

## **My good friend and fellow student is imprisoned in Iran**

I was shattered when I learned that my close friend Bijan is in the notorious Evin prison in Iran. Bijan has been speaking at conferences in London and Vienna promoting foreign investment in Iran when he was snatched at the airport after his return to Tehran. His family fears for his life as he is a diabetic and did not receive his medication in the first weeks of imprisonment.

Bijan is Iranian and got his education in the West – we studied together 4 years in Germany and London – he also received a doctorate in Paris. While he could have settled for an easy life in the West he decided to return to his homeland and work on making it a better place. He is founder and chairman of the largest strategy consultancy in Iran and probably the most renowned economist speaking on Iran. Anybody who spends just 10 min with Bijan is impressed by his knowledge and wisdom as well as moved by his character and idealism. An idealism we have often lost in the West living in a democratic country and being sure of our human rights being upheld.

Bijan's imprisonment gives face to the thousands who have disappeared in Iran in the past election turmoil. After 6 weeks of not knowing where Bijan is he appeared in the second of the infamous "show trials" – he has significantly lost weight, grown a beard – but he is alive.

He is a democrat who thinks highly of personal freedom and in that sense he is the living proof that human rights and personal freedom are scarce in today's Iran. These "show" trials are a clear sign that democratic rights are not in place in Iran: The family has not been notified of the charges against him, he was not allowed access to a lawyer, and none of the defendants was represented by legal counsel in court. Also he is nearly blind without his glasses and he was not wearing his glasses when speaking for himself in court claiming his innocence – actually he did not have his glasses the first many weeks in prison.

But what can we, his friends do?

After 9 weeks imprisonment it is important to keep his name mentioned and keep pressure on the governments asking for his release:

- The "show trials" are ongoing – recently the hard-liner prosecutor has been changed – what this means for the thousands imprisoned remains unclear
- The confinement of the leading business consultant and economist will not support the so very much needed foreign investment in Iran – the country will face even stronger economic problems
- Democratic and human rights are not upheld in Iran – we all have to speak up.

Therefore, I am asking journalists to report about his case. The Danish government has been informed on his situation, Amnesty International is aware of him – but much more can be done.

I am in regular contact with Bijan's wife and family in Iran. His wife has written a very touching letter of the few moments she was allowed to spend with her husband. The letters or extracts thereof can be made available to the press.

For questions and further information please contact.

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Attached a fact summary as well as various newspaper and internet extract on Bijan's case.

## Dr. Bijan Khajehpour Khoei

Dr. Bijan Dr. Bijan Khajehpour Khoei, a highly respected independent Iranian businessman and economic consultant, was arrested on **Saturday 27 June 2009** when returning from a trip to Vienna and London. He was paged over the loudspeakers at the airport and taken away by security men. During his brief trip abroad, he had spoken at the chamber of commerce/ trade commission in Vienna and met the Iran British Business Chamber in London to support Iranian business and to encourage foreign investment in Iran. Now, Dr. Khajehpour is being held at **Evin prison** and was put on trial among the 2<sup>nd</sup> group of detainees by the Iranian government.



Dr. Khajehpour is the founder of the strategic business consultancy **Atieh Bahar Consulting**, which he started in 1993. In his two decades of activities in Iran, Bijan has been instrumental in creating jobs for Iranians through his different business activities, attracting **foreign investment** to Iran and advising domestic and international companies on the economic and investment climate and opportunities in Iran, guiding them through the Islamic Republic's thickets of red tape and explaining the complex regulatory environment.

Dr. Khajehpour holds a **DBA in International Management** from the **International University in Paris** and has a **BA Hons** from the **Middlesex University business school** as well as a **Diplom-Betriebswirt (ESB) of Reutlingen University** which he attended after earning his Abitur at the **Zinzendorf-Gymnasium in Königsfeld (Germany)**.

A proud **patriot** who loves his country, he chose to return home rather than make his fortune comfortably in Europe after his studies. He explains the political economy of Iran economics with passion and an irrepressible optimism. When he is not busy promoting Iran as a business location, he is active as **Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Science and Arts Foundation in Iran**, an NGO focusing on the empowerment of Iranian youth through information technology. An active intellectual in civil society, he has devoted his life to **improving the economy, education and opportunities for poor people** in his country. He kept convincing both his clients and his friends, that the Iran was a safe country to invest in, to do business in and to visit, doing his best to build trust into his country. A trust, which is now being shattered.

While Dr. Khajehpour is just one of maybe thousands of Iranians who have disappeared since protests erupted after the June 12 presidential election, his disappearance is particularly disturbing because he was neither a street protestor nor a leader in Mousavi or Karroubi's campaign or a journalist. Instead, Dr. Khajehpour was a **public intellectual and businessman** who was out of the country at the height of the protests. He worked all his life to make his country a better place. His arrest will likely have a negative effect on foreign investment in Iran.

Dr. Khajehpour's wife, two school aged daughters, family and friends are very concerned about his health as he is a **diabetic** on strict medication and diet.

**Governments** like the German, Austrian and Swedish government call for Mr. Khajehpour's immediate release. As well do **international organizations** like Amnesty International, the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and others. Dr. Khajehpour's imprisonment has been mentioned in various **international media** like the New York Times, Washington Post, Business Week, Seattle Times, Reuters, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Swiss 20min.ch, Danish Weekendavisen, etc.

13:07 August 19th, 2009

## An update on Bijan Khajehpour

Posted by: [Paul Taylor](#)

<http://blogs.reuters.com/commentaries/files/2009/08/bijan-2.jpg>

A couple of weeks ago, I drew attention to the arrest of respected business consultant [Bijan Khajehpour](#) as an example of the situation of hundreds of Iranians detained after the disputed presidential election on June 12. At the time, Bijan's whereabouts, state of health and conditions, as well as any charges against him, were unknown.



We now know that Bijan is being held at Tehran's Evin prison, where most political prisoners are detained. He was one of the defendants at the [second mass trial](#) of people accused of plotting a "velvet coup" to overthrow the regime. The second one-day trial focused on people with contacts with Western countries. Bijan's company advises many European corporations on doing business in Iran. His client list is a who's who of international energy, engineering and automotive companies. The German Foreign Minister has called publicly for his release.

Bijan is apparently in good health and receiving his diabetics medicines, but his glasses were taken away from him when he was imprisoned, and he is almost blind without them. He has thus been deprived of his sight as well as his freedom for the last seven weeks. He has grown a beard and lost weight. His home was raided while his family was out of the country. His office was searched in his presence the day after his arrest. Security authorities removed computers and files.

Bijan was photographed by the semi-official Fars news agency in court (centre in the picture). He was on the B-list of the trial that included French researcher Clotilde Reiss and British embassy local staffer Hossein Rassam.

His family have not been notified of the charges against him and Iranian news agencies did not report them. He was not allowed access to a lawyer, and none of the defendants was represented by legal counsel in court. Most of the accused were charged with espionage, harming national security or transmitting information on the post-election unrest to foreigners. Bijan had a chance encounter with a lawyer outside the courtroom and told him he denied the charges against him in court. His statement was not reported by the Iranian news agencies, which have only reported selected "confessions".

Since my first post, I have received several messages from business contacts, diplomats, officials of international organisations and NGO members involved with Iran saying what a wonderful person Bijan is. Many underlined his patriotism, his dedication to developing the Iranian economy and to attracting talented young Iranians from inside and outside the country to invest and set up companies there, and his sustained efforts to promoting business education in his homeland.

Bijan is not a political activist and was abroad during the height of the turmoil that followed the presidential election. He was on a speaking tour to business audiences in Vienna and London.

What message are the Iranian authorities trying to send by arresting probably the country's leading business consultant and putting him through a mass trial? If they wanted to discourage foreign investment, they could hardly do better. Do they want to deter other Iranians from facilitating foreign investment and from encouraging Iranians living in Europe, the Gulf and north America to set up businesses in Iran? Or does the mere fact of having business contacts abroad and being well connected with Western officials and academics make him automatically a "suspect", as during the French revolutionary terror?

As an official at a major European oil company that is one of Bijan's clients puts it: "Why would Iran arrest someone who was working so hard for the good of his country?"

**BusinessWeek**

## The Absurdity of Iran's Political Detentions

Posted by: Stanley Reed on August 11

On Aug. 8, a photo of Bijan Khajehpour, a respected Iranian business figure, appeared on the website of a hardline Iranian group. Khajehpour, looking weary and dressed in a pajama-like uniform, was in the second group of detainees put on trial by the Iranian regime in the wake of the disputed June election.



According to a colleague, Khajehpour was arrested on June 27, 2009 when returning from a trip to Vienna and London, where he spoke to business groups such as the British Iranian Chamber of Commerce.

The exact motivation for his arrest and detention remains unclear. Why the regime would have considered Khajehpour a threat is a mystery. If anything, he has for years been an asset to the Islamic Republic because he worked to encourage foreign investment in Iran.

From the 1990s Khajehpour has been one of a handful of private Iranian businessmen engaged in explaining the opaque Iranian economic and political landscape to outsiders. A founder and Chairman of Atieh Group, a diversified consulting firm, he was a trusted advisor to oil companies and other corporations. He also provided business services such as legal advice and accounting. Khajehpour's analysis was invariably fair and factual.

The government's throwing a person like this in jail does not augur well for Iran's future. With substantial unemployment and a tanking economy, Iran badly needs investment, knowhow, and jobs. But a better future does not seem to be one of the regime's priorities



## Irans nye, brutale orden

14. august 2009

**Iran. Skueprocesser i Teheran viser Den Islamiske Republiks selvmorderiske skred mod et religiøst militærdiktatur. Mød to af de arresterede: Maziar Bahari og Bijan Khajepour.**

*Af Janne Bjerre Christensen*

»Jeg så en mand dø i dag,« skrev Maziar Bahari i en af sine sidste artikler til Newsweek. Som journalist fulgte han demonstrationerne i Teherans gader de første dage efter Irans præsidentvalg den 12. juni. Ni dage senere blev Bahari arresteret i sin mors hjem i Teheran.

Den 42-årige dokumentarfilminstruktør og journalist er én blandt hundredvis af mennesker, der nu sidder fængslet i Iran, anklaget for at opildne til en vestligt-støttet »fløjlsrevolution.« Og han var én af de utallige, som den 1. august blev stillet til skue i Teherans retssal, hvor han »tilstod« sin rolle i at vælte det iranske regime: »Jeg har også, som journalist og medlem af denne store vestlige kapitalisme-maskine, enten blindt eller bevidst deltaget i at skabe tvivl og promovere en (...) revolution,« citerer det officielle nyhedsbureau Fars ham for at sige.

Intet synes mere forkert eller urimeligt. Få journalister har større integritet og uafhængighed end Maziar Bahari, der har arbejdet i Iran gennem de sidste ti år og leveret adskillige skelsættende dokumentarfilm til BBC og Channel 4.

Som han sad på anklagebænken for to uger siden, lignede han en mand, der har mistet sin sjæl.

Længe før jeg mødte Maziar Bahari, læste jeg i en iransk avis, at en ung, iransk filminstruktør var taget til Mashhad for at lave en dokumentarfilm om de såkaldte »edderkoppemord«. I 2001-02 blev 16 prostituerede dræbt i det religiøse pilgrimscenter i Irans nordøstlige provins, og fundet, efterladt i byens gyder, viklet ind i deres kropslange, sorte chador.

Maziar Baharis prisvindende dokumentarfilm *And Along Came a Spider* viste, hvordan morderen, der var veteran fra Iran-Irak-krigen, så det som sin »religiøse pligt« at dræbe disse syndige kvinder. Filmen fulgte morderen, til han hang i galgen med plastiksandalerne dinglende fra sine fødder, og den var med til at eksponere Irans omfangsrige problem med prostitution - og religiøs fanatisme.

Det var sigende for Irans udvikling på det tidspunkt, at det på trods af restriktioner var muligt at lave en film om de prostituerede. Det var nok så sigende for Maziar, at det var ham, der gjorde det.

### **De udskudte**

Efter at være flygtet fra Iran som 18-årig, fået uddannelse og statsborgerskab i Canada, vendte han tilbage til Iran for at filme de udskudtes blinde vinkler.

»Jeg er interesseret i mennesker, der har konflikter i deres liv,« sagde han, da jeg senere interviewede ham under cph:dox i 2003, hvor Maziar Bahari var medlem af dokumentarfilmfestivalens jury. »Jeg beskriver situationer, der handler om liv og død, store problemer, det store billede.«

Alle hans dokumentarfilm - om Teherans gryende kunstscene, hiv-smittede, narkomaner, religiøst lærde, fodboldfans - rummer den dobbelthed. De afspejler Irans sociale skyggesider og politiske

dilemmaer, men afdækker samtidig menneskets eksistentielle vilkår. Det var også tilfældet for det teaterstykke, han skrev til Betty Nansen Teatrets forestilling 1001 nat NU i 2002.

Som en af de eneste uafhængige journalister, der ikke arbejdede som 'embedded' hos militæret, beskrev han Irak-krigens konsekvenser siden invasionens start i 2003. I dokumentarfilm til BBC og Channel 4 portrætterede han tortur i de amerikansk-ledede fængsler, shiismens fremmarch, borgerkrig. Han rapporterede fra hele Irak - Basra, Najaf, Kerbala, Bagdad. Helt ekceptionelt fik han et interview i stand med den shiitiske oprørsleder Moqtada al-Sadr.

Hans grænsesøgende reportager handler ikke om eget vovemod. Han tog ikke til Irak og interviewede Moqtada al-Sadr for at bringe sig selv i fare, sagde han, da vi mødtes i Teheran i december 2005: »Men den krig er den vigtigste historie i verden at fortælle lige nu.«

Sådan var det bare. Med en sikkerhed i sit blik og sin færden, der kunne misforstås som arrogance, søgte han disse historier. Self-contained var det ord, der faldt mig ind. Selvstændig. Uafhængig. Men også altid bevidst om risikoen. Han vidste præcis, hvor langt han kunne gå. Han havde sit fundament i orden. Om end han blev fulgt tæt af Irans efterretningstjeneste, er det første gang, han nu er arresteret.

Fra 2006 var hans største bekymring, at USA også ville angribe Iran. I sine artikler til Newsweek - som han har været korrespondent for siden 1998 - påpegede han, hvor farlig den strategi er. Han lavede blandt andet et interview med den berømte iranske dissident og journalist Akbar Ganji, der var et entydigt opråb: Bomb ikke Iran; forsøg ikke at skabe 'regimeforandringer' gennem Irans civilsamfund. Det vil kun blive brugt af Ahmadinejad til at undergrave reformfløjen.

Alle Maziar Baharis dokumentarfilm fra Irak var kritiske over for USAs invasion. Det var aldrig hans erklærede mål, men på sin vis gav de film det iranske regime glimrende ammunition til deres fordømmelse af USAs politik i regionen. Men lige så frustreret var han over den iranske stats ideologisering af islam og dens højrestede anti-amerikanisme, som han ikke tøvede med at kalde »idiotisk«.

Maziar Baharis arbejde er i høj grad sigende for, hvordan den yngre generation i Iran har ønsket at gøre op med revolutionens ideologiske ensretning. 1990ernes reformbevægelse - som han aldrig deltog i politisk, men som hans dokumentarfilm er levende udtryk for - var og er et opgør med ideologi som sådan; en dyb skepsis overfor, at ét verdensbillede skulle afløse et andet. Så meget desto mere hårrejsende og aparte er det, at regimet nu anklager Maziar Bahari og andre for at opildne til en vestligt-støttet fløjsrevolution.

### **Modsætningernes Iran**

På anklagebænken den 1. august sad også den 44-årige Bijan Khajepour, en fremtrædende politisk og økonomisk analytiker. Han kom ikke med en offentlig tilståelse, men er stadig anklaget for at være en del af »fløjsrevolutionen« mod regimet.

Bijan Khajepour er direktør i Atieh Bahar Consulting i Teheran, et firma, der rådgiver udenlandske firmaer, som vil investere i Iran, men som også har bidraget med utallige uafhængige politiske analyser i årenes løb, blandt andet på konferencer i Vesten. Da Bijan Khajepour blev arresteret i Teherans lufthavn den 27. juni, kom han netop fra Wien og London efter at have deltaget i møder med britiske og østrigske handelskommissioner. Ingen har været i kontakt med ham siden, og lige som Maziar Bahari har han ikke haft adgang til en advokat.

Bedre end de fleste har Bijan Khajepour fornemmelse for de sociale vilkår, der påvirker Irans politiske kurs. Han var i 1992 med til at starte det sociale tidsskrift Goftogu (Dialog), der fokuserede på de emner, som blev helt centrale i præsident Khatamis politiske projekt fra 1997: Civilsamfund, islamisk demokrati, modernitet, kvinders politiske deltagelse, forholdene for Irans unge.

Jeg har interviewet Bijan Khajepour flere gange fra 2001 til 2004, og hver gang har han søgt at vise, hvor modsætningsfyldt Iran er. Hver gang justerede han på sin beskedne, imødekommende og præcise facon det blik på Iran, jeg var ved at etablere.

Når jeg nævnte, at mange aviser var blevet lukket, og at det måtte være udtryk for reformbevægelsens tilbagegang, pointerede han, hvordan kvaliteten af nyhedsjournalistikken var blevet markant bedre. Når jeg bad om en analyse af de politiske svingmanøvrer, pegede han på de langsigtede, makropolitiske planer, som udstak Irans prioriteringer og potentielt kunne muliggøre en kinesisk reformmodel.

Når jeg ville tale med de mest progressive journalister, insisterede han på, at jeg også interviewede Hossein Shariatmadari, den notorisk ultrakonservative chefredaktør på Keyhan, der nu med alle midler hænger folk som Bijan og Maziar ud som spioner og som for en måned siden tilmed krævede tidligere præsident Khatami og præsidentkandidat Mousavi retsforfulgt.

Hvis man endelig skulle anklage Bijan for noget, var det ikke hans opposition mod regimet, men snarere at hans analyser var for konstruktive og optimistiske. Bijan Khajepour formåede altid at se lyspunkter i landets udvikling.

Han rejste ofte til USA og Europa for at skabe større forståelse for Irans politiske processer, men intet kunne ligge ham fjernere end at støtte eventuelle amerikanske forsøg på at skabe regimeforandringer. Lige som Maziar Bahari argumenterede han specifikt imod en sådan løsning. Men nu er han, som stort set den samlede reformvenlige intelligentsia i Iran, anklaget for netop dét.

Hverken Maziar Bahari eller Bijan Khajepour arbejdede under radaren. De var åbne omkring deres arbejde, kendte reglerne og vidste præcis, hvor grænserne gik. De regler er sat ud af spil nu.

### ***Et religiøst-militært kup***

Tv-transmitterede »tilståelser« var et udbredt middel til at kontrollere oppositionen i 1980ernes Iran. Dengang som nu frembringes disse tilståelser ved brug af psykisk og fysisk tortur. Selv om 140 mennesker blev løsladt i begyndelsen af august, formodes det, at hundredvis stadig er fængslet. Det er de dygtigste, mest nuancerede og uafhængige mennesker, der nu bliver udsat for disse ydmygelser.

Mens fremtrædende menneskerettighedsadvokater er blevet arresteret - som Mohammad Ali Dadkhah og Abdolfattah Soltani - har Højesteret med kort varsel frataget den iranske advokatstand deres ret til at udnævne advokater. Det vil fremover være en politisk beslutning. På samme måde er Efterretningsministeriet blevet »renset« for de mennesker, som ikke er fuldstændigt loyale over for Ahmadinejad.

Det er blot den seneste udvikling i det politiske og militære kup, som præsident Ahmadinejad, Revolutionsgarden og den åndelige leder, ayatollah Khamenei, har iværksat.

Republikkens endeligt

Iran er ikke længere en Islamisk Republik, som vi kendte den. Guderne skal vide, at det aldrig har været et helt enkelt spørgsmål, hvordan Den Islamiske Republik skulle defineres. Siden revolutionen i 1979 har det været en stående diskussion i den politiske ledelse, hvorvidt trykket skulle lægges på Republik (folkets stemme) eller Islamisk (med suveræniteten placeret hos den åndelige leder). Siden 1989 har landets politiske og religiøse ledelse dog søgt en vis folkelig legitimitet.

Men i kraft af den omfattende valgsvindel og den hårdhændede måde, hvorpå protesterne er blevet undertrykt, er den republikanske del af forfatningen nu sat over styr.

Også det islamiske aspekt er under forandring, fordi den religiøse leder, Khamenei, nu så entydigt støtter præsident Ahmadinejad.

Ayatollah Khamenei tilhører selvsagt den konservative del af den politiske elite. Hans autoritet bestod i - fra sin ophøjede religiøse placering som revolutionens åndelige leder - at afbalancere de forskellige stridende fraktioner. Det er altid foregået bag lukkede døre. For første gang har han nu umisforståeligt valgt side og dermed sat dele af sin religiøse legitimitet over styr.

At opponere mod Khamenei - eller »Khamenei-jad« som han sarkastisk kaldes - er ikke længere det samme som at opponere mod Gud, som en anonym analytiker udtrykker det i Los Angeles Times.

Regimet kan dræbe, fængsle og torturere den politiske opposition og dermed skabe ro på kort sigt - og der er al mulig grund til at frygte, hvad der sker med mennesker som Bijan Khajepour og Maziar Bahari. Hvis de dømmes for at være anti-revolutionære, mohareb, det vil sige »Guds fjende«, kan de dømmes til døden.

Men på længere sigt kan den legitimitetskrise, som regimet har skabt for sig selv, blive fatalt. Det var det, den betydningsfulde Rafsanjani hævdede, da han langt om længe gik på talerstolen på Teherans Universitet den 17. juli for at lede fredagsbønnen. »Uden folket er der ikke et islamisk styre,« sagde lederen af Hensigtsmæssighedens Råd. Dermed understregede Rafsanjani, at selv den religiøse leder er afhængig af folkets stemme, og at begge aspekter - Islamisk og Republik - er lige vigtige.

Det er det, kampen står om i Iran lige nu: Skal landet være en islamisk republik eller et islamisk militærdiktatur? At højt respekterede folk som Maziar Bahari og Bijan Khajepour er arresteret, anklaget for at ville omstyrte regimet, tyder på, at Iran går mod diktaturet.

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Auswärtiges Amt

## Bundesminister Steinmeier fordert Freilassung der politischen Gefangenen im Iran

02.08.2009

Zum gestrigen Prozessbeginn gegen Oppositionelle im Iran erklärte Bundesaußenminister Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier heute (02.08.) in Berlin:

*"Die Nachrichten über den Prozessbeginn gegen Oppositionelle im Iran erfüllen uns mit Sorge. Nach den bisher vorliegenden Erkenntnissen werden die rechtsstaatlichen Mindestanforderungen für ein transparentes und faires Verfahren nicht eingehalten. Die iranische Regierung ist aufgefordert, die politischen Gefangenen frei zu lassen und die selbst eingegangenen internationalen Verpflichtungen zum Schutz der zivilen und politischen Rechte seiner Bürger einzuhalten."*

Iran hat den Internationalen Pakt über bürgerliche und politische Rechte der Vereinten Nationen unterzeichnet und ratifiziert. Zu den besonders prominenten Verhafteten gehören unter anderem der Unternehmer Bijan Khajepour Khoi, der Menschenrechtsanwalt Abdolfattah Soltani und der ehemalige Vizepräsident des Iran und Hodschatoleslam Seyed Mohammad Ali Abtahi. Die iranischen Behörden haben bislang nicht offiziell bekannt gegeben, wem von den politischen Gefangenen der Prozess gemacht werden soll.

Mitte dieser Woche waren rund 140 politische Gefangene freigelassen worden, darunter die Frauenrechtlerin Shadi Sadr, für deren Freilassung sich Bundesminister Steinmeier persönlich eingesetzt hatte. Die genaue Anzahl der noch in den Gefängnissen sitzenden politischen Gefangenen, die seit den umstrittenen Präsidentschaftswahlen vom 12. Juni 2009 festgenommen wurden, ist unbekannt, doch wird ihre Zahl auf mehrere Hundert geschätzt. Dazu kommen noch zahlreiche politische Gefangene, die schon in den letzten Jahren festgenommen wurden.

## Federal Minister Steinmeier calls for the release of political prisoners in Iran

Aug 2, 2009

In connection with the start yesterday of the trials of dissidents in Iran, Federal Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier issued today (2 August) in Berlin the following statement:

**"We are greatly concerned by the news that dissidents in Iran have now been put on trial. According to present reports, these trials do not conform to minimum rule of law standards of transparency and fairness. voluntarily given to protect the civil and political rights of its citizens. The Iranian Government must release the political prisoners and honour the international commitments it has"**

Iran has signed and ratified the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Entrepreneur Bijan Khajepour Khoi, human rights lawyer Abdolfattah Soltani and former Iranian Vice-President and Hojatoleslam Seyed Mohammad Ali Abtahi are among the most prominent detainees. As yet the Iranian authorities have given no official indication as to which political prisoners are to be put on trial.

Some 140 political prisoners were released mid-week, including women's rights activist Shadi Sadr, for whose release Minister Steinmeier had made a personal appeal. The exact number of political prisoners detained following the disputed presidential elections on 12 June 2009 and still in custody remains unknown but is estimated at several hundred, not including the already large number of political prisoners detained in recent years.





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## Arrests and deaths continue in Iran as authorities tighten grip

22 July 2009

Reports from Tehran on Tuesday, said that security forces deployed excessive use of force to counter peaceful demonstrations in Haft Tir Square, where more arrests were said to have been made. This news is, according to Amnesty International, a jarring reminder to the international community that the waves of arrests and killings continue unabated in Iran, as the authorities tighten their grip.

Thirty-six Iranian army officers are among people reported to have been arrested recently in connection with the disputed presidential election in Iran. Amnesty International has received [the names of 24 of them](#).

Others reported to have been arrested in recent days include political activists, journalists, academics and lawyers. Amnesty International said it fears for their safety in detention, as torture or other ill-treatment of detainees is common in Iran.

According to media reports, the military officers planned to attend the Friday prayer sermon in Tenrah on 17 July, led by former president Ayatollah Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani. They planned to do so while wearing their military uniforms as an act of political defiance.

The gesture was said to be intended to express solidarity with the demonstrators protesting against the official but widely disputed presidential election result.

Ayatollah Rafsanjani, who supported the campaign of presidential candidate Mir Hossein Mousavi, expressed concern in his sermon at the handling of complaints regarding the election by the Guardian Council, and called for the release of all those detained following the protests and an end to media restrictions.

Hundreds - possibly thousands - of people have been detained for protesting against the official election result. Many are held in undisclosed locations across Iran.

Mostafa Tajzadeh, arrested on 16 June, unlike some other detainees, has not yet been allowed to call his family, nor have they been able to obtain any information concerning his whereabouts from the Iranian authorities.

**Bijan Khajehpour Khoei, a business and economic consultant, was arrested on 27 June at Tehran airport when he arrived back from a trip to Vienna and London. During his brief trip abroad, he spoke to trade officials in Vienna and met the Iran British Business Chamber in London, as part of his work to support Iranian business and encourage foreign investment in Iran. His whereabouts are also unknown and his family fear for his health as he is diabetic.**

Possibly as many as 197 protestors were arrested on 9 July at a demonstration marking the tenth anniversary of 18 Tir, the suppression of student-led protests in 1999, in which at least one student was killed and many others were tortured or otherwise ill-treated. The police say that about 40 demonstrators were arrested at the 9 July protest.

Dr Sheikh Hassan Aghaei, a journalist from Iran's Kurdish minority and a political cartoonist, was detained in Mahabad, northwest Iran at 11am on 18 July by plain-clothes security officials who may be affiliated to the Revolutionary Guards, and transferred to an unknown location. No reason has been given for his arrest but he had been involved in campaign activities for Mir Hossein Mousavi.

Lawyer and human rights activist, Shadi Sadr, was violently arrested in Tehran on the morning of 17 July on her way to prayers.

Shadi Sadr was walking with a group of women's rights activists along a busy road when unidentified plain-clothed men pulled her into a car. She lost her headscarf and coat in the ensuing struggle but managed briefly to escape. She was quickly recaptured and beaten with batons before being taken away in the car to an unknown location.

The director of Raahi, a legal advice centre for women until it was closed down by the authorities, Shadi Sadr founded *Zanan-e Iran* (Women of Iran), the first website dedicated to the work of Iranian women's rights activists. She has written extensively about Iranian women and their legal rights. As a lawyer, she has represented activists and journalists, as well as several women sentenced to execution, whose convictions were subsequently overturned. She is also involved in Women's Field, a group of women's rights activists who have launched several campaigns to defend women's rights, including the "Stop Stoning Forever" Campaign.

French national Clotilde Reiss was detained at Tehran airport in Iran, on her way home to France on 1 July. The 24-year-old is accused of espionage in connection with photographs she took during a demonstration in the city of Esfahan in which she participated last month, against the announcement of the re-election of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. She emailed the photographs to a friend in Tehran. Amnesty International said that it believes Clotilde Reiss to be a prisoner of conscience, held solely for peacefully exercising her right to receive and impart information and ideas.

A graduate politics student from the city of Lille, Clotilde Reiss travelled to Iran after receiving a scholarship for her studies on Iran. She was detained after five months working as an assistant teacher in Esfahan University in central Iran. Clotilde Reiss is held in Evin Prison in Tehran. She has been allowed to phone and on 9 July was able to meet the French Ambassador to Iran. She said that she was being interrogated daily, though she was not being ill-treated.

Amnesty International has called for all those held solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression, assembly and association to be released immediately and unconditionally, and for all other detainees to be promptly charged and tried in proceedings, which meet international standards for fair trial or released. The organization said that the authorities should immediately clarify the fate of all those detained in connection with recent events.

Amnesty International has also called for a full and impartial investigation into the death of Sohrab Arabi, a 19-year-old student, who died from a bullet wound to the heart. He disappeared during a demonstration on 15 June. His family was then unable to find out any information about him until 11 July when they were summoned to court where they recognized him from photographs of dead individuals. His body had apparently been at the Coroner's Office since 19 June. There is, as yet, no information as to what happened to him between 15 and 19 June, including either the exact date, or the circumstances, of his death.

Official Iranian figures say that up to 21 people were killed during the demonstrations. However, Amnesty International has received the names of over 30 people said by unofficial Iranian sources to have been killed. The actual figure may be even higher.

A new group has been set up, called Mourning Mothers (*Madaran-e Azardar*). For the past four weeks, they have been meeting silently on Saturdays in public parks between 7 and 8pm – the day and time at which Neda Agha-Soltan, a young woman, was shot dead on 20 June. A video of her death was uploaded onto the internet and her face has come to symbolise the repression meted out in recent weeks.

Their peaceful protest has not gone unnoticed by the authorities – their gatherings have been broken up by security forces and several have been arrested. They include Zeynab Peyghambarzadeh, a women's rights and student activist who is also a member of the One Million Signatures Campaign, which is demanding an end to discrimination against women in law. She was arrested at the second gathering on 4 July, held overnight and then released.

The call made by the Mourning Mothers states: "Until the release of all detainees who were arrested for protesting election fraud, and until the end of violence and until the murderers of our children are prosecuted, we will gather to mourn in silence every Saturday at 7 pm near where our dear Neda was killed, in Amirabad Street, Laleh Park, by the pond."

New York Times

July 1, 2009

## Iran Seeks to Close Door on Further Protests

By [MICHAEL SLACKMAN](#)

CAIRO — Police officers and militia forces crowded the streets of Tehran on Tuesday, setting up checkpoints and making clear that the government had zero tolerance for any further public expressions of defiance to the re-election of President [Mahmoud Ahmadinejad](#), a day after [Iran's](#) powerful [Guardian Council](#) [certified](#) his landslide victory.

The government made a series of official moves to close the book on weeks of protest that represented the strongest challenge to its control since the Islamic republic was founded in 1979. Parliament issued a statement expressing broad gratitude over the June 12 vote and thanking the police and the [Basij](#) militia for maintaining security. Mr. Ahmadinejad visited the Ministry of Intelligence, where he gave a speech to employees.

The government crushed the vast protests following the vote, dispatching armed militia and police officers and leaving an estimated 17 people dead and hundreds injured. The authorities continued to detain hundreds of journalists, former government officials, political activists and even independent researchers, in the quest to prevent any further demonstrations.

There seemed little prospect of any chance for organized and sustained action against the government's version of events, political analysts said, in part because the arrests had starved the opposition of leadership, foot soldiers and an effective means to communicate.

**One of the most recent arrests, of Bijan Khajehpour, an independent political economist, sent a chill deeper yet into Iran's civil society because he had not been involved in the opposition demonstrations, political analysts said.**

**Mr. Khajehpour had been detained at the airport coming into the country from Britain, and like many others, has disappeared into the notorious Evin prison, raising concerns over the scope of the crackdown and the prospect of a political purge, the analysts said.**

**"Bijan was perhaps the last independent-minded analyst living in Tehran who continued to travel to Europe and the U.S. and give open lectures about Iran," said Karim Sadjadpour, an Iran expert with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. "He always believed that if he was totally transparent, the government would understand he was not doing anything wrong."**

The government has also, over the past several days, fired high-ranking officials who had supported [Mir Hussein Mousavi](#), the president's main challenger, according to Iranian news reports.

Human rights groups said arrests had taken place around the nation, but there were particular fears that those held at Evin were in physical danger.

[Amnesty International](#) said in a statement that it was “gravely concerned that several opposition leaders detained in the wake of the 12 June elections may be facing torture, possibly to force them to make televised ‘confessions’ as a prelude to unfair trials in which they could face the death penalty.”

Reporters Without Borders, a press freedom organization, said that the concern extended beyond opposition leaders. “Several witness accounts makes us fear that torture and ill treatment are being systematically inflicted on prisoners who have demonstrated against the regime,” the group said in a statement. “Several journalists and bloggers were brutally treated by the guards and by men employed by the state prosecutor Saeed Mortazavi.”

The Guardian Council’s validation of the election on Monday followed days of promises that a committee would be formed to review the election and that a partial recount would occur. But the committee was never seated, nor was the review process established.

The recount involved what officials said was a random 10 percent of ballots in Tehran’s 22 electoral districts and in some provinces. The officials concluded that in some areas, Mr. Ahmadinejad had won even more votes than initially stated.

With the vote now officially over, the government pressed forward with its efforts to rewrite a narrative of events that had been cast first by the millions who took to the streets, and then through independent and citizen journalism. The government has made reporting inside the country impossible, forcing foreign journalists to leave, while arresting and threatening Iranians who challenge the government’s position.

The government maintains that Western agents, primarily Britons, have been responsible for the unrest. On Monday, the government sought to recast blame for the deaths of about 17 protesters.

The commander of Iran’s Basij militia, Hossein Taeb, said that impostors wearing Basij uniforms had been responsible for infiltrating crowds attacking unarmed citizens. He also suggested that a Basij impostor had been responsible for killing [Neda Agha-Soltan](#), the young woman who became an international symbol when video of her shot and dying in the street went on the Internet and was seen around the world.

12:58 July 29th, 2009

## Where is Bijan Khajehpour?

Posted by: [Paul Taylor](#)

On June 27, Iranian business consultant Bijan Khajehpour landed at Tehran's Imam Khomeini Airport on a flight from London. His driver saw him in the arrival lounge. Bijan was paged over the loudspeaker and taken away by security men. He has not been seen for more than a month. He has had no access to lawyers. His wife and two young daughters do not know who is holding him, where or why. He is a diabetic and his family fears for his health.



Khajehpour is one of hundreds of Iranians who have been arrested since protests erupted over a disputed presidential election on June 12 in which President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was officially declared the winner. Unlike many of those locked up, he is not a political activist, a demonstrator or a journalist. Indeed, he was out of the country, giving talks to business groups in Vienna and London, at the height of the protests.

Khajehpour has dedicated the last 16 years to encouraging and helping foreign companies to invest in Iran. He founded a company, [Atieh Bahar Consulting](#), with his wife, Pari Namazie, which advises firms on how to do business in Iran, guides them through the the Islamic Republic's thickets of red tape and explains the complex political and regulatory environment. A multilingual economist with degrees from universities and business schools in Germany, Britain and France, he has written scholarly articles on the Iranian economy.

I first met Bijan at an oil industry conference in London in 1997 and visited him several times at his offices in Tehran. A proud patriot, he chose to return home rather than make his fortune comfortably in Europe after his studies. He explains the political economy of Iran economics with passion and an irrepressible optimism. When he is not busy promoting Iran as a business location, he is active as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Science and Arts Foundation in Iran, an NGO focusing on the empowerment of Iranian youth through information technology. An active intellectual in civil society, he has devoted his life to improving the economy, education and opportunities for poor people in his country.

Bijan is only one of the hundreds of people detained without trial in Iran in the last month. Each has a name and face, friends and a family. This is just one such tale.

## **Wirtschaftswissenschaftler Bijan Khajehpour immer noch in Haft Oliver Ernst, Berlin, 25. Aug. 2009 Hrsg.: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.**

Eigentlich sollte Bijan Khajehpour im September bei einem Seminar der Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung über die iranische Wirtschaftspolitik referieren. Als in Deutschland studierter Wirtschaftsexperte war er uns von dem jüngst verstorbenen Iran-Experten der Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Dr. Johannes Reißner, wärmstens empfohlen worden.

Doch seit dem 27. Juni ist Khajehpour im Teheraner Evin-Gefängnis inhaftiert. Wochenlang wusste selbst seine Familie nichts über seinen Verbleib und seine Ehefrau hatte keinen Zugang zu ihm erhalten. Im Rahmen der politischen Schauprozesse, die den Massenprotesten gegen die Präsidentschaftswahl vom 12. Juni folgten, wurde auch Khajehpour inzwischen vor Gericht gestellt.

Seine Familie und seine Freunde und Kollegen sind in großer Sorge um Khajehpour. Der gesundheitliche Zustand des Diabetikers soll sich stetig verschlechtern. Es ist unklar, ob er seine Medikamente erhält. Die internationale Forderung nach Zugang eines unabhängigen Mediziners, zum Beispiel eines Vertrauensarztes des Roten Halbmondes, hat das Regime bislang verweigert.

Nach den erschütternden Berichten über Dutzende in Haft zu Tode Gefolterte wächst im Iran und im Ausland die Angst um Leib und Leben der weiterhin Inhaftierten. Aufgrund des aktuellen Folterskandals wurde bereits ein Gefängnis geschlossen. Aber auch in den anderen Haftanstalten kam es nach den jüngsten Verhaftungen zu weiteren Todesfällen. Unter Oppositionellen ist das Evin-Gefängnis seit ehedem wegen zahlloser und massiver Menschenrechtsverletzungen berüchtigt.

Die Präsidentschaftskandidaten Mir-Moussawi und Karrubi hatten in den letzten Wochen wiederholt auf Folter, Vergewaltigung und Ermordung von Inhaftierten aufmerksam gemacht. Die Menschenrechtsorganisation Amnesty International hat den religiösen Führer Chamenei aufgefordert, eine unabhängige Untersuchungskommission einzurichten, die, unter Einbezug internationaler Experten, die Foltterwürfe klären soll. Auch der deutsche Außenminister hat in einer Presseerklärung inzwischen die Freilassung der Verhafteten, namentlich insbesondere des unserem Lande besonders verbundenen Bijan Khajehpour, gefordert.

Im Falle Khajehpours, der in Teheran die Atieh Consulting Group mitbegründet hat und leitet und sich seit vielen Jahren für die wirtschaftlichen Beziehungen Irans einsetzt, bleiben die Gründe für die Verhaftung unklar. Weder war er zurzeit der Proteste im Land, noch hat er sich politisch besonders exponiert. In einem Beitrag für die britische Zeitung The Guardian hatte er jedoch in einer Analyse die Enttäuschung der jungen Wähler insbesondere über die Wirtschaftspolitik Ahmadinedschads analysiert und die Frustration der Jugend über die herrschenden Verhältnisse beschrieben: „Die jungen Iraner sind ermüdet von Irans internationaler Isolation. Sie wollen, dass Iran vorankommt – und für seine Erfolge anerkannt wird – im Sport, in den Künsten, und im Bereich der Bildung im internationalen Maßstab.“

Das Verhalten der iranischen Führung der letzten Monate hat jedoch jede Hoffnung zunichte gemacht, dass sich diese Hoffnung der iranischen Jugend in absehbarer Zeit erfüllen dürfte. Isolierter als heute war die Islamische Republik schon seit zwei Jahrzehnten nicht mehr. Und die Haft von Bijan Khajehpour lässt die Vermutung aufkommen, dass die zunehmende Konfrontation und Isolation von der Regierung in Teheran gewollt sein könnte.

17. Juli 2009, Nr. 163, Seite 10.

## Sündenböcke

Mehr als zweitausend Menschen sind nach offiziellen Angaben in Iran seit den Protesten nach den Präsidentenwahlen im Juni verhaftet worden: Studenten, Demonstranten, Menschenrechtler, Reformpolitiker. Nun geraten auch unabhängige Intellektuelle in Gefahr, die weder politisch aktiv waren noch sich an den Protesten beteiligt haben. Einer von ihnen ist Bijan Khajehpour Khoi, Gründer und CEO der angesehenen Beratungsfirma Atieh Bahar Consulting, die vor allem ausländische Investoren in Iran berät. Khajehpour wurde am 27. Juni am Flughafen in Teheran auf der Rückkehr von einer Europa-Reise verhaftet. Er hatte in Wien vor der Handelskammer gesprochen und in London Vertreter der iranisch-britischen Handelsgesellschaft getroffen, um ausländische Investitionen in Iran zu fördern.

Der 42 Jahre alte Khajehpour stammt aus Khoi in der Provinz West-Aserbaidschan im türkischsprachigen Nordwesten. In seinen Analysen und Artikeln vor allem zur iranischen Wirtschaftspolitik hat er sich als scharfsichtiger und unabhängiger Denker hervorgetan. Im Ausland war er ein perfekter Vertreter, geradezu ein Botschafter seines Landes: Mit unermüdlicher Rationalität und nie nachlassendem Optimismus beleuchtete er die oft schwer verständlichen Zusammenhänge der iranischen Politik. Er argumentiert dabei nie als Regimekritiker, sondern als Patriot, der sein Land auf einem schwierigen, aber stetigen Weg in die Moderne sieht. Seine persönliche Integrität, sein ruhiges Temperament und sein moderates Denken frei von ideologischen Scheuklappen verleihen ihm eine auch unter iranischen Intellektuellen hervorragende Glaubwürdigkeit. Für Khajehpour, der fließend Englisch und - dank seines Studiums in Mannheim - auch hervorragend Deutsch spricht, wäre es leicht gewesen, in den Westen zu emigrieren. Aber er zog es vor, mit seiner Familie in Iran zu leben. Er sieht es als seine Aufgabe an, dort Arbeitsplätze zu schaffen und internationale Wirtschaftskontakte aufzubauen. Darüber hinaus engagiert er sich sozial und kulturell, unterstützt sportliche Talente und Studenten und ist Vorsitzender einer Stiftung, die das Computer-Wissen iranischer Jugendlicher fördert.

Khajehpour ist nun seit fast drei Wochen verschwunden. Von wem und warum er verhaftet wurde, ist unbekannt. Bisher wurden weder Haftgründe angegeben noch Anklage erhoben. Seine Familie - Khajehpour ist verheiratet und hat zwei minderjährige Töchter - hat keinen Kontakt zu ihm. Wo Khajehpour, der an Diabetes leidet und eine strikte Diät einhalten muss, festgehalten wird, ist unbekannt. Als wahrscheinlich gilt das Teheraner Evin-Gefängnis. Es ist zu vermuten, dass er wegen seiner Kontakte ins Ausland verhaftet wurde. Dass die Proteste zu einer vom Ausland organisierten "samtenen Revolution" führen sollten, ist eine gängige Unterstellung der Machthaber, für die jetzt Sündenböcke gesucht werden. In dieses Muster passt auch die Verhaftung von Kian Tajbakhsh, einem Intellektuellen mit amerikanischer und iranischer Staatsbürgerschaft, der am vergangenen Donnerstag aus seiner Wohnung in Teheran abgeholt wurde.

