-in-law was hanged in Baboulsar. On the same day, **Aftab-e-Yazd** reported that, according to the Chief of Police of Kerman, 178 individuals believed to be responsible for disturbing the public peace were arrested in the city of Kerman itself, 12 of which were awaiting execution by hanging.

On 15 August, **Fars News Agency** reported that the Deputy Prosecutor of Tehran has requested the death penalty for 17 individuals charged with disturbing the public peace in the Tehran Criminal Court.

On 19 August, **ISNA** announced that a man found guilty of murdering two people and injuring nine girls in East Tehran would be hanged subject to the approval of a retaliatory decree (*qisas*) by the 71st Branch of the Tehran Criminal Court. On the same day, **Aftab-e-Yazd** reported that Branch 31 of the National Supreme Court upheld the retaliatory decree of execution imposed on two men who were found guilty of murder and armed robbery.

Etemad reported on 20 August that three young men found guilty of rape were hanged in Saveh. Mahmoud, 24, Mohammad, 27, and Davoud, 28, were arrested by Tehran Police and the death penalty was approved by the Tehran Criminal Court and Supreme Court. The three initially denied the charges, but later confessed. **Etemad** further reported that in imposing the death penalty the judge considered the fact that the accused had previously been involved in public disturbances and vandalism. On the same day **Etemad** also reported that a man found guilty of murdering his five-year-old son of a temporary marriage (*sigheh*) would be executed by retaliatory decree (*Qisas*).

A man was hanged in Shiraz, according to a 23 August report in **Kyhan**, after his execution order was upheld in Fasa and at the National Supreme Court.

On 25 August, **Aftab-e-Yazd** reported that, according to the Chief of Police of Kermanshah, a number of criminals in the city and in prison were hanged. He further stated that several more will be executed in the city.

Ressalat reported on 26 August that the Member of Parliament for Azarshar, Tabriz, said that human rights are defined by the Quran and the Islamic Constitution of Iran and not by the White House. Eshrat Shaghyegh criticized Western countries for intruding into Iranian domestic affairs following the recent hangings made under the social security plan.

On 27 August, **Etemad** reported that the man accused of killing Justice Jafarpour of the Varamin Court would be hanged in public. It was also reported that a man arrested for armed robbery was sentenced to death by the 71st Branch of the Criminal Court. **Etemad** also reported that the Supreme Court upheld a retaliatory decree of execution (*Qisas*) imposed on a woman found guilty of killing her husband and burying him under their house. Also on 27 August, **Kyhan** reported that a man found guilty of carrying heroin by the Common and Revolutionary Tribunal was executed in Zahedan.

On 2 September, **Aftab-e-Yazd** reported that The Deputy Prosecutor for Tehran said that he had requested the execution of 17 people at the Tehran Criminal Court. Mr Mohammad Salarkia explained that these people were known vandals and disturbers of the public peace. He also added that these cases had been heard in the penal court and not in a tribunal.

Aftab-e-Yazd reported on 3 September that a Turkish drugs smuggler found guilty of murdering his two Iranian accomplices was sentenced to death by the 74th Branch of the Tehran Criminal Court. **Aftab-e-Yazd** also reported that the Head of the Association for the Defence of Prisoners' Rights had written a letter to the heads of the political parties and to ex-President Mohammad Khatami, criticizing the passivism and silence over the Government's human rights infringements and the increasing number of executions. He accepted that while offenders needed to be punished, the death penalty was an excessive punishment.

On 5 September, **Etemad** reported that four individuals found guilty of disturbing the public peace were executed in Shiraz. The Deputy of the Fars Province Judiciary told **ISNA** that from the beginning of the year, approximately one or two criminals were hanged in public every week in the Province of Fars alone. The Deputy explained that this figure indicated how determined the judiciary was in responding to public disruptions and threats to security.

On 6 September, **Etemad** reported that 21 individuals found guilty of disturbing the public peace and drugs smuggling were executed in the Provinces of Khorasan and Fars. The report went on to explain that there had been a large amount of publicity surrounding the increasing number of executions and claimed that 56 people had been put to death since the beginning of the summer in Tehran, Mashhad and Tabriz. **Aftab-e-Yazd** published a similar story the following day, 7 September, but maintained that only 17 drugs smugglers had been hanged in Khorasan. **Kyhan**, on the other hand, reported that four men were hanged in Sadie for opium smuggling and possession of firearms.

On 8 September, **Etemad** reported that two drugs smugglers had been executed in Bandar Abbas. One of the two had initially been sentenced to life imprisonment but, on appeal by the Governance Office of Bandar Abbas, his sentence was retracted and he was resentenced to death.

Kyhan reported on 12 September that a man purporting to be the Last Prophet of Shiia Islam was hanged in Qom. The man had also raped several women.

On 15 September, **Kyhan** reported that three men were executed in connection with the 2005 Ahvaz bombings. The Chief Prosecutor of Ahvaz explained that, although 80 per cent of the agents responsible for the attack itself had been arrested, the leaders of the group were stationed abroad and so had not been apprehended.

5.2 Torture, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment

On 12 July, **Etemad** reported that, based on comments made by members of the judiciary on the subject of Islamic jurisprudence, an accused who confesses to a given charge or sin should be flogged only and should not be subject to the punishment of stoning.

On 16 July, **Aftab-e-Yazd** reported that a women accused of public disorder and participation in an illegal gathering was sentenced to six months' imprisonment and 10 cracks of the whip.

Etemad reported on 7 August that 31 Members of Parliament had written to President Ahamdinejad after hearing about recent student protests against investigators and prison guards at the Evin Prison.

On 28 August, **Etemad** reported that a man in Abhar fell into a coma after the rope with which he was to be hanged snapped under his weight.

Etemad reported on 13 September that four thieves had their hands amputated in Mashhad, in accordance with Islamic law.

On 15 September, **Ressalat** reported that three people found guilty of disturbing the public peace and posing a threat to security were subjected to 74 lashes in public.

On 29 September, **Etemad** published comments made by Iran's Prosecutor General, Mr Douri-Najafabadi, relating to the punishment of flogging. Mr Douri-Najafabadi explained that though many international institutions view flogging as a punishment which infringes individual rights, in an Islamic legal system the rights of the accused are balanced against the deterrent effect of the punishment in question.

5.3 Right to Liberty and Security

Aftab-e-Yazd reported on 8 July that the cases of 80 people arrested for protesting against fuel rationing were to be considered by the investigative and security department of the Tehran Common and Revolutionary Court.

Aftab-e-Yazd reported on 11 July that several members of the public had been arrested in the Province of Kohgiluyeh and Buirahmad following an uprising in the city relating to fuel rationing.

On 12 July, **Aftab-e-Yazd** reported that 23 people were arrested in Rezaishahr-Karaj for disturbing the public peace. The report also explained that, according to the Chief of Police for Tehran, these people would be dealt with harshly in order to discourage others from disturbing the peace.

On 4 August, **Etemad** reported that nine students had been detained at Evin Prison for nearly a month without charge, though it was believed that they were accused of engaging in activities undermining national security and of participating in illegal gatherings.

5.4 Freedom of Movement

On 2 August, **Etemad** reported that 60 disabled residents of Tehran gathered in front of the Ministry of Health to protest about the discontinuation of disabled facilities and services, which was justified on the basis of fuel rationing.

On 6 September, **Etemad** reported that the family members of imprisoned union leader Mansour Osanlo, unsuccessfully attempted to meet with UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour, who instead met with the Iranian Foreign Minister and the Head of the Iranian Judiciary.

5.5 Right to a Fair Trial

On 1 July, **Aftab-e-Yazd** reported that, according to **ISNA**, imprisoned union leader Mansour Osanlo had not been made aware of the charges against him and had not been permitted to meet with his defence lawyers following his arrest.

5.6 Right to Respect for Private and Family life

Etemad reported on 4 September that the Family Support Bill has been the target of considerable criticism from women's rights activists and lawyers, who argue that the bill is designed to weaken the position of women in Iranian society, to the benefit of men. The report further stated that, according to these activists, the bill will ultimately create problems within the family unit.

On 5 September, **Etemad** published a lengthy review of the series of legislative enactments and amendments that preceded the adoption of the Family Support Bill, and specifically the provision relating to the requirement of spousal consent for remarriage. The report further explained that a previous Family Support Bill, enacted in 1974, was drafted exclusively by male members of parliament and so did not take women's concerns into account. On 11 September, **Etemad** followed-up by reporting that 2,000 female members of parliament, lawyers and gender equality advocates had protested in writing against the enactment of the Family Support Bill, referring in particular to article 23, which codifies the right of a husband to remarry without spousal approval. **Etemad** claimed that, according to the protesters, the bill did not adequately reflect the realities of modern Iranian society and argued that article 23 was disrespectful to women.

On 13 September, **Kyhan** reported that, according to the Chief Revolutionary Prosecutor of Mazandaran, 35 unmarried young men and women were arrested at a sham marriage ceremony which, the authorities suspected, was being held with the aim of 'propagating immorality'.

On 25 September, **Etemad** published comments made by a noted sociologist relating to the Family Support Bill, which the sociologist believed posed a danger to the institution of the family.

5.7 Freedom of Thought, Conscience and Religion

Aftab-e-yazd reported on 4 July that a protest was held by the Islamic Association of University Teacher Training at Tarbyat Modares against the marginalization and eventual banning of a 'freedom-loving lecturer'.

5.8 Freedom of Expression

Aftab-e-Yazd reported on 1 July that the editor of the weekly **Jaam** publication, which is an organ of the Islamic Society of Engineers, was brought before the Press Court to respond to various charges. On the same day, **ISNA** reported that, according to defence counsel for Adnan Hassanpour and Abdoul Vahed Botimar, the death sentences imposed on the aforementioned journalists did not relate to any of their publications, as it was claimed in the foreign press, but rather related to their affiliation to armed groups opposed to the Islamic regime.

On 2 July, **Aftab-e-Yazd** reported that the editor of the **Taak** publication was fined 400,000 Toman by the 76th Branch of the Tehran Criminal Court. The following day, the newspaper published a related story on the defamation and libel charges brought against the editors of **Nasim-e-Saba**, **Iranshahr** and **Tajrobeh** by the Tehran Criminal Court. **Etemad** published this story on 7 July.

On 3 July, following the closure of the Central Islamic Participation Front's newspaper, **Aftab-e-Yazd** published an interview with one of the Front's members who claimed that the closure was due to the newspaper's affiliation with the Participation Party, which had been critical of the Government. The interviewee also expressed surprise at the closure after the Head of Judiciary commented on the importance of protecting the media. The report also explained that leading up to the parliamentary elections, the newspaper's closure would limit the Participation Party's chances of success.

On 4 and 5 July, **Aftab-e-Yazd** and **Etemad** both reported that a number of weblog writers and students at Amir Kabir University were arrested and charged with making defamatory statements against sacred Islamic personalities. Apparently the families of some of the arrested students met with the head of the National Trust Party with a view to visiting the prison and ultimately securing their freedom. Three days thereafter, **Aftab-e-Yazd** report that another three weblog writers had been arrested and charged with undermining national security and publishing propaganda against the system.

According to **IRNA** on 8 July, the Council of Guardians requested that the authorities name the students recently arrested during a protest against the closure of the **Salam** Newspaper. On the 10 and 12 July, **Aftab-e-Yazd** published similar stories about the closure of the **Ham'Mihan** newspaper after complaints were made about its allegedly anti-religious, defamatory and libelous material.

Aftab-e-Yazd reported on 9 July that after the **Jam-Yazd** paper published a story on abusive oil and rice rationing in Yazd, its editor was summoned to appear before a provincial Tribunal and was subsequently released on bail of 20 million Rials.

According to reports by **Aftab-e-Yaz** and **ISNA** published on 18 July, the editor of an Amir Kabir University student publication called **Sar-e-Khat** was freed on bail of 80 million Toman. The student was convicted of publishing statements relating to sacred religious personalities.

Aftab-e-Yazd and **Etemad** reported on 22 and 23 July respectively that the editors of **Kyhan**, **Etemad** and **Etemad Meli** were summonsed to appear at the Civil Servant Tribunal in Tehran to respond to accusations of libel. On the 22 July, **Aftab-e-Yazd** and **Etemad** both reported that, according to **Mehr News Agency**, a pecuniary punishment of nine million Rials was imposed on the editor of **Shargh** newspaper, Mehdi Rahmanian, for publishing un-Islamic and defamatory statements against sacred religious personalities, for committing libel against President Ahmadinejad and for spreading propaganda against the system.

Etemad reported on 23 July that a member of the Parliamentary Cultural Commission would review the filtering and subsequent closure of the both the **Ham'Mihan** publication and of the **Iran Labour News Agency (ILNA)**.

After a complaint was submitted by a Member of Parliament for Saveh, **Aftab-e-Yazd** reported on 24 July that editors of the weekly newspaper **Madine-e-Goftego** were called to appear before the Press Court.

On 29 July, **Etemad** reported the launch of a Press Court investigation into three publications, **Sepidar-e-Khanavadeh**, **Jahan-e-Sanant**, and **Cinema Today**. **Etemad** also published a story about an editor and two journalists from the **Rozhehalat** weekly newspaper appearing before the Kurdistan Criminal Court to answer to charges of undermining national security and publishing discrepancies.

On 4 August, **Etemad** reported that a journalist was sentenced to nine months' imprisonment by the 13th Branch of the Revolutionary Court for publishing an article about a recent

women's rights demonstration that the court deemed to be overly critical of the Islamic system. **Etemad** also reported that representatives of **Jahan-e-Sanat**, **Sepidar-e-Emrouz** and **Etemad** itself were called to appear before the 17th Branch of the Tehran Criminal Court.

On 5 August, **Etemad** published an article stating that, while many public authorities had denied or played down the standoff between the Government and the media, two press advisors to the president confirmed that Iran was in fact facing a 'press coup d'etat'. The report further stated that this movement had limited public support, adding that 95 per cent of all coups in the 20th century were propped up by foreign elements. The **Fars News Agency** stated that, according to government spokesmen, the press should not concern themselves with supporting certain political parties.

On 6 August, **Etemad** reported that Akbar Alami, a Member of Parliament, requested that the Minister of Culture, Mohammad Hussein Safar Harandi, explain the recent increase in newspaper closures and media filtering. In a letter referring to articles 3 and 24 of the Iranian Constitution, Mr Alami asked for further clarification on the legal aspects of this heightening of media restriction. On the same day, **Etemad** reported that its own editor, Elias Hazrati, faced charges at the Tehran Press Court of publishing propaganda against the system. His defence counsel argued that the allegations were not well founded.

On 6 August, the national day of the journalist, **Etemad** published a story on a group of journalists from the **Iranian Labour News Agency** who had written to Culture Minister Mohammad Hussein Safar Harandi demanding that the Government stop filtering their organization. According to **Etemad**, the journalists asserted that excessive restrictions were depriving them of their right to work and compromising the revolutionary goals of independence and freedom. On 9 August, **Etemad** reported that hundreds of members of parliament signed a petition to the Minister of Justice, Mr Hashemi-Shahrudi, requesting that the Government stop filtering the news agency in question.

On 15 August, **Etemad** published an interview with Saied Abotaleb, a Member of the Parliamentary Cultural Commission, who criticized the impunity granted to government-sponsored websites that breach legal standards and the strict line adopted with regards to enforcement where sites such as the Iranian Labour News Agency are concerned. He also criticized the 'No-Governmental News Agencies' law, which he said damages the position of these news agencies against the favoured government-sponsored sites. On the same day, **Etemad** reported that a journalist charged with insulting the authorities on his mobile phone was acquitted at the Meshkin Shahr Court.

On 16 August, **Etemad** reported that former Member of Parliament and editor of the **Arzesh** publication, Ali Nazeri, had been summonsed to appear before the Tehran Common Court to face charges of publishing propaganda against the Islamic system.

Etemad reported on 3 September that 150 journalists had signed a written statement asking the Government to remove the recent restrictions placed on members of the press. The statement had been drafted by the newly constituted Committee for the Defence of the Banned Press. The next day, **Etemad** published comments made by the Head of Security at Tehran University, who criticized the press for publicizing the recent dismissal of University lecturers. **Etemad** stated that **ISNA** was singled out in particular for misreporting voluntary retirement as forced removal and for copying statements made by **Radio Farda**, which is funded by the United States government.

On 4 September, **Etemad** reported that the managing director of Fajr-e-Azerbaijan, Ahmad Badiran, who was arrested after distributing leaflets that opposed the authorities, was freed on bail of 10 million Toman.

Etemad published on 15 September, statements made by Syed Jafar Sadaat Mosavi, a member of the Parliamentary Judicial Commission, relating to the Government's intention to subject people who send immoral SMS messages to the legal action.

On 18 September, **Etemad** published details of an interview that the **Mehr News Agency** held with Alireza Afshar, Political Deputy to the Minister of Home Affairs, regarding the Government's decision to prohibit the press from reporting on the affairs of unlicensed political parties.

Etemad declared on 24 September that, as a participant at both the Geneva and Tunis World Summits on the Information Society, Iran had accepted, and was subject to, a number of standards relating to the freedom and accessibility of information. The article further explained that the restrictions imposed on the use of sites such as Google, as well as the implementation of intelligent Internet filtering systems, infringed its obligations under articles 19, 67(11), 36 and 37 of the Declaration on Information Society.

On 25 September, **ISNA** criticized the recent spate of forced closures of independent media agencies and publications. The story further stated that the Press Observation Council's restrictive approach to the granting of press licences and the subsidies and financial privileges enjoyed by government-funded news agencies were discriminatory in nature and were resulting in numerous voluntary closures.

Etemad on 26 September reported that Frouzan Asfei, editor of **Golistan-e-Iran**, was found guilty by a press jury at the Tehran Common Court of propagating fornication and publishing propaganda against the Islamic system. The report further stated that Golistan-e-Iran's publication licence was also cancelled by the court.

5.9 Freedom of Assembly & Association

Aftab-e-Yazd reported on 5 July that the 15th Branch of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran sentenced a young women's rights activist to four years and three months' imprisonment and 20 lashes for participating in an illegal gathering and for undermining national security.

On 10 July, **Aftab-e-Yazd** reported that six activist members of the Tahkim Vahdat student association were arrested at Amir Kabir University during a student protest. Another report in **Aftab-e-Yazd** on the same day mentioned that members of the central council of the aforementioned student association were also arrested. The article further stated that, according to the Centre for the Defence of Human Rights, the recent arrests of students and the authorities' illegal entry into the university violated both article 27 of the Iranian Constitution and the principles of freedom enshrined in international human rights documents.

Ressalat reported on 17 July that presumed secret agents of the Soros Institution would make a collective public confession on live television. The institution was accused of spying for foreign elements and of attempting to overthrow the system through propaganda.

Etemad reported on 4 August that the participants in a satanic music group's concert in Karaj were all arrested after 150 bottles of alcohol and 800 immoral CDs were found and confiscated. **Etemad** also mentioned that the crowd had gathered after receiving invitations on the Internet.

On 8 August, **Etemad** reported that a member of the Isfahan students union, ADVAR, was sentenced to two years' imprisonment for illegal activities.

Etemad reported on 15 August that Alireza Hashemi, the Head of the Iranian Teachers' Association, was sentenced to three years' imprisonment for participating in a teachers' protest. **Etemad** also reported that the Centre for the Defence of Prisoners' Rights (CDPR) published a review of its activities over the last four years and explained that the organization was critical of politically motivated restrictions on their activities. According to **Etemad**, the CDPR was attempting to provide free legal representation to those charged with political or non-political offences over the course of the four-year period.

On 16 August, Hossein Kanani Moghadam, the Secretary of Unity for Iranian Hezbollah told **ISNA** that the 18th gathering of the House of Parties was not attended by those new parties that were seeking registration under article 10 of the Parties Registration Commission. He questioned why the Islamist Government had not approved and facilitated full participation for his party. He stated that while there is open discourse on many areas of justice, political justice is often ignored. Kanani also warned of the possibility of further government intrusion in the coming election.

Etemad published on 16 September, comments made by Ahmad Shirzad of the Participation Front relating to the Government's suppression of certain political parties through the elimination of State subsidies, restrictive licencing practices and the closure of partisan publications. **Etemad** explained that Shirzad was urging the Government to clarify its position on these issues and reiterated that a diversity of partisan representation is a necessity in a democratic country. **ISNA** published a similar piece on 20 September. The article stated that, according to a noted public lawyer, the new licencing requirements for political parties might result in gradual implementation of a single-party system. The article also explained that the political involvement of parties and associations is permitted under the Iranian Constitution.

5.10 Right to Adequate Housing

On 3 July, **Etemad** reported that the number of people who live under the poverty line in Iran had increased over the last two years. It further stated that, according to the Chief Executive of Social Affairs, 12 million Iranians did not have enough money to survive.

Etemad reported on 12 August that the Minister for Social Security placed the number of Iranians living under the poverty line at 9,242,700. **Etemad** explained that, according to a Member of Parliament for Bejnord, this figure was out of date and that 12 million was a more likely estimate.

5.11 Right to Work and Rights in Work

Etemad and **ISNA** reported on 11 August that a leading bus drivers' union activist was being held at Branch 14 of the Revolutionary Court. The unionist requested a meeting with Mansour Osanlo, the imprisoned head of the bus drivers' syndicate. On 13 August, **Etemad** reported that another unionist, Yaghob Salimi, had been arrested and was being detained at Branch 14. The two were accused of propaganda against the Islamic system, disturbing the public peace and threatening national security. Their defence counsel told **ISNA** that Salimi was arrested whilst attempting to visit Osanlo's family home.

On 15 September, **Aftab-e-Yazd** reported that nearly 600,000 workers in the Province of Tehran chose not to file for social security, fearing that they would be dismissed or have their wages cut if they reported to the social security office.

Etemad and **Aftab-e-Yazd** both reported on 17 September that several teachers on temporary contracts gathered to protest against the Ministry of Education's decision to employ new teachers on a permanent basis rather than make the temporary teachers permanent employees.

5.12 Cultural Rights

Nothing to report.

5.13 Right to Education (and Student Life)

On 3 July, **Etemad** reported that, in spite of the students' objections, Tehran University decided to close its dormitories and educational centres. Students of contemporary art, in particular, protested at the closure of workshops during the summer months. **Etemad** also reported that four students were arrested following a sit-in at the Faculty of Arts that was broken up by police. On the same day, **Etemad** also published an article concerning students at Tabriz University that were suspended for several semesters for their activities.

On 19 August, **Aftab-e-Yazd** reported that a student activist at Allame University was expelled from pursuing his education for one semester for disturbing the peace and infringing the university's internal regulations. The next day, **Aftab-e-Yazd** reported that Tabriz University had also expelled 10 student activists for several semesters.

Etemad and **ISNA** reported on 28 August that several members of the Islamic Association of Shahroud University met with the Member of Parliament for Tabriz, Akbar Alami, who told the students that their participation in political activities was positive for the nation. He said that one indication of a strong republic is political progress through the promotion of non-governmental organizations and Islamic associations. He added that it seems that the current government is trying to restrict the work of NGOs. He also stated that bringing associations under government control is a violation of the Constitution.

Etemad reported on 18 September that the Tahkim Student Association had publicly voiced its concern over the recent dismissals and forced retirements of university lecturers and argued that the Government's actions would facilitate a brain drain and had already damaged the competitiveness of Iranian universities worldwide. The article also reported that, in the previous academic year, 14 students were denied postgraduate education because of this, though they had excelled in their prior examinations.

On 23 September, based on a publication of the Association for the Defence of Children's Rights, **Etemad** reported that 1.7 million children were outside the educational system in Iran. **Etemad** explained that the Association was urging the Government to return these children to school, and stated that it had criticized both the lack of government funding for primary education and the lack of awareness of children's rights at schools themselves.

5.14 Women's Rights

On 15 July, **Etemad** reported that, according to the Chief of Police of Tehran, a police operation aimed at curbing women's un-Islamic dress would be initiated. The following day, **Etemad** published an article questioning whether the expectation in Iranian society that women always sacrifice themselves for their family is fair. The article argued that the prohibition on women opening bank accounts for their children is an illustration of this unfairness.

Etemad reported on 1 August that the Islamic Human Rights Commission held a meeting with several women's rights activists to analyse Iranian women's rights in contemporary Iranian

society. **Etemad** further stated that, in the opinion of the Deputy of Women's Affairs at the Ministry of Education, women's rights were indivisible from human rights.

On 9 September, based on a recent study of the Office for Women of the Ministry of Education, **Etemad** and **Aftab-e-Yazd** reported that 9,000 girls had been deprived of education and that that figure may soon reach 13,000. The study also found that only 2.7 per cent of management positions in the country are filled by women. The Managing Director of the Office for Women criticized the discrimination that women face in career development and tertiary education.

5.15 Minority Rights

Aftab-e-Yazd reported on 3 July that the editor of banned weekly newspaper **Payam-e-Mardom** Kurdistan was arrested at his work place and imprisoned at Evin Prison after police conducted a search of his house.

5.16 Children's Rights

On 21 July, **Etemad** published an article that criticized the Government's handling of homelessness amongst children. The article argued that the Government should provide shelter for these children, of whom many are infected with HIV/AIDS.

6. Results of Findings

Table 1

Top Ten Countries Reporting on the Human Rights Violations in Iran

1. **USA** (39)
2. – **Turkey** (27)
2. – **UK** (27)
3. **Spain** (25)
4. **Germany** (24)
5. **Canada** (23)
6. **Austria** (17)
7. – **Australia** (9)
7. – **Italy** (9)
8. **Poland** (8)
9. **France** (7)
10. **Russia** (0)

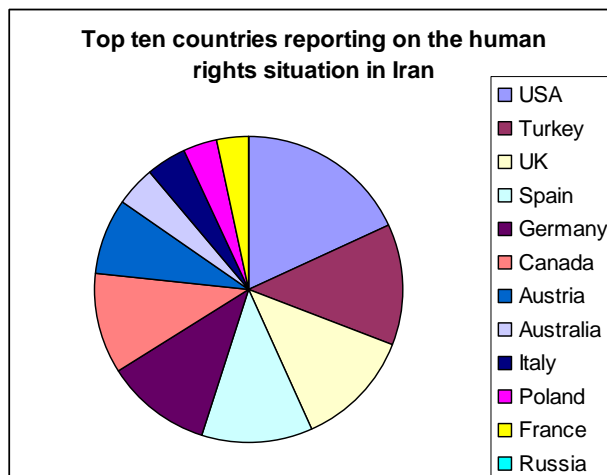


Table 2

Top Western Newspapers Reporting on Human Rights Violations in Iran

1. **Guardian** (15)
2. **Der Spiegel** (11)
3. – **LA Times** (10)
3. – **New York Times** (10)
3. – **Washington Post** (10)
3. – **Der Standard** (10)
4. – **ABC** (9)
4. – **Hurriyet Daily** (9)
5. **La Presse** (8)
6. **Zaman Daily** (7)
7. – **El Pais** (6)
7. – **Globe & Mail** (6)
7. – **Il Corriere della Sera** (6)
8. – **Dziennik Polska Europa Swiat** (5)
8. – **El Mundo** (5)
8. – **La Vanguardia** (5)
8. – **Milliyet Daily** (5)
8. – **Toronto Star** (5)
9. – **Daily Telegraph** (4)

* The Australian paper.

- 9. – Die Presse (4)
- 9. – Financial Times (4)
- 9. – National Post (4)
- 10. – Chicago Tribune (3)
- 10. – Daily Mail (3)
- 10. – Die Welt (3)
- 10. – Die Zeit (3)
- 10. – Gazeta Wyborcza (3)
- 10. – Österreich (3)
- 10. – Sabah Daily (3)
- 10. – Sydney Morning Herald (3)
- 10. – The Times (3)
- 10. – USA Today (3)
- 10. – The Wall Street Journal (3)

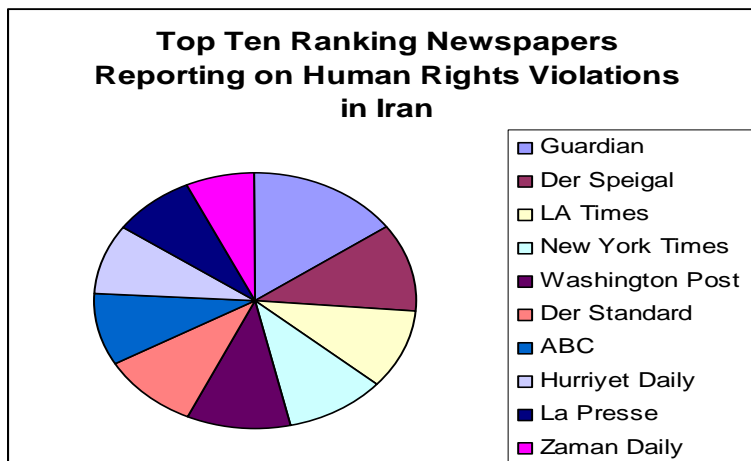


Table 3

Top Iranian Newspapers Reporting on Iranian Human Rights Violations

- 1. Etemad (74)
- 2. Aftab-e-Yazd (37)
- 3. Kyhan (7)
- 4. Ressalat (5)

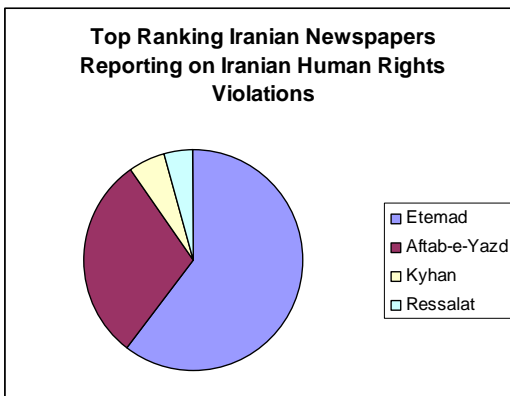


Table 4

Top Ten Types of Human Rights Violations Reported by Western Press

- 1. Rights to Life (24)
- 2. Rights to Liberty and Security (13)

3. **Freedom of Expression** (10)
4. **Women's Rights** (7)
5. **Minority Rights** (5)
6. **Cultural Rights** (5)
7. **Right to a Fair Trial** (3)
8. **Right to Respect for Private and Family Life** (3)
9. **Right to Education (and Student Life)** (2)
10. **Torture, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment** (1)

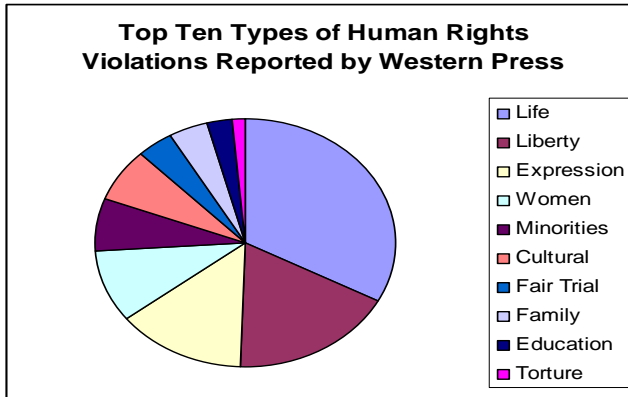
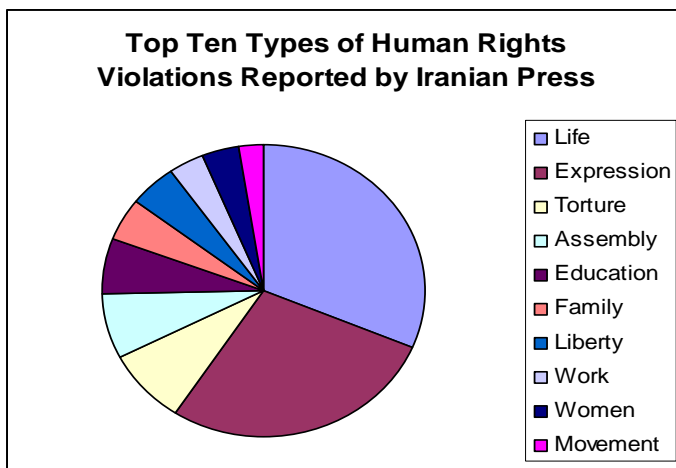


Table 5

Top Ten Types of Human Rights Violations Reported by Iranian Press

- 1 **Rights to Life** (26)
- 2 **Freedom of Expression** (23)
- 3 **Torture, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment** (7)
- 4 **Freedom of Assembly and Association** (6)
- 5 **Right to Education (and Student Life)** (5)
- 6 **Right to Respect for Private and Family Life** (4)
- 7 **Rights to Liberty and Security** (4)
- 8 **Right to Work and Rights in Work** (3)
- 9 **Women's Rights** (3)
- 10 **Freedom of Movement** (2)



7. Analysis

In this media-monitoring study, the US press came on top with the most published articles on human rights violations in Iran (see Table 1). Of the American papers, the **LA Times**, the **New York Times** and the **Washington Post** all ranked highly, in joint third place (see Table 2). A major explanation for the US press interest in Iranian human rights violations is that during the study, two US nationals were arrested and detained on alleged espionage charges. They were forced to confess to these dubious allegations on Iranian State television, before eventually being released. Evidently, the US media deemed this story newsworthy as it was reported by all the major newspapers. One might surmise that the reason for this high level of reporting was because the individuals concerned had dual US/Iranian nationality and worked for prominent American institutions such as the Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars and for George Soros' Open Society Institute. It is telling that beyond this story, very little was covered on anything else happening within Iran. In other words, the stories of 'ordinary Iranians' did not feature highly on the US news agenda.

The Turkish press also published a significant number of stories on Iranian human rights violations and on a much wider variety of issues than the US press did and was ranked in second place overall (see Table 1). The **Hurriyet Daily** came in joint fourth place, with the **Zaman Daily** ranked sixth and the **Milliyet Daily** ranked in joint eighth place (see Table 2). In contrast to the US press, the Turkish papers did publish stories on the lives of 'ordinary Iranians', and also on the repression meted out by the Iranian authorities against their Kurdish citizens in the north-west of the country. There was also a lively debate on the headscarf issue, with Turkish journalists pointing out the paradox that in Turkey, where the headscarf is banned, there is a trend to defy the authorities by wearing it, whereas in Iran where it is compulsory, it has proved to be extremely unpopular, especially amongst the bourgeoisie. This explains why there has been a crackdown by the authorities on women with 'bad-hejabi', a description of the way women wear the headscarf improperly. Many Turkish papers also reported on the use of the death penalty in Iran (the Turkish Parliament banned the use of the death penalty during peacetime in 2002).

The British press ranked third place on the reporting of human rights violations in Iran (see Table 1). However, more than half of the stories surveyed appeared in only one British newspaper, the **Guardian**, which came first out of all the newspapers monitored (see Table 2). The only other British newspapers to make it on the list were the **Financial Times** in joint eighth place and **The Times** in joint tenth place (see Table 2). One explanation for this, as noted in the previous media-monitoring study, is because that paper has a correspondent based in Tehran, which can make all the difference as he is physically on the ground and is consequently in a better position to search for stories. The tabloids, for instance, which do not have any correspondents based in Iran, reported very little on anything happening within the country, unless it was a particularly gruesome execution or punishment which was accompanied by photographs like the story that appeared in the Daily Mail on 23 August about a man being flogged for drinking alcohol and having pre-marital sexual relations.

The Spanish, German and Canadian media came in third, fourth and fifth place respectively, on reporting human rights violations in Iran. The German weekly, **Der Spiegel** came in second place, the Spanish paper **ABC** came in at joint fourth and the **Globe and Mail** joint seventh. Many of these papers (and this includes the US and British papers, and others) seemed to be influenced by the stories which appeared on the newswires. For instance, in many cases, the stories reported were simply cut and paste from the newswires, and consisted merely of a paragraph in the foreign news section. There was also a correlation in this regard, with many of the newspapers reporting the same story from the same source. Whether a particular human rights violation was reported by a particular newspaper could very much depend upon what newswire the paper concerned subscribed to. In other words, if the newspaper only subscribed to the **Reuters** news service or the **Associated Press**, and the human rights violation was being reported by **Agence France-Presse**, then it was highly likely that they would simply not have reported the story.

With regard to the Iranian papers, **Etemad** clearly came out on top in first place, leaps and bounds ahead of **Aftab-e-Yazd** (see Table 3). Having said this, **Aftab-e-Yazd**, though in distant second place, performed much better than **Kyhan** and **Ressalat**, which barely reported on anything that touched upon human rights issues. This is perhaps hardly surprising as **Etemad** and **Aftab-e-Yazd** were the only reformist papers being monitored.

Both the Iranian and the Western press reported on the surge of executions taking place in Iran, with the Iranian papers reporting slightly more than the Western press. This probably reflects the fact that there are many more executions taking place in Iran that are not being reported by either the major Western newspapers or newswires. Moreover, whereas the Western newspapers were focusing on the detention of Haleh Esfandiari and Kian Tajbakhsh, and the potential outfall from it with regards to already strained Iranian–US relations, the Iranian media was far more concerned about the crackdown by the authorities on the freedom of expression in Iran (see Tables 4 and 5). Other issues that were deemed newsworthy within Iran was the use of torture, restrictions on the freedom of assembly and State interference with the right to education (see Table 5). In contrast, the Western press considered stories relating to the right to life, women’s rights, minority rights and cultural rights more newsworthy (see Table 4).

8. Conclusions

These were the principal conclusions of the media-monitoring study:

- **The Iranian and the Western press were both concerned with the rising number of executions in Iran.**

During this media study, stories concerning the right to life were the main staple of news from Iran for both the Western (24 stories) and Iranian press (26 stories, see Tables 4 and 5). Slightly more executions were reported by the Iranian papers, and bearing in mind that only four Iranian papers were monitored, this would mean that a significant number of executions are going unreported in the Western press.

- **The reformist Iranian newspapers were more likely than the hardliner papers to report on stories that touch upon human rights issues.**

Etemad and **Aftab-e-Yazd** were between seven times and three times more likely to report such stories than **Kyhan** and **Ressalat** (see Table 3).

- **The issue of minority rights is routinely ignored by the Iranian papers.**

During the monitoring period only one article was published in an Iranian paper that touched upon minority rights. In contrast there were five such stories reported in the Western press (see Tables 4 and 5).

- **Of the Western countries whose newspapers were monitored, the US published the most stories, followed by Turkey, the UK, Spain, Germany and Canada.**

See Table 1 (page 31).

- **Newspapers from former Communist countries reported very little in the way of human rights stories from Iran.**

The Russian press did not report one story pertaining to human rights violations in Iran. The Polish media performed better, publishing eight, ahead of France with seven (see Table 1).

- **Of the Western newspapers being monitored, the Guardian published the most human rights stories on Iran, followed by Der Speigal, the LA Times, the New York Times, the Washington Post, Der Standard, ABC, Hurriyet Daily, La Presse, Zaman Daily, El Pais, the Globe & Mail, Il Corriere della Sera, Dziennik Polska Europa Swiat, El Mundo, La Vanguardia, the Milliyet Daily and the Toronto Star.**

See Table 2 (page 31).

- With the exception of the Turkish media, human rights stories in Iran are not considered particularly newsworthy by the Western press.

Although the US came in at first place of all the Western newspapers on the reporting of human rights violations in Iran, this was only because two individuals with joint Iranian/US nationality were arrested and detained by the Iranian authorities and forced to make confessions of espionage on television. If it had not been for this story, the US would not have ranked first overall. Moreover, the vast majority of Western newspapers were still more interested in reporting on Iran's relations with the West, the nuclear question, the Iraqi war, and Israeli–Iranian relations. Human rights did not rank highly on the Western news agenda, which explains why those human rights stories they did report were usually relegated to the back pages on foreign affairs or cut and paste in a paragraph from a newswire. In contrast, the Turkish press published a significant number of stories on the human rights situation in Iran, from the use of the death penalty, to stories on minorities and cultural rights.

- There needs to be a link between a particular human rights story in Iran and a person/event in the West for it to be headline news.

This was particularly evident from the way in which the stories of the arrest and detention of Haleh Esfandiari and Kian Tajbakhsh were reported by the Western media. The arrest and detention of 'ordinary' Iranians was barely mentioned and when executions were reported, they were mentioned as mere statistics (ie XX number of people were hanged in Tehran).

- A newspaper is more likely to report on the human rights situation in Iran if they have a reporter based in the country.

This is possibly the sole explanation as to why the **Guardian** published more stories than any other newspaper. Moreover, the **New York Times**, which was ranked in joint third place also, has a correspondent based in Tehran. Moreover, many of the other newspapers which ranked highly use Iranian freelancers, as opposed to only relying on the newswires.

Appendix: Summaries of Country Reports

DISCLAIMER: The views expressed here are those of the rapporteurs alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of the BIICL or of our donors.

Australia (Kristi Cooper)

Five newspapers were monitored, in three Australian jurisdictions, throughout the monitoring period. First, two Australian national daily newspapers directed at the A–B demographic (**The Australian**, **The Australian Financial Review**—broadsheets); secondly, two New South Wales State newspapers (**The Daily Telegraph**—a tabloid, right-wing conservative, and **The Sydney Morning Herald**—a broadsheet, liberal); and thirdly, an independently owned newspaper from Western Australia (**The West Australian**—broadsheet).

Throughout the monitoring period I found **The Daily Telegraph** to be the Australian newspaper to most consistently carry dedicated articles concerning human rights issues in Iran. In July, **The Daily Telegraph** carried articles concerning an execution by stoning, police crackdowns on ‘un-Islamic’ dress, the detention of two Iranian-Americans on suspected spying charges and a stay of execution for a teenage murderer. In August, the newspaper carried articles on detentions and arrests at a rock concert in Tehran, the detention of an Australian by Iranian authorities and internal unrest in the form of insurgent actions, including the taking of foreign tourists as hostages, in south-east Iran. In September, the **Daily Telegraph** covered comments made by Mr Ahmadinejad during a visit to New York on the issue of homosexuality, and was the only Australian newspaper to print an edited transcript of Lee Bollinger’s controversial introduction speech, of Mr Ahmadinejad, to Columbia University. The paper also carried an article on the execution by hanging of three men in Babol for rape. Additionally, **The Daily Telegraph** usually included comment and figures from Amnesty International with each story (for example, the numbers of executions carried out by Iran (210) to date in 2007) and/or would contextualize a story by referring to the applicable tenets of Sharia Law.

In contrast, **The Australian** was more concerned with reporting on Iranian nuclear issues, radical Islam in Iran, the application of economic sanctions and UN Security Council sanctions to Iran, Iran’s comments on Israel, the potential for war between the US and Iran, US comments on Iran’s ‘sponsorship of terrorism’ in Iraq, the internal Iranian economy (including oil production facilities and output) and fears of the growth of Iran’s power and influence in the region given the decline of Iraq. These issues were often intermingled throughout each article. The comments of the appropriate Australian Ministers and the position of the Australian Federal Government on Iranian issues were most likely to be reported by **The Australian**.

During the reporting period **The Australian Financial Review** published an extensive piece on the role of Shia religious politics in the region, including Iran’s humanitarian shelter of Iraqi Shiites during and following the Iran–Iraq war. **The Sydney Morning Herald** carried a piece on ‘brain-drain’ in Iran, reporting that many Iranian professionals were leaving the country to settle in neighbouring countries (such as the United Arab Emirates) for reasons of freedom of conscience, economic opportunity and lifestyle choice. **The West Australian** was the Australian publication most likely to carry a mix of human rights issues (second to **The Daily Telegraph**) and articles with an economic and/or political slant on Iran. During the monitoring period, **The West Australian** was the *only* Australian publication to carry an article on Kurdish insurgency in north-western Iran.

The monitoring exercise results have been a surprise to me. I had expected the Australian national A–B broadsheets to carry human rights stories on Iran, if not reported by Australian journalists in the region then at least in reprint from the major news distribution agencies. This was not the case—many Australian readers being left largely uninformed as to justice, liberty, cultural, women’s, minority, free speech and other human rights issues in contemporary Iran.

Austria (Lena Kayhan-Rad)

During the monitoring period, the four monitored newspapers published 24 articles about the human rights situation in Iran. As expected, most articles were published in **Der Standard**, closely followed by **Die Presse**. Not one article appeared in **Die Neue Krone. Österreich** published only three stories during the media-monitoring period.

Most of the human rights violations reported by the Austrian press concerned the right to life, the freedom of expression, the right to liberty and security, the right to a fair trial and women's rights.

The Austrian media only reported one story during the entire monitoring period on women's rights:

All Austrian newspapers published stories on Iran's confrontation with the West because of its uranium enrichment and its role in Iraq on a daily basis.

The relations between Iran and Israel were deemed very newsworthy in Austria. This is most probably because of the position of the Austrian Jewish Community. Their chairman, Ariel Muzikant, asked the Pope, during his visit to Austria (7–9 September), for help with Iran.

Canada (Salman Haq)

There were several stories concerning freedom of expression, particularly with respect to clothing and dress. In July, the **Globe and Mail** ran a long story about Iran's new crackdown on women who 'dress like models' and men with Western haircuts. Tehran's police force dispatched dozens of police cars and minibuses into the early evening rush hour to enforce the dress code at major squares in the city centre. An earlier pre-summer drive by police resulted in thousands of warnings and hundreds of arrests.

In August, Canadian national papers also carried news stories about the Iranian Government's suppression of 'Western' culture. One story detailed how more than 200 fans attending a Western-style rock concert near Karaj, Iran, were arrested; the public prosecutor told State television that many of those arrested were wealthy youth unaware of the 'satanic nature of the concert'. Later in the month, 13 barber shops were shut down by Iranian police for giving men spiked or heavily gelled 'Western' hairstyles; some female beauty salons were also closed for providing tattooing services. On the other hand, another article reported that the Iranian Government agreed to allow a German symphony to perform several concerts as part of a cultural exchange between the two countries. However, the programme was vetted by the Iranian authorities and all the female German musicians had to play with their heads covered.

In September, a brief note in the **Globe and Mail** noted that 25 years ago, Iranian legislators ruled that kissing for pleasure must stop and was considered a moral offence officially outlawed by the Parliament. The ban was expected to run for an experimental period with a punishment of 100 lashes for first-time offenders. Also included on the list of moral offences officially outlawed were homosexuality and drinking alcohol.

The three-month time period also saw several stories concerning freedom of the press and detention of political dissenters. In July, Iran's State broadcaster launched Press TV, a 24-hour English-language news channel, claiming that the West had a 'stranglehold' over the world's media. President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad rejected a proposal by film director Oliver Stone to make a film about him because Stone is part of the 'Great Satan' cultural establishment.

Also in July, Iranian television broadcast the first video of two Iranian-American scholars since they were detained in May on espionage charges. Iranian authorities have suggested that Haleh Esfandiari and Kian Tajbakhsh have confessed that their work involved trying to overthrow the Government.

In August, **La Presse** reported on the ongoing efforts of Reporters without Borders to help two Iranian journalists of Kurdish ethnicity sentenced to death for 'moharebeh', a term used to describe a crime against Islam and the State. The journalist watchdog group had sent a letter to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon to intervene and ask Iran to respect international treaties it had signed regarding civil and political rights.

On 22 August, all four Canadian newspapers covered the release of Ms Haleh Esfandiari, an Iranian-American academic. Ms Esfandiari, who appeared on Iranian television in July to provide proof of a US plot to overthrow Iran's clerical rulers, had been held for more than 100 days on suspicion of promoting a 'velvet revolution'. Nobel laureate and lawyer Shirin Ebadi is representing Ms Esfandiari. Three other Iranian-Americans had also been arrested, but thus far, only Ms Esfandiari and another female detainee have been released. By 23 August, the *Toronto Star* reported that Ms Esfandiari would not be allowed to leave the country. Similarly, Montreal-based documentary filmmaker Merhnoushe Solouki, arrested 7 months ago in Iran and then released after one month of solitary confinement in the notorious Evin prison, has also been barred from leaving the country despite possessing a French passport. The **Globe and Mail** reported Ms Solouki was injured in a 'suspicious' hit-and-run accident last month in Tehran. As a result, Ms Solouki varies her residence amongst different hotels to protect her family and increase her personal security.

Early in July, newspapers reported that Iran's Supreme Court held a new appeal hearing into the death in custody four years ago of Iranian-Canadian photographer Zahra Kazemi, a case that has strained ties with the Canadian Government. Although the judge announced that the court would announce its decision in a week, there was no reporting of any subsequent decision later in the month.

In August, Iran's practice of the death penalty received coverage in three of the four papers surveyed. With this month's release of a report by 'Hands Off Cain', a Rome-based organization, Iran was ranked second to China in the number of death penalties carried out in 2006. Earlier in the month, newspapers reported that seven men had been publicly hanged as part of 'crackdown' on crime in Mashad, Iran. There were also reports of an increase in sentencing political dissidents to death instead of terms of imprisonment. Approximately 50 demonstrators protested in front of the Canadian Human Rights Monument in Ottawa to denounce the use of the death penalty in Iran as well as calling for democracy in Iran and the end of President Ahmadinejad's regime. **La Presse** also ran a short story noting that 79 people were executed in Iran during the summer months.

A July opinion piece in the **Toronto Star** criticized the Bush administration's approach to Middle East foreign policy, arguing that the US talks about democracy for Palestinians, Syrians and Iranians, but supports authoritarian rule in its allies. Bush often singles out Iran and Syria as oppressor states and says that the Iranian and Syrian peoples 'yearn for freedom and liberty' and wish to 'say what they think (and) travel where they wish'. These statements imply that Iranians do not enjoy the right to mobility or the freedom of religion, speech, thought and mobility.

In September, the **Toronto Star** reported on Canada and Iran's confrontation at the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva. Canada criticized Iran for its human rights record, while the Iranian envoy replied that Canada's own record should be scrutinized. The article noted that the exchange is part of an 'ongoing diplomatic battle' between the two nations sparked by the death of Canadian photojournalist Zahra Kazemi while in Iranian custody in 2003. An Amnesty International official said that the comparison between Canada and Iran's human rights records was 'nonsensical' and noted Iran's escalating rate of executions that included child offenders, death by stoning and the disappearances of union leaders and journalists.

The last few days of September contained several stories related to Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's visit by to New York to address the UN General Assembly and speak at Columbia University. The articles discussed the President's denial of the existence of homosexuals in Iran; his insistence that Iranian women were the most free in the world; the persecution of religious minorities in Iran; the crackdown on free speech; the use of torture; and the detention of an Iranian-American scholar. Most of the editorials and opinion pieces were very critical of Ahmadinejad and Iran's human rights record, but some said that the West's criticism of him was over the top. One claimed that Ahmadinejad's statements should be read in the context of him creating a diversion for his weak support at home, while another said that many of the criticisms of Ahmadinejad and Iran could easily be made against the West.

Also in September, the French language newspaper **La Presse** ran a few stories concerning the province of Quebec's ongoing commission on reasonable accommodation. One opinion piece noted that women are forced to wear the veil in Iran, calling the country a dictatorship. Another article discussed a study that found that Iranian women living in Canada were particularly critical of the veil and what Islam had to offer to women.

In July, an opinion piece in the **Globe and Mail** noted that 'Iran elected a president and parliament but not until the ruling theocrats disqualified candidates they did not like.' On the other hand, in a National Post article, one of Israel's greatest thinkers said that Iran represented the best hope for democracy in the Middle East. He noted that Iran can be defined as a 'civil society' because it holds elections (including presidential runoffs) and allows women to drive, vote and sit in a parliament that is not controlled by the president.

An August **National Post** editorial argued that the so-called 'clash of civilizations' has been replaced by a civil war within Islam; Iran is cited as an example, where Ahmadinejad is seeking to revive Shiite Islam's '12th Imam' while facing mounting criticism from citizens amidst a State campaign to enforce Sharia law.

The **National Post** carried a lengthy piece on 11 August analysing Ahmadinejad's declining popularity at home. The article concluded that high unemployment, rapid inflation, crackdown on political dissent and increased international isolation have left many Iranians unsatisfied with Ahmadinejad and ready for serious domestic reform. However, Iran's powerful Council of Guardians could deny reformers a place in the next parliamentary elections through the Council's power to disqualify candidates. Given Iran's relatively young demographic, the author concludes pragmatics could lead to some amount of reform by the ruling bodies, but for this to happen, a president like Ahmadinejad would have to leave first.

France (Amy Herrick)

Iranian human rights issues were barely covered in the French media during the month of July. A total of six articles in two of the papers covered human rights issues in Iran. Surprisingly, **Libération**, the left-leaning paper that generally covers scandals with a human element to them, did not publish one article on the stoning that occurred in July—the largest human rights violation covered by the media.

To the extent that human rights issues were covered they mostly came from AFP or AP news feeds. Only about half the articles written were actually by reporters from their respective newspapers. This may be due to the fact that increased repression has limited reporters' abilities to cover news from within Iran.

There was no discernable difference in the quality of coverage between **Le Monde** and **Le Figaro**, nor surprisingly in their take on the news. The coverage of the stoning was very factual in both papers and there were no editorials or opinion pieces in either paper denouncing the acts, as is common in the French press. **Le Monde** frequently publishes opinion pieces and 'dossiers' (multiple articles on the same subject area) on subjects that are judged important for public debate. For example, they have covered Guantanamo Bay detainee abuses and other hot topics dealing with human rights abuses. It is surprising, then, that they did not publish one op-ed on this topic.

The articles that covered Iran in all three papers tended to belong to three categories: US–Iranian discussions concerning Iraq; US/international community; Iranian relations concerning Iran's nuclear ambitions; and finally the US arming countries around Iran in its containment efforts. However, both **Le Figaro** and **Le Monde** did link US pressure on Iran to Iran's crack down on its own citizens in the articles mentioned in the media-monitoring document.

There was not much to report on in August 2007. The three newspapers covered did not report on human rights in Iran but mainly focused on Iranian nuclear ambitions or were silent on Iran. The major news of the release of the Iranian-American academic from detention in prison went unnoticed by **Libération** and **Le Figaro**, only to be picked up in an AFP rush by **Le Monde**.

In contrast, September was a busy month for news about Iran but the human rights element was sorely missing. Even in discussions about possible sanctions due to Iran's nuclear ambitions there were no articles on the humanitarian impacts of these sanctions, even in the op-ed section of **Le Monde**. There was only one article that was on the continuing persecution of researchers and academics in Iran. It was a factual article that did not have any commentary decrying Iran's methods.

Kouchner's striking remarks about Iran getting a bomb or being bombed took up much of the space in all three newspapers as he was normally considered a 'dove' and his hawkish remarks, later rescinded and spun by Sarkozy, shocked the French. Ahmadinejad's

own remarks and visit to New York took up a lot of space as well but the human rights aspect again was lacking as the press focused on his comments on the holocaust, homosexuals and his nuclear programme.

Germany (Martina Warning)

In July, the German media showed only a moderate interest in Iranian human rights issues. The nuclear question and Iran's alleged involvement in the conflict in Iraq was mostly mentioned when it came to news on Iran, as it was in the other months.

In August, there was a significant increase in coverage as regards human rights in Iran and even more so in September, which may be explained by the heavy attention paid to the visit of the Iranian president to New York, as reflected by a record number of 13 articles or commentaries in total.

As far as the overall political atmosphere is concerned, the German press claims that the increasing human rights violations, ranging from the suppression of women who are not correctly veiled to the rising number of deaths by execution, is a sign of the growing internal and external pressure upon the Iranian regime.

In July, **Süddeutsche** published a lengthy article on women's rights and on the campaign 'One million signatures against legal inequality between men and women'. This campaign, which was publicly announced in November 2006, targets the abolishment of female-discriminating laws.

In August, **Welt** mentions in the context of its article on the mass executions that it is the women's movement in Iran that needs international public support, which provides the only protection in the country. **BILD** reported that a 16-year-old girl was publicly hanged because of 'unchastity'. In its article on the German orchestra in Teheran, **Spiegel** also mentions the stonings of women and reports that the German musicians were told that among the audience, there will members of the Iranian authorities who will mostly pay attention to how they are dressed. Subsequently, every woman in the orchestra was asked to pay attention to her appearance.

In September, every paper except for **Süddeutsche** and **BILD** also raised the issue of female suppression in Iran in the context of President Ahmadinejad's speech at Columbia, in which he said that women have all freedoms and are respected in Iran. In her interview with **Spiegel** in September, Iranian-born ex 'Miss Canada', Afshin-Jam, mentions the ill-treatment of women who are not correctly veiled. She also claims to be grateful having grown up in Canada where, unlike in Iran, she could do sports, receive education and was allowed to sing out aloud.

Iran (Kourosh Taheri)

Although **Etemad** sides with the conservatives when it comes to certain core Islamic principles, it follows up on many social, political and international concerns which make it a reformist newspaper as far as Iranian standards go.

Etemad also published notifications by many human rights groups regarding the human rights situation in the country, and human rights protests. Although the paper does not include human rights issues along with the reported infringements, the reports on human rights violations can be extracted from the information they do provide. This means that in Iran, the newspapers can not criticize the authorities by direct reference to the human rights conventions and other international instruments, whereas they are free to monitor human rights violations by the Americans in Iraq or other parts of the world.

Aftab-Yazd was similar to the **Etemad** newspaper up to the last month but seems to have changed its reporting policy by decreasing its reporting of the human rights infringements in Iran. The conservative newspapers are supporting the Government in all aspects, only criticizing the reformist newspapers.

Hangings and executions, amputation of limbs and flogging, punishments which have all the hallmarks of the early days of the Islamic revolution and are contrary to the election pledges of the president display a strong allegiance to the notion of a true radical Islamist ideology. **Etemad** reported that in Fars province, an estimated one to two people are

executed weekly. In another report, it is estimated that since the beginning of the summer 51 persons have been executed. The crackdown on the un-Islamic dress for women, and 'radical' hair styles for boys was also intensified in the recent period of monitoring along with the social behavioural security leading to mass arrest and executions.

Both **Etemad** and **Aftab-Yazd** reported the 'Family Support Bill' which was criticized by women and human rights groups as a bill against women.

One issue of concern to the reformist newspapers which was widely reported is related to the role of Guardian Council which is now chaired by the pragmatic former president Hashemi Rafsanjani that the competency test of their candidates may be refused without even a right to appeal and notification of the reasons of refusal.

It seems that the authorities in Iran consider the concept of human rights as a device to pressure the Government, which may explain why activists and newspapers advocating this are suppressed. The head of the judiciary urged State prosecutors to intensify their fight against the disrupters of 'public peace' ignoring human rights issues (**Aftab-Yazd**, 1 September 2007). In another statement by the judiciary, it was requested that the international institutions differentiate between the Islamic retaliation decree of the death penalty and the 'normal' death penalty.

Another example of authorities' zero tolerance for the human rights is the imprisonment of Emad- aldin Baghi (along with his daughter and wife), the deputy of the association for defence of the prisoner's rights, who is charged for writing a letter to the authorities regarding the hangings of the Ahvaz bombing suspects and attending a human rights conference outside Iran (**Aftab-Yazd**, 31 July 2007).

Poland (Anna Tomaszewska)

The state of human rights in Iran was an almost non-existent subject in the Polish newspapers in the last three months. This does not mean that Iranian stories were not published by Polish newspapers. There was plenty of information about Iran but they all focused on military issues. The nuclear programme was the most popular topic connected to Iran. Unfortunately, not one of the journalists wrote something about everyday life and how the people are managing under the Iranian regime. There was also some information about a possible war from US and French sources.

Most of the information was from agency newswires, they were not independent articles. The lack of information in the tabloids was not surprising, as most of the readers are less educated, with a lower income. The Polish broadsheets were more likely to publish stories on Iran, but they usually need some extra impulse to do this. During the last three months in Poland, all the news was dominated by domestic issues. The only time when the broadsheets paid attention to human rights in Iran were the public executions on 3 August 2007. This kind of punishment, which is seen as barbarian by European standards, forced the journalists to focus on Iran. In the articles there was also some background given: a short history of the death penalty, the frequency of its use, etc.

Gazeta Wyborcza published an article about the newspaper **Szargh** and about the problems they had after an interview with Saghie Ghahreman, a poet who lives in Toronto. **Gazeta Wyborcza** is quite sensitive about press freedom as it was founded by some Polish oppositionists after 1989, who had just regained their freedom of speech.

The attention paid to the Middle East was in the last three months reserved for Iraq, especially after the assassination of some Polish soldiers. Iran was mentioned in this context a few times, usually as a source of support for the insurgents. Iran is not seen as a country of an oppressed nation, but as a place where the insurgent can get his supplies. In my opinion, the image of Iran in the last months is even more warlike than it was during the first media-monitoring study. Iranian threats (its nuclear programme) are seen as serious and more important from the European/Polish point of view than the human rights situation in Iran.

Another reason for the lack of information about human rights in Iran in past months could also be that it was the summer time. There is generally less 'heavy' information during the holidays in the Polish newspapers. In September, when the summer was over, there was an election campaign in Poland. This and the election itself are possible explanations as to why stories from around the world were marginalized.

Spain (Iñaki Garcia Blanco)

The professional culture of journalists tends to consider that good news is no news. If this valorization of negativity was the only criterion journalists used to select the events that should make it into the papers, it could be concluded that there is no need to worry about the protection of human rights in Iran. However, the study of news-making² offered, back in the 1970s, a more complex description of the power relations that condition the selection of news. In this sense, authors stressed the part played by the oddity, the public prominence of the actors involved, or the proximity of the event in news selection. It is quite disappointing to see that almost 30 years after the publication of those critical works, journalists have not adopted different professional values that may be used for democratic ends.

The coverage in the four main Spanish quality papers given to issues related to human rights and democratization in Iran from July to September 2007 shows that the papers worry about Iran a) when leaders of the world superpowers consider that the world's safety is at risk (ie information regarding the nuclear bomb)³; b) when there are executions in Iran; c) when there are issues affecting the rights of Iranian citizens that have a link with other nations (for example, the case of Hani Esfandiari, an Iranian-American scholar who was not allowed to leave the country accused of espionage); and d) when there are purges of journalists, or media outlets are closed down (often after a press release of a Western NGO such as Reporters without Borders).

On other occasions atemporal feature articles were published, normally about the difficulties Iranians experienced when they wanted to wear Western clothes or hairstyles, or listen to Western music. These feature articles tended to be more anecdotal than critical, and showed, to a certain extent, a hopeless attitude with regard to the fate of most Islamic countries.

One of the issues that got more coverage overall was the lecture the President of Iran delivered in Columbia University, where he included some outrageous comments about the (in)existence of homosexuality in Iran, some remarks about the rights of women in the country and finally, the somehow consuetudinary suggestion that the Nazi holocaust is nothing but an invention. The papers showed their indignation about the ideas of President Ahmadinejad, but only because these ideas were delivered in a Western location. There is no reasonable evidence suggesting that President Ahmadinejad only supports these ideas when he is abroad: why is it that his ideas or his acts *never* got covered in the months before? Probably because Western journalists are not outraged when radical Islamist ideas are expressed, or when radical policies are enforced, in Islamic countries.

It is curious that issues related to human rights in Iran were never referred to in the columns or opinion articles normally authored by intellectuals and/or leading political journalists. In the same sense, they were never in the editorials. It seems that Spaniards, in spite of living in a country that has only enjoyed democracy since 1977, do not have a more developed sensitivity to the situation of those living in countries where no human, and no political rights are respected.

It has been documented that information in the public domain has an influence over the type and intensity of the response to international crises. In this sense, the so-called CNN effect seems to indicate that the intensity of media coverage received by an international crisis may condition the extent to which foreign States are involved in the resolution of such a crisis.⁴ If that was the case, it could be expected that a more intense coverage, both

² See David L. Altheide, *Creating Reality: How TV News Distorts Events*, (Sage, Beverly Hills, 1976) and Gaye Tuchman, *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality*, (Free Press, New York, 1978).

³ This information was not monitored, as it did not *directly* refer to human rights and/or democratization.

⁴ See Eytan Gilboa, "The CNN Effect: The Search for a Communication Theory of International Relations", 22 *Political Communication* (2005), pp. 27-44. For a more critical review, see George Livingstone, *Clarifying the CNN effect. An Examination of Media Effects According to Type of Military Intervention*, The Joan Shorenstein Center for the Study of Press and Politics, Research Paper R-18, 1997).

quantitatively and qualitatively, of human rights-related issues could lead to a greater international support for democratization initiatives in Iran.

As there is no evidence that human and political rights are scrupulously observed and respected in the Islamic Republic of Iran; the scarce number of stories in the Spanish papers documenting how Iranian people's rights are being attacked is by no means a good sign. A greater number of stories could generate greater public awareness about the living conditions of Iranians, what could mean greater involvement of Western countries in fostering democratization and respect for human rights in Iran.

Something is definitely wrong with the Spanish journalistic culture if the four main quality papers published pages and pages about a child called Madeleine during the three monitored months, whereas only 36 news stories were published about the respect for human rights in a country that has hung more than 150 people since January 2007.

Turkey (Sezin Lalecelir)

Due to the heavy news agenda in July, the Turkish media focused on the presidential and parliamentary elections in the country. The stories reported on Iran were mainly concerned with the Memorandum of Understanding under which Iranian and Turkmen gas will be exported to Europe via Turkey. **Sabah Daily** reported an interesting story about the Tehran youth and the bars where alcohol is banned. The programme that appeared on Iranian State television, which showed detained American-Iranians acting against national security and spying, was also covered by the dailies. The execution of 12 people was also reported by the media with photos. Another story addressing Iranian human rights was the fashion police in the Iranian streets and their intensified control over Iranian women.

In August, the Turkish media focused on the news relating to stories reporting Iran's shelling of northern Iraq to combat the PJAK as well as energy issues. In terms of the media coverage on human rights issues in Iran, the media was mainly dominated by the public executions in Iran. Particularly, the death sentence of two Kurdish journalists received relatively extensive coverage. **Hurriyet Daily** reported that two women's rights activists were sentenced to death for collecting signatures to support the 'One million signatures' Campaign. The Turkish media also broadly reported that 230 young people, including foreigners, were arrested at a rock concert. Another story concerning human rights in Iran was the closing down of some barber shops. It was highlighted by the media that the shops were shut down due to their promotion of un-Islamic behaviour by offering Western hairstyles and tattooing. Italy's anxiety about the hangings in Iran was also another story covered by the media. **Turkish Daily News** quoted from Bloomberg a story about Iranian young people who lack basic rights and freedom. The release of US-Iranian academic Haleh Isfendiari also received coverage in the media.

In September, Turkish media coverage in general was dominated by the constitutional amendment package, negotiations with Iraq to combat against terrorism, debate over lifting the headscarf ban at universities and whether Turkey could become another 'Malaysia'. In September, similar to previous months, the Turkish media covered extensively the public hangings in Iran. It is remarkable that the monitored dailies covered several stories related to Iran despite the heavy agenda focused on the fight against terrorism and the constitutional reform process.

Due to the fear of the possible constitutional amendment, some journalists compared the regime in Turkey and in Iran instead of comparing Turkey with Malaysia. In the stories concerning the comparison of Turkey and Iran the human rights issue was not particularly mentioned, but rather they focused on the process of the regime change in these countries.

Hurriyet Daily reported a story on compulsory sex education in Iran, saying that the State tried to provide at least "sexual comfort" although it could not provide socio-economic opportunities to its citizens. **Hurriyet** columnist Yalcin wrote a story about the regime change in Iran and questioned whether Turkey could become like Malaysia or Iran. Another columnist of **Hurriyet**, Rahmi Turan, also wrote about the controversial headscarf issue and compared the state of women's rights in Turkey and Iran. Turan concluded that it was controversial to observe some Turkish women who decided to wear the headscarf while Iranian women have been trying to get rid of it.

Ahmadinejad's remarks at Columbia University that there were no homosexuals in Iran were also covered by the media in September. It was also reported that a Western orchestra performed for the first time in September since the revolution in 1979. It was underlined that the female musicians wore headscarves, although they were invited by the Tehran administration.

UK (Victor Kattan)

Despite Iran's deteriorating human rights record, the media was still more concerned with publishing stories on Iranian–US and Iranian–Israel relations and Iran's alleged involvement in the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq in July.

Of the newspapers monitored in July, the **Guardian** reported more stories on human rights violations in Iran than any other British newspaper (five stories as opposed to two for **The Financial Times (FT)** and **The Times** and one for the **Daily Mail**). The tabloids did not report anything on the internal Iranian human rights situation.

On 4 July, the **FT** reported that Iran's judiciary closed down one of the main reformist newspapers, Ham-Mihan, after it published comments critical of the Government. In a related story, a report appeared in the **Guardian** on 9 July which said that Iran's President accused the Iranian media of trying to depose him in a 'creeping coup'. On 12 July, the same paper reported that Iran was to defy Western criticism over its human rights record by executing 20 sex offenders and violent criminals. A short paragraph appeared in the **Guardian** on 17 July saying that Iran's State television broadcast images of two detained Iranian-American academics apparently confessing to acting against national security and spying. Two days later, the **Guardian** published a lengthier article saying that the two detained Iranian-American academics admitted involvement in US-backed pro-democracy projects but stopped short of making widely anticipated full confessions. The story was also reported by **The Times**. The **FT** reported on 26 July that Iran slowed down the deportation of illegal Afghans immigrants after protests from Kabul that the Afghan economy could not cope with more hungry people or provide them with shelter and jobs. On the following day, an article appeared in the **Guardian** saying that Iranian students are being systematically abused in prison.

Stories the British press missed in July included: the detention of three journalists (**RSF**, 2 July); the sentencing of a women's rights activist to flogging and three years in jail (**Reuters**, **AFP**, **ILNA**, July 3); the ban on the Ham Mihan newspaper (**AFP**, 3 July), with the exception of the **FT** which was the only British newspaper to report this story; the death sentence for an Ayatollah and his followers (**FIDH**, 3 July); comments by Iran's supreme leader on women's rights (**Associated Press**, 5 July); the execution of a rapist (**AFP**, 8 July); the arrest of six reformist students (**AFP**, 9 July); the arrest and detention of two Kurdish human rights activists (**Amnesty International**, 15 July); the execution of three men accused of murder in the Iranian province of East Azerbaijan (**IRNA**, 15 July); the reinforcement of the Islamic dress code (**Reuters**, 16 July, **AFP**, 23 July); the halting of an execution of a minor by the Iranian judiciary (**AFP**, 18 July); the execution of 12 people in Tehran (**IRNA**, 22 July); the execution of a man accused of rape in Mazandaran province (**IRNA**, 26 July); and the protests by Kurds against the announcement that two of their compatriots are to be executed (**Rooz**, 30 July).

August was a relatively quiet month for human rights stories from Iran. The **Guardian** reported on 3 August that Iran's former President, Khatami, got himself into a spot of trouble for being pictured shaking hands with women in breach of Islamic convention. The **Times** and the **Express** were the only British papers to report on the spate of public executions in Tehran, on 2 August. It was the first public execution in the capital in five years. The **Guardian** was the only paper to report on the arrest of 230 people at a 'satanic' rock concert and it was also the only paper to mention that Iran's leading reformist newspaper was closed down after it criticized the policies of President Ahmadinejad. The **Guardian** and the **FT** were the only British newspapers to report the release of the American-Iranian academic Haleh Esfandiari. On 23 August the **Daily Mail** reported on the flogging of a 25-year-old man for drinking alcohol and having sex outside of marriage, which was accompanied by some gruesome photographs. The **Guardian** was the only British paper to report on Iran's crackdown on hair salons and barbers offering men 'Western'-style haircuts. It was also the

only paper to report that Iranian academics are being forced to tell the security authorities of all foreign trips in advance, so that can be prevented from being recruited as 'Western spies'.

Stories the British press missed in August, included: the sentencing to death of two Kurdish human rights activists (**Associated Press**, 1 August); the execution of a man in Golestan and three others in the Iranian province of Sistan-va-Baluchistan (**IRIB**, 7 August); the execution of a man in Mazandaran (**IRNA**, 12 August); the arrest and detention of five members of Tehran's bus driver's union (**AFP**, 12 August); the flogging of a man for having a bible in his car (**Iran Focus**, 13 August); the execution by hanging of two men in Khorassan Razavi (**IRNA**, 15 August); an execution of a man in Astaneh-Ashrafiyeh for murder and another in Zahedan for armed robbery (**AFP**, 15 August); the execution by hanging of three men in the town of Saveh (**IRNA**, 19 August); the execution by hanging of two men in the province of Sistan-va-Baluchistan (**IRNA**, 22 August); the hanging of a man in Fars (**IRNA**, 23 August); and a hunger strike by two Iranian journalists (**Reporters without Borders**, 27 August).

September proved to be an even quieter month despite the continuing deterioration of human rights in Iran. The **Guardian** was the only British newspaper to report on the mass execution in one day of 21 people accused of drug smuggling (6 September), despite **Amnesty International** issuing a press release on the subject. And even then, the story was relegated to a mere paragraph in the **Guardian** on page 28. Amazingly, the **Guardian** was also the only British paper to publish several articles on President Ahmadiyeh's visit to New York where he claimed that there are no homosexuals in Iran.

Stories the British press missed in September, included: the execution of a man in Gharchak (**ISNA**, 2 September); President Ahmadiyeh's speech before the Non-Aligned Movement, where he claimed that human rights are 'abused by the bullying powers to target independent countries' (**BBC Monitoring Middle East**, 3 September); the banning of Rafsanjani's memoir by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance (**Rozoneonline**, 3 September); protests by Iranian teachers in front of the Majlis (**Rozoneonline**, 3 September); the execution of two men in the province of Hormozgan (**ISNA**, 6 September); the execution of two men in Mashad and Qom (**AFP**, 11 September); the amputation of the hands of four men in Mashad and the execution of 'several' people in Mahan (**IRNA**, 12 September); the concern raised by a number of Western countries at the rising number of executions in Iran (**Reuters**, 13 September); the statement by Louis Arbour, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, saying that Iran should immediately halt the execution of children (**Associated Press**, 17 September); the release from captivity of radio journalist Parnaz Azima (**Radio Free Europe**, 18 September); the release from captivity of Kian Tajbakhsh, an urban planning consultant with the Soros Foundation's Open Society Institute, (**Associated Press**, 20 September); the filtering of the international search engine Google™ (**Rozoneonline**, 23 September); the arrest of Cleric Hadi Qabel by the Special Court for the Clergy (**Amnesty International**, 24 September); and the release of Ali Shakeri, 59, a California-based peace activist and businessman (**ISNA**, 25 September).

All in all, it is quite clear then, that the British printed press does not deem human rights stories from Iran as particularly newsworthy.

USA (Brian Oliner)

In July, there were many articles mentioning Iran in regards to human rights and democracy, but the overwhelming majority of those articles concentrated on one incident; the airing of a documentary containing video clips of two Iranian-Americans being detained in Iran.

Outside of the widespread reporting on the airing of this documentary, there was little reported in most newspapers monitored. The stoning of a man for adultery was mentioned in most of the publications. Also reported was an incident involving the suppression of a student sit-in. Of interest is that the **Wall Street Journal**, though it did not report on these incidents as news, did run an editorial that included mention of these and several other events demonstrating the curtailing and suppression of human rights. The exception to this reporting was the **LA Times**, which ran several articles on specific incidents or general news related to human rights and democracy which were not reported in other papers.

In August, as with July, the majority of articles concerned the holding and release of Iranian-Americans in Iran. There were intermittent articles on isolated human rights issues in Iran, mostly in regards to arrests and sentencing of acts considered criminal in Iran or acts

resulting in a sentence of capital punishment. There was one interesting editorial in the **Washington Post** that questioned the World Bank's activities with Iran in the light of the large revenue Iran receives from oil exports and the human rights abuses reported in the country.

I think it would be fair to say that, but for the holding of the Iranian-Americans in Iran, little, if any, thought was given during this period to human rights and democracy in Iran in the American media. Though here and there short accounts are given of a demonstration, execution, paper closing, or similar event effecting those living in Iran, the American media for the most part does not report on human rights or democracy issues in Iran unless there is a direct American connection. For example, over this three-month reporting period there were numerous reports on the status and ultimate release of Iranian-Americans being held in Iranian custody. In these reports, information was provided about why they were held and the conditions under which they were held. Yet, not once was there a report in the American media that solely focused on a non-American held in Iranian custody.