

**IRAN**

International Campaign  
for Human Rights in Iran

# REPORTERS' GUIDE

SEPTEMBER 2010



**HOW TO INTERVIEW**

**IRANIAN OFFICIALS ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES**

**INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN**  
**FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN IRAN**

[www.iranhumanrights.org](http://www.iranhumanrights.org)

## About us

The mission of the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran is to gather support for Iranian human rights activists and defenders who are advocating for their civil, political, social, and economic rights within the framework of international treaties and standards that define Iran's obligations.

The Campaign is founded on these principles: that human rights in Iran, and in every country, are a matter of legitimate international concern and essential to establishing international peace and security; that human rights in Iran can only be implemented with the assistance of civil society, whose role must be protected and sustained; that human rights compliance in Iran should be approached from a non-partisan perspective, and detached from political objectives; and that solidarity with any and all peoples prevented from enjoying their human rights is a moral imperative of our time.

In order to encourage and assist state authorities to respect and abide by international standards and law, the Campaign will document Iran's compliance with its international human rights obligations, and publicize this and other relevant information to help provide a basis for accurate evaluations and constructive recommendations for improvements.

The Campaign works to inform civil society actors and media from around the world on the situation of human rights in Iran, urging them to support their Iranian colleagues. The Campaign advocates in international institutions, promoting recommendations put forward by human rights and social movements in Iran, and providing a platform for their views. The Campaign reaches out across the world to build a network devoted to its principles, and ready to contribute to the realization of its goals.

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## Introduction

# Human Rights Under Siege in Iran

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's coming visit to New York, for the opening of the 65<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations' General Assembly, will be his second visit to this city since the disputed election of June 2009 and his fifth trip to the United States. It is expected that he will be a center of international media attention, similar to his previous trips. Journalists will most likely seek his views on Iran's nuclear program, economic sanctions by the UN Security Council, US-Iran relations, and the Middle East peace process.

Human rights in Iran, a subject of utmost importance for the security and future of the Iranian people and their neighbors in the Middle East, also deserves extended coverage. The International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran is urging journalists to make human rights concerns a major component of their interviews with Ahmadinejad.

Iran's human rights crisis has worsened considerably since the June 2009 election. Iranian media are tightly controlled by the government and subjected to heavy censorship. Most independent journalists are in jail or have been forced into exile.

While Iranian journalists have no opportunity to hold Ahmadinejad accountable for Iran's human rights crisis, it is critical that when he travels abroad, particularly during his visit to New York, the international me-

dia give top priority to Iran's human rights crisis.

Fifteen months after the beginning of the government's brutal crackdown of post-election protestors, nearly five hundred prominent civil society activists, journalist, students, women's rights defenders, and reformist politicians remain behind bars. Many have been sentenced to years in prison, others remain in legal limbo.

The Campaign's review of two dozen interviews of Ahmadinejad by foreign media shows that prior to the 2009 presidential election the situation of human rights in Iran was largely overshadowed by three topics: Ahmadinejad's denial of the Holocaust (or challenges of historical accounts); his remarks on Israel's right to existence; and finally Iran's nuclear program. However, in most interviews, the media did not ask any questions about Iran's human rights situation.

Since the post-election crackdown of the last fifteen months, an increasing number of media interviews with Ahmadinejad have focused on human rights violations in Iran. After analyzing dozens of these interviews, the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran has highlighted trends, patterns, and arguments related to the coverage of human rights issues.

We hope this document will help

journalists who interview Mahmoud Ahmadinejad—or other senior Iranian government officials—frame pertinent questions about Iran's human rights situation, including the lack of freedom of speech and assembly, media censorship, political executions, stoning of women, and many other egregious abuses described below.

Iran's nuclear program has been the center of the international community's attention in view of its impact on international security, the dangers it might pose to the non-proliferation movement and regional as well as global instability. But it should also be noted that one of the primary goals of Iran's nuclear development project and associated conflicts is to divert attention from its repression of citizens and movements that seek harmony with the international community through respect for international standards.

We strongly believe in the role of the international media as a force to shed light on incidents that transform individual lives and whole societies. Were it not for the courageous people who risked their lives to send pictures and videos of Iran's post-election violence, and for the international media's responsible coverage of these events, more people would have undoubtedly died on the streets of Tehran and other cities. We hope this Reporters' Guide will facilitate continued accurate coverage of Iran's human rights crisis.

# A Brief Summary of Major Human Rights Violations in Iran

## Executions and Stoning

Since last year's disputed Presidential election, the Iranian government has instituted a hyped-up campaign of executions, virtually all of which have followed unfair trials. Amnesty International estimates that Iran executed 388 people in 2009, 112 of them in the two months following the election. In 2005, when Ahmadinejad took office, Iran executed 86 people. Iran executes the highest number of people per capita in the world, including juvenile offenders in contravention of international law.

At least nine political prisoners have been executed in secret since last year. Another eleven protestors have been sentenced to death, as authorities aim to show citizens that further dissent will be punished in the harshest manner.

Stoning, a form of torture, is a legal punishment for adultery in Iran. The application of death sentences according to the law puts women, non-Muslims, and other vulnerable groups at risk. In addition to adultery, drinking alcohol and homosexuality are also punishable by death.

Official reports by the government say that 44 people have been killed during street protests since the election, but civil society sources estimate that at least one hundred people died. Many of these victims were deliberately murdered by security and paramilitary forces.

## Torture

Torture is routine, systematic, and widespread, and serves a judicial system in which the main evidence in criminal convictions is a confession. The common use of solitary and incommunicado confinement and the denial of access to legal counsel contribute to the problem. Prisoners of conscience have reported rapes, beatings, threats to family members, and life-threatening interrogations. Four arbitrarily detained protestors died of wounds from torture at the Kazhirak Detention Center.

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## Arbitrary arrests and detentions of prisoners of conscience

Official statistics indicate that at least 6,000 persons have been arrested since June 2009 for peacefully demonstrating their political views or for holding reform-oriented views or being related to those who do. At least 500 prisoners of conscience languish in Iran's jails today, the majority in Tehran's notorious Evin prison. They include a number of human rights defenders, women's rights activists, students, intellectuals, and journalists. Arbitrary arrests of human rights defenders and others have continued as authorities pursue a policy of attempting to eradicate dissent.

## Lack of equality under the law; Legal discrimination against women

Because it rests on such vague and subjective concepts as persons who "deserve death," women, children, non-Muslims, dissidents, and critics, do not enjoy equal protection under the law, as they may be harmed under the pretext of "safeguarding Islamic values." Perpetrators of such crimes enjoy virtual impunity under such circumstances. Iran's Criminal Code deeply violates the principle of equality embedded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Women suffer legal discrimination with regard to inter alia their obligations to obey husbands; restrictions on travel; divorce; the management, legal custody and nationality of children; and the right to work. Blood money to be paid for the murder of a woman is half that of a man's and a wife may be legally murdered if she is suspected of adultery. Women are subject to more rigid restrictions than men with regard to their dress and behavior.

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## Violations of due process

The Iranian Judiciary is increasingly under the control and is being exploited by the Revolutionary Guards, Ministry of Intelligence, and other security apparatuses. These institutions interfere in investigations, interrogations, and trials. Thousands of citizens have been arrested without proper warrants or sufficient legal basis. Dissenters facing prosecution are routinely denied access to lawyers, held for months without charge, denied access to information about charges against them, charged with capital offenses such as “enmity against God,” forced to confess in show trials after being tortured, and given disproportionately harsh sentences including death for “crimes” as petty as throwing rocks during demonstrations. In recent months, nine political prisoners have been executed following closed trials lasting only minutes, during which they were not permitted to defend themselves.

## Ethnic and religious discrimination

Ethnic and religious minorities including Baha’is, Kurds, Baluchs, Azeris, Arabs, and other groups are subject to discrimination. Members of the Baha’i Faith, with about 300,000 members making them the largest non-Muslim religious minority group, are facing intensified persecution including cemetery desecration, arbitrary detention, home raids, property confiscation, work expulsion and denial of basic civil rights. Iranian Baha’i youth continue to be denied the right to higher education, and any university found to have a Baha’i student is ordered to expel them. Baha’i professionals are denied government jobs and face discrimination. About 40 Bahai’s are now jailed, including the seven top leaders who were each recently sentenced to twenty years in prison.

## Violations of the Freedom of Expression; Media censorship

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) reported that Iran is detaining one third of the world’s imprisoned journalists. Foreign journalists have been restricted from observing political demonstrations. Victims and their family members are being threatened with the most severe consequences if they communicate

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with foreign journalists. Iran's highest authorities have publicly announced that dissent is a crime and will be prosecuted, and have incited violence against dissenters. Numerous rights activists, political activists, students, and others have been prosecuted and jailed on the basis of their published articles and statements. Universities are being purged of professors whose views do not accord with government policies. Censorship of printed and electronic media is pervasive and all independent newspapers have been banned. Internet bandwidths have been reduced to restrict usage. SMS systems are routinely blocked and social networking websites restricted.

## Crackdown on civil society and freedom of association and assembly

Iran's most important civil society organizations and movements have been shut down or neutralized in a process that began when President Ahmadinejad first took office. Around 70 percent of human rights defenders have been jailed or exiled, while the remainder cannot work. Members of women's rights groups peacefully campaigning to change discriminatory laws have been systematically repressed. Hundreds of students have been arbitrarily detained and ill-treated for their activism. Organizing independent labor unions is not permitted and leading labor organizers are in prison. Many civil society activists have been banned from travel. Activists' and other citizens' email and telephone communications are often monitored, violating their privacy. In some cases, the Iranian security agencies' monitoring of citizens extends to those living abroad.

## Prison conditions

Prisoners of conscience, many of whom are held in Ward 350 of Tehran's Evin prison, are being denied needed medical care, putting some at grave risk. They are routinely held in unhealthy, unsanitary conditions, denied family visits and telephone calls, and given very low-quality food. Some are also held in cells with violent criminals.

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## Iranian Officials' Claims on Rights Issues: Myths vs. Facts

Myth	Fact
<div data-bbox="172 600 570 999" data-label="Image"> </div> <p data-bbox="191 1024 553 1205"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Iran is a free country, and opponents and critics are free to criticize the state and its leaders</b> </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="630 604 1198 1024"> <input type="checkbox"/> Iran currently holds over 500 political prisoners in jail, including political activists, students, journalists, and women's rights activists. While leading opposition figures like Mir Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karroubi have not been jailed, they are under virtual house arrest and surveillance. Mousavi's nephew was assassinated and Karroubi has been attacked several times. Most of their supporters have been imprisoned, mistreated in detention, and tried on trumped-up charges. Today, dissent is harshly punished.         </li> <li data-bbox="630 1062 1198 1234"> <input type="checkbox"/> According to the International Press Institute, Iran led the world in jailing journalists in 2009. The Committee to Protect Journalists and Reporters without Borders also rank Iran as one of the world's top jailers of journalists.         </li> <li data-bbox="630 1272 1198 1444"> <input type="checkbox"/> Reporters without Borders characterizes Iran as an "enemy of the Internet" and describes President Ahmadinejad as a "predator of the press" for systematically targeting journalists for persecution.         </li> <li data-bbox="630 1482 1198 1612"> <input type="checkbox"/> Iran is the only country in the world that has banned a journalist for life from writing, and continues to impose sentences banning journalists from practicing their professions freely.         </li> </ul>

## Myth



## ■ Iran is a democracy

## Fact

- ❑ Iran does not hold free and fair elections. It does not have an independent judiciary, nor does it have a free press. Iranians cannot freely choose their leaders or change their government due to a complex system of vetting and supervisory roles by unelected clergy that sit on the Guardian Council and Assembly of Experts.
- ❑ Unelected organs made up of clergymen continue to maintain control of the country--a parallel structure of government which, still supervised and vetted by unelected organs controlled by clergy, has been severely eroded by the government of President Ahmadinejad.
- ❑ Iran is ranked at the bottom of the world's leading independent governance indicators.
- ❑ Freedom House includes Iran in its list of countries which are "not free."
- ❑ The Bertelsmann Stiftung categorizes Iran as an "autocracy."
- ❑ The Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index lists Iran as an "authoritarian" regime.
- ❑ Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International describe Iran as one of the most repressive countries in the world.
- ❑ Iranian reformists, political activists, journalists, and human rights groups describe Iran as moving towards greater authoritarianism since President Ahmadinejad took power, particularly after the 2009 vote rigging and the systematic attack on civil society.

## Myth

## ■ Iran practices religious pluralism and tolerance

## Fact

- ❑ Iran does not provide equal treatment or protection under the law for religious minorities and sects. In practice, there is no freedom of religion, even for Iranian Muslims, as they are not free to choose, leave or change their religion.
- ❑ The most heavily persecuted religious group in Iran are the Baha'is. Seven Baha'i community leaders spent the last three years in arbitrary detention. Recently, they were sentenced to 20 years in prison on trumped-up charges.

Myth



■ Iranian women have enjoyed progress in the Islamic Republic

Fact

- ❑ The United Nations has consistently criticized Iran's treatment of women and girls as discriminatory since after the Islamic Revolution.
- ❑ Iranian women have made important strides in gaining access to education and increasing their participation in the public sphere, but this progress has not been the result of government policies. These advances were achieved in spite of discriminatory and regressive policies by the Islamic Republic government.
- ❑ Iran's laws treat women as second class citizens and Iranian society discriminates against women in law and practice. In recent years, women's rights activists fighting for equality have been severely persecuted. Dozens of activists have been subjected to arbitrary detention, mistreatment and torture, convicted for vague crimes against "national security," and given long prison sentences.
- ❑ Iranian women lost rights as a result of the Islamic Revolution, particularly as they relate to family law, forced hejab (veiling), and unequal access to education and employment. According to Iran's law, a woman's life is valued at half of a man's life. This principle governs the legal and societal treatment of women and the state thereby encourages discrimination and violence against women. Iranian women do not have equal rights to custody of their children, equal rights to inheritance, equal rights to divorce, or a right to control their bodies, travel, or make choices about their lives. According to the UN, prevailing inequality between genders breeds violence against women.
- ❑ Iran carries out state violence against women. Iran's Islamic Penal Code prescribes 74 lashes for women who appear on the streets and in public without a hejab. The penal code also sanctions stoning for adultery; women are required to be buried up to their necks while men are "only" buried up to their waist, providing for easier escape.
- ❑ Iran is one of a handful of countries – six to be exact - which has not ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against

Myth	Fact
<p><b>Iranian women have enjoyed progress in the Islamic Republic</b></p>	<p>Women (CEDAW). The vast majority of Islamic and non-Islamic states in the world have joined this treaty.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ The penal code also sanctions stoning for adultery; women are required to be buried up to their necks while men are “only” buried up to their waist, providing for easier escape.</li> </ul>
Myth	Fact
<p><b>Iranian culture prescribes a different set of values than Western culture, and therefore Western standards of human rights cannot be imposed on Iran</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Iran is a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and a signatory to several major human rights treaties, as are the majority of states in the world. These treaties require adherence to certain universal principles and legal obligations, in particular with respect to human rights.</li> <li>❑ Leading Iranian human rights defenders, civil society leaders, intellectuals, opposition leaders – and apparently, millions of Iranian citizens- seem to reject the notion that current laws and practices in the Islamic Republic reflect their cultural values. Do Iranian leaders recognize the right of Iranian citizens to influence their government’s laws and interpretation of their culture? If so, why have dissidents and activists been imprisoned? Why have independent newspapers and offices of human rights groups been shut down? Why have Iran’s leading human rights activists like Mehrangiz Kar, Shirin Ebadi, Shadi Sadr, and Mohammad Mostafaie been forced to leave the country and work from abroad?</li> </ul>

Myth	Fact
<p><b>■ Criticism of Iran’s record by the United States and the West is a politicized act against Iran</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ The UN has passed resolutions criticizing Iran’s human rights record since 1984, with the support of a majority of states from every region of the world, not just Western states.</li> <li>❑ International agreements, to which Iran is a member -such as the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action -recognize that the protection and promotion of human rights is “the first responsibility of governments” and a “legitimate concern of the international community.” In other words, it is the obligation of states to speak out about violations everywhere they occur.</li> <li>❑ Iran recognizes these obligations with regard to human rights violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. In 2006, Iran tabled two resolutions at the UN General Assembly on rights violations in the United States and Canada – though both of these resolutions were rejected by wide margins in the General Assembly (only six states voted in favor out of 192). Iran also regularly raises issues of human rights in the United States and Europe in the UN Human Rights Council.</li> <li>❑ In December 2009, 109 independent human rights organizations from every region of the world, including Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America wrote to the UN demanding condemnation of the repression of Iranian citizens.</li> <li>❑ In July 2009 and again in February 2010, 63 independent Arab human rights organizations expressed outrage about human rights violations in Iran, and demanded the Iranian government stop the violent repression of its citizens.</li> </ul>

## Myth

❑ **Iran has invited the High Commissioner for Human Rights to visit Iran this year and is cooperating with the United Nations**

## Fact

❑ In contravention of its standing invitation, Iran has not allowed the UN's independent human rights monitors, representatives of the Human Rights Council, to visit the country since July 2005. These investigators must be given free and unhindered access to Iranian activists, prisoners, and human rights defenders, as a pre-requisite for a High Commissioner's visit in order to ensure a true assessment of conditions on the ground.

❑ At a review of its record at the UN Human Rights Council in February 2010, Iran rejected 45 critical recommendations by states from around the world to revise its practices and laws and abide by international standards. Iran has failed to respect the successive UN resolutions passed since 1984 expressing similar concerns about systematic human rights violations.

## International Record and Cooperation on Human Rights

- Since 1984, the United Nations has expressed concern about human rights practices in the Islamic Republic of Iran through successive resolutions of the UN General Assembly and Commission on Human Rights. Iran has failed to abide by these UN resolutions to improve its human rights record. Since 2007, the UN Secretary General has been asked by the UN General Assembly to report on the situation annually.
- As noted by the UN General Assembly resolutions, most recently in December 2009, Iran fails to uphold its international human rights obligations as required by human rights declarations and treaties it has ratified, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, and the International Convention on the Rights of the Child.



- In 2009, UN human rights experts reported more urgent communications about alleged human rights violations in Iran than any other country in the world, yet the Iranian government had the lowest number of responses to these communications of any other state in the world.
- During a review of its human rights record at the UN Human Rights Council in February 2010, the head of Iran's delegation, Mohammad Larijani, challenged the universality of human rights standards as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and related human rights treaties to which Iran is a signatory. Larijani claimed that Iranian culture was different than Western culture. Leading Iranian human rights defenders, civil society leaders, intellectuals, and opposition, have strongly rejected this notion.
- Simultaneously, Iran was seeking a seat on the UN Human Rights Council in elections in May – a UN body mandated to ensure the protection and promotion of human rights as enshrined in international law. Iran withdrew its bid due to strong international and domestic opposition by Iran's human rights defenders.



## Interviewing Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

“President Ahmadinejad is a difficult man to pin down because his answers are often questions and he does not feel compelled to respond to questions as posed,” says the host of PBS talk show Charlie Rose. When asked a question, he lectures, turning the question towards other subjects, puts responsibility and accountability on other power players in Iran, and ultimately does not respond the question or acknowledge the issue.

The Campaign has reviewed more than 20 interviews that have been conducted over the past 5 years, particularly the ones after the Iranian election in 2009. Below is a list of major arguments and techniques he employs to defend Iran’s human rights record before foreign journalists:

- Responding to questions with questions
- Answering specific questions with vague or philosophical responses
- Criticizing human rights violations within in the United States, or by the U.S. government against people in other countries
- Saying that the Iranian judiciary is independent and he has no influence on its actions and deflecting blame onto the judiciary or legislative branches
- Giving long answers to questions, leaving no space for more human rights questions
- Defending the situation of freedom and democracy in Iran in general terms
- Questioning the reliability of interviewers’ arguments and the accuracy of their questions
- Denying the universality of human rights and claiming that human rights are imposed by the West. Avoiding direct “yes” or “no” answers
- Challenging the ownership and bias of foreign media. Asking the interviewer to respond to his questions on human rights violations in the U.S.
- Ignoring the facts and sticking to his own narrative, including political responses unrelated to specific questions on human rights



Below are a few suggestions designed to help journalists effectively counter these evasive techniques employed by Ahmadinejad in interviews:

- Ask specific, not philosophical questions. Ask him questions that have “yes” or “no” answers.
- Prepare yourself with secondary questions, read a bit about the background of the question you ask
- Don’t let him lecture. He goes around questions for a few minutes, never getting to your point directly and draining time. As a journalist, it helps to interrupt and remind him that he is not answering the question.
- Although Ahmadinejad is the president, and the judiciary is ostensibly independent, most of the cases are handled by the Ministry of Intelligence, which is under his control. As the country’s chief executive, he can always remind his cabinet and all ministries to uphold the constitution.
- Long questions tend to lack focus and allow him to answer in whatever way he wants; focus on one question at the time and stick a specific issue.
- He is the interviewee, don’t let him put you in the position of Western politicians. He is there to answer your questions, not you his.
- Do the fact checking first; check your questions and background information with experts. There have been interviews in which the interviewer has gotten facts wrong and has been corrected by Ahmadinejad, effectively losing control of the interview for the journalist.
- Provide pictures and/or video of the person you are talking about, to allow him and the audience to have a more vivid understanding and feeling of the issue.
- Preview his answers to similar questions you are asking in past interviews. You are not supposed to get the same answers.

# Argumentative Ahmadinejad

## Quotes from Interviews

- **“Iran is very free. It is the highest conceivable degree of freedom. We don’t have a party based system. It is a free government, very close to the people.”**

■ Ahmadinejad’s Interview with Kim Bildsoe of Dutch TV - January 8, 2010
- **“Everybody must obey the law. Protests also have to happen within the limits of the law.”**

■ Ahmadinejad’s Interview with Kim Bildsoe of Dutch TV - January 8, 2010
- **“In our country the law prevails.”**

■ Ahmadinejad’s Interview with Kim Bildsoe of Dutch TV - January 8, 2010
- **“Let me tell you something else which is more important.”**

■ Ahmadinejad’s Interview with Channel 4 of England’s Jon Snow - December 23, 2009
- **“You are making a mistake. And the Western politicians think something is happening in Iran and Iran has become weakened. That is a mistake. They do not know Iran.”**

■ Ahmadinejad’s Interview with Channel 4 of England’s Jon Snow - December 23, 2009
- **“In Iran, the Judiciary is an independent body. It does not make decisions based on political circumstances, nor does it make decisions based on propaganda. It makes decisions based on the framework of law.”**

■ Katie Couric’s Interview with Ahmadinejad - CBS Evening News - September 29, 2009
- **“In Iran, elections are real elections. Really completely popular ones.”**

■ Charlie Rose Interview with Mahmoud Ahmadinejad - September 28, 2009
- **“Both the attorneys said that they acted freely and the -- basically, the plaintiffs also said that they had enough time to review what they had done and they admitted the mistakes they had done. And actually, the courts were open enough to basically take care of due process of law and allow for the trials to happen.”**

■ Ahmadinejad’s Interview with Larry King - CNN - September 26, 2009
- **“In your own country, does the president have the ability to order a judge what to do? Can he?”**

■ Ahmadinejad’s Interview with Larry King - CNN - September 26, 2009
- **“The situation in the country is a very good condition, Iran is the most stable country in the world and there is the rule of law in this country.”**

■ Interview with Mahmoud Ahmadinejad on CNN and Iran Press TV by Christiane Amanpour - June 14, 2009
- **We don’t have execution for homosexuals. Of course we consider it an abhorrent act but it is not punished by capital punishment.”**

■ Democracy Now’s Amy Goodman Interviews Ahmadinejad - September 26, 2008
- **“People are free to do what they like in their private realms. But nobody can engage in what breaks the law in public.”**

■ Democracy Now’s Amy Goodman Interviews Ahmadinejad - September 26, 2008
- **“In Iran expressing ones points of view is permissible, it’s free and if a person has an opinion to express within the confines of the law they are free to express such opinions.”**

■ Interview with Mahmoud Ahmadinejad by Ann Curry of NBC News - September 18, 2008

# Suggested Questions for President Ahmadinejad

## 1. Question on former Tehran prosecutor Saeed Mortazavi

Saeed Mortazavi



**Question: Former Tehran Prosecutor Saeed Mortazavi has been indicted by a special Judges Court within the Iranian Judiciary for his involvement in the arrest orders of protesters that were taken to Kahrizak Detention Center. The detainees were brutally tortured and four of them were killed. Why did you give him a high position in your administration as Head of the Anti-Smuggling Task Force?**

### Background

Saeed Mortazavi served as Tehran's Prosecutor at the time of the June 2009 presidential elections. He issued a general arrest warrant four days before the elections, later used by security and intelligence agents to arrest hundreds of well-known journalists, students, and political activists deemed "suspicious." Nicknamed the "Torturer of Tehran," Mortazavi ordered the transfer of post-election detainees to Kahrizak Detention Center alongside high risk criminals, in substandard conditions, and subject to torture and abuse, resulting in the deaths of at least four persons, including Mohsen Rouholamini, Amir Javadifar, Mohammad Kamrani, and Ramin Aghazadeh following violent treatment. In total, 147 detainees were sent to Kahrizak. After the official announcement of Mortazavi by the Parliamentary fact-finding committee as "the Kahrizak Suspect," he was removed from his position as Tehran's Prosecutor on 30 August 2009, and was appointed as the country's Deputy General Prosecutor. On Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's request, he was appointed as Head of the Anti-Smuggling Task Force.

Mortazavi was the main official responsible for the murder of Iranian-Canadian photographer Zahra Kazemi, who died in custody nineteen days after her arrest on 23 June 2003 as a result of "a hard item hitting her head." Even after a Presidential report at the time implicated him as most responsible, Mortazavi never admitted his involvement and avoided prosecution.

Another journalist and blogger, Omid Reza Mirsayafi, was arrested and imprisoned on the orders of Mortazavi in January 2008, only to die in custody on 18 March 2009, under suspicious circumstances. In 2004, in the "Case of the Bloggers", Mortazavi's ordered the arrest, torture, and extraction of false confessions from Omid Memarian, Roozbeh Mirebrahimi, Javad Gholam Tayamomi, and Shahram Rafizadeh were verified by all four detainees. Mortazavi threatened to kill the prisoners by orchestrating car accidents if they mentioned the torture they endured in prison when released.

In his position as Head of Branch 1410 and Press Court in 2000, through actions later referred to as "wholesale banning of the press," he ordered closures of hundreds of publications, sending dozens of journalists to prison. Most imprisoned journalists were kept in solitary confinement and tried in closed door courts. Two

United Nations Special Rapporteurs, Amibi Ligabo and Loui Juane, who investigated the arbitrary arrests and restrictions on freedom of the media in Iran, provided testimony in a report from 2005. The Rapporteurs called for the dismissal of Mortazavi from all judicial responsibilities.

## 2. Question on the murderer of former Prime Minister Shapur Bakhtiar



Ali Vakili Rad

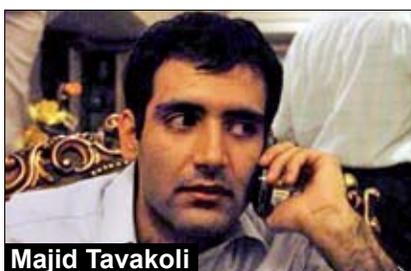
**Question:** A few months ago, a man who was in prison for 17 years in France for the murder of Iran's pre-revolution Prime Minister, Shapur Bakhtiar, was sent back to Iran and received a hero's welcome. How could a man who stabbed and murdered an exiled politician be received as a hero? Was it a gesture of support for those who eliminate the State's opposition?

### Background:

Shapur Bakhtiar was Iran's last Prime Minister under the Shah. He was murdered on 6 August 1991 in Paris, along with his assistant, Soroush Katibeh, at his residence outside Paris by agents of the Iranian government. One of his murderers, Ali Vakili Rad, was arrested, tried, and sentenced to lifetime imprisonment. The Iranian regime denied any involvement in the assassinations. However, the investigation led by the French investigative judge, Jean-Louis Bruguière, documented the Iranian authorities' involvement.

France released and returned Vakili Rad to Iran on 18 May 2010. He received a hero's welcome upon his arrival in Tehran. Iran's state media posted pictures and footage of Vakili Rad upon his arrival in Tehran, where he was received with flowers from Parliament Member, Kazem Jalili, and Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister, Hassan Ghashgavi.

## 3. Question on the jailing of critics of the President



Majid Tavakoli



Ali Tajernia

**Question:** In your previous interviews you have always said that Iran is a free country. At the time I'm speaking to you, there are at least five people inside Iranian prisons on the charge of "insulting the President," in other words, criticizing you. Why should your critics stay in prison?

### Background

- Student activist Bahareh Hedayat was sentenced to five years in prison for "assembly and collusion against the regime," to two years in prison for "insulting the Supreme Leader," and to six months in prison for "insulting the President."

- Three student activists, Majid Tavakoli, Ehsan Mansouri, and Ahmad Ghassaban were tried in a closed-session trial for "publishing and distributing student publications in which sanctities and the President have been insulted."

- Former Parliament Member Ali Tajernia was sentenced to five years in prison for "assembly and collusion with the intent to disrupt public security," and to one year in prison for "propagating activities against

Bahareh Hedayat



Heshmatollah Tabarzadi



Ali Malihi



the regime,” and to 74 lashes for “insulting the country’s authorities (the President and his cabinet).”

- Journalist and member of Tahkim-e Vahdat Alumni Association, Ali Malihi was sentenced to four years in prison for “acting against national security,” and payment of a cash fine for “insulting the president.”
- Imprisoned political activist Heshmatollah Tabarzadi faces four charges: “propaganda against the state,” “gathering and colluding against national security,” “insulting the Supreme Leader and President,” and “insulting Islam.”

#### 4. Question on the three jailed American hikers



Josh Fattal, Sara Shourd and Shane Bauer

Questions regarding jailed American hikers:

**4a. Three Americans, who were arrested on 31 July 2009 in Iran, are still in detention after more than one year. Iranian authorities claim they are spies. Why don’t you take them to court and put them on trial? If you have any evidence that they are not just hikers, why you don’t you hold a free trial and show your evidence to the world?**

**4b. Why don’t they have access to their lawyer and why can’t they access their families? You might know that Sara Shourd has a dangerous health problem requiring treatment she has been denied. Do you approve of these irregularities? And if not, why haven’t you used your authority as President to send notice to the Iranian Judiciary and to ask them to comply with the law?**

**4c. A year after their arrest, why doesn’t the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence transfer the case to the Iranian Judiciary? The Iranian Ministry of Intelligence is in charge of the investigation and is under your control. Why haven’t you asked them to accelerate the investigation process and to send the case to court, or the Judiciary?**

**4d. What if something happens to any of the three Americans, like many Iranians who have lost their lives inside Iranian prisons, including the blogger Omid Reza Mirsayafi, who died in 2006 at Evin prison due to lack of medical attention? Would you take responsibility or would you say it was out of your hands?**

## Background:

### The Three American hikers:

Nora Shourd, mother of American hiker Sarah Shourd, announced to the media recently that in a surprise telephone call her daughter said her health has deteriorated and that she needs immediate medical attention, which is being denied to her. Families of the American prisoners in Iran are trying to pursue the issue with the United Nations.

Nora Shourd told a local television station that her daughter is still kept in solitary confinement. “This is extremely inhumane,” she said. Sarah Shourd, Josh Fattal, and Shane Bauer have been in prison for more than a year for illegally crossing the border into Iran, something the three hikers say was accidental.

Though their families have hired an attorney for them since last November, the three UC Berkeley graduates have not yet been able to meet with him. During the past year, security organizations have evaded sending the case to the Iranian Judiciary, claiming that the case file is still incomplete. There has been growing concern about the health and conditions of prisoners inside Evin prison during recent weeks. Refuting charges such as espionage in his clients’ case, the three Americans’ lawyer, Massoud Shafie, said, “I have spoken with the case judge and the charge in the case is specifically “illegal border crossing.” We do not have any new laws for illegal border crossing and therefore, the old process will have to be observed in which a cash penalty is stipulated.” Shafie also said that it is very rare that an individual receives imprisonment as punishment for illegal entry. He added, “Only if the issue [of illegal border crossing] is related to another charge, may they receive imprisonment as punishment, and usually, such issues are dealt with through cash penalties. But the main point here is that the charge of espionage is being used inappropriately in this case. Illegal crossing is punished by cash penalties.”

Iranian authorities have so far shown no reaction to questions about Sarah Shourd’s health. The three hikers have only been able to make a few telephone calls over the past year. In addition to feeling depressed due to her solitary confinement, Sarah Shourd has reported a lump in her breast recently.

## 5. Question on media censorship / shutdown of critical newspapers



Mohammad Ali Ramin

**Question:** You claim Iran is a free country and at the same time the Ministry of Culture has shut down major newspapers that have been critical of your policies, including Etemad Melli, Etemad, Hayat-e No, and Kargozaran. Is the country free only for your supporters?

## Background

During the administration of Ahmadinejad, the Iranian press has experienced an even worse time with censorship than before. Not only have many newspapers, publications, and websites been banned, but many of their principals have been prosecuted based on charges brought against them by Ahmadinejad’s cabinet members. Mohammad Ali Ramin, Iran’s Deputy Minister of Culture for Press is one of the most extremist thinkers in his cabinet, said to be the influencing force behind Ahmadinejad’s ideas on the Holocaust. In ad-

dition, immediately after last year's post-election protests, hundreds of journalists and bloggers were rounded up, arrested, imprisoned, and tortured for fake confessions, and tried for espionage and actions against national security. Dozens of Iranian journalists are in prison or have had to flee the country to seek refuge outside Iran. Intelligence and security agents and representatives from the Ministry of Culture now routinely dictate the content and topics the press is allowed to cover and report. The list of banned newspapers is long, but a few notable papers include: *Etemad Melli*, *Hayat-e No*, *Etemad*, *Kargozaran*, *Tehran Emruz*, *Roozgar*, *Arya*, *Shargh*, *Hammihan*, *Shahrvand-e Emruz*, *Zanan Magazine*, *Madreseh*, and *Irاندokht*.

## 6. Question on media censorship / jailed journalists



**Question:** You've said that Iran is a free country with free elections. Why does Iran have the highest number of journalists in prison? Have you heard the names of journalists like Bahman Ahmadi Amouee? Kayvan Samimi? Ahmad Zeid-Abadi? Hengameh Shahidi? Issa Saharkhiz? They have been sentenced to long prison sentences and bans on their journalistic activities for what they have written. How can you then claim that Iran is a free country?

### Background:

#### **Bahman Ahmadi Amouee and Jila Baniyaghoub, journalists and bloggers, imprisoned June 19, 2009**

Amouee, a contributor to reformist newspapers and the author of a blog, was arrested with his journalist wife, Zhila Bani-Yaghoub. Bani-Yaghoub, editor-in-chief of the Iranian Women's Club, a news website focusing on women's rights, has been sentenced to one year in prison and a 30-year ban from journalism work. Amouee is serving a five year prison term.

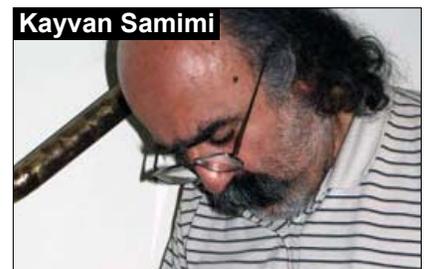
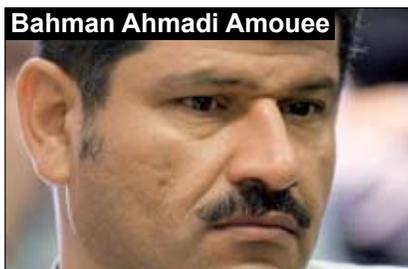
#### **Kayvan Samimi, journalist, imprisoned June 14, 2009**

Samimi, manager of the now-defunct monthly *Nameh*, is serving a six year prison term at Tehran's Evin prison.

#### **Ahmad Zeid-Abadi, freelance journalist, imprisoned June 2009**

Zeid-Abadi, who wrote a weekly column for Rooz Online, a Farsi and English language reformist news website, was arrested in Tehran in June 2009. Zeid-Abadi was also the director of the Organization of University Alumni of the Islamic Republic of Iran and a supporter of defeated presidential candidate Mehdi Karroubi.

Zeid-Abadi spent most of the first year of his detention in solitary confinement under inhumane conditions. He was transferred to the notorious Rajaei Shahr Prison in February 2010 where he is serving his six year





prison term next to smugglers and hardened criminals. In addition to a prison term, Zeid-Abadi has been sentenced to five years' exile to the town of Gonabad, and a lifetime ban on political, social, and journalistic activities, interviews or analysis, whether in verbal or written form.

### **Issa Saharkhiz, freelance journalist, imprisoned July 3, 2009**

Saharkhiz, a columnist for the reformist news websites *Rooz Online* and *Norooz*, and a founding member of the Association of Iranian Journalists, was arrested in July 2009 while traveling in northern Iran. Saharkhiz has had a long career in journalism. He worked for 15 years for *IRNA*, Iran's official news agency, and ran its New York office for part of that time. He returned to Iran in 1997 to work in Mohammad Khatami's Ministry of Islamic Guidance, in charge of domestic publications. Saharkhiz and a superior, Ahmad Bouraghani, came to be known as the architects of a period of relative freedom for the press in Iran. After Saharkhiz was forced to leave the ministry and was banned from government service in a trial. He founded a reformist newspaper, *Akhbar-e Eghtesad*, and monthly magazine, *Aftab*, both of which were eventually banned. Saharkhiz wrote articles directly critical of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader. Saharkhiz has publicly complained about his inhumane conditions inside prison where he has not received medical treatment for broken ribs he sustained during his arrest, leading to physical disabilities. Saharkhiz was sentenced to 15 months in prison and a lifetime ban on journalistic activities on 30 July 2010. He is currently at Rajaei Shahr Prison where hardened criminals are kept. Saharkhiz went on a two-week hunger strike recently to protest his inhumane prison conditions.

### **Hengameh Shahidi, blogger and journalist, imprisoned June 2009**

Hengameh Shahidi, an adviser to defeated presidential candidate Mehdi Karroubi, a blogger and contributor to reformist newspapers such as *Etemad e Melli*, was arrested on 30 June 2009. The Committee of Human Rights Reporters, a local watchdog group, reported that Shahidi spent 50 days in solitary confinement and underwent "extreme mental anguish during her interrogation."

After a brief release on bail, Shahidi was sentenced to six years and three months in prison, a sentence an appeals court quickly upheld in May 2010. She is currently at Evin prison in Tehran.

## **7. Question on persecution and prosecution of human rights defenders**



**Question: Why are human rights defenders such as Shiva Nazar Ahari and Nasrin Sotoudeh detained and prosecuted? They are usually charged with «acting against national security.» How can defending human rights in Iran endanger the country's national security?**



**Shiva Nazar Ahari** is a human rights activist and editor of the *Committee of Human Rights Reporters* website. She was arrested on 14 June 2009 in her office. After spending 102 days in detention, she was released on 23 September 2009 on \$200,000 bail. She spent 33 days of her detention in solitary confinement. She was arrested for the second time on 20 December 2009, and has remained in prison without furlough on charges of “propagation against the regime through cooperation with *CHRR*’s website,” and “actions against national security through participation in gatherings on 4 November 2009 and 7 December 2009.” Recently, Nazar Ahari, her family and her lawyer discovered that she was also charged with *moharebeh*, enmity with God. Nazar Ahari has denied participation in the mentioned gatherings and stated she was working during both events.

**The second session of her trial is said to be scheduled for 4 September 2010.** Shiva Nazar Ahari’s lawyer has expressed concern about his client’s upcoming trial considering the heavy charge of *moharebeh* in her case, a charge which could bring Nazar Ahari the death sentence.

Since last year’s elections, several other members of the *Committee of Human Rights Reporters (CHRR)* have also been arrested and released later on bail.

Last October, under pressure from security forces, **Kouhyar Goudarzi**, an aerospace student at Sharif Industrial University, was expelled.

The journalist and human rights activist was formerly a member of the *Sharif University Islamic Students Association*, an editor for the *Committee of Human Rights Reporters*, a producer for *Radio Zamaneh*, a member of *The Human Rights Committee of Advar-e Tahkim-e Vahdat Alumni Association (Office to Foster Unity)*, and a member of the Allameh Faction of the Association. Goudarzi, who is faced with heavy charges of “*moharebeh*, enmity with God,” and “actions against national security through relations with foreign organizations,” has not been allowed any furlough, and has gone on hunger strikes to protest prison conditions twice. Goudarzi’s charges could bring him the death sentence.

**Rassoul Badaghi**, a former member of the *Human Rights Activists in Iran* organization and member of the *Iranian Teachers’ Association*, is currently at Ward 6 of Rajaei Shahr Prison. Badaghi has been sentenced to six years in prison and a five years’ ban on partisan activities. Badaghi is also a member of the *Unity Council for Democracy and Human Rights in Iran*.

His lawyer, Massoud Shafie told *the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran* that his client was sentenced at Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Courts with Judge Salavati presiding.

“My client has been sentenced to five years in prison for ‘attending gatherings with the intent to disrupt national security,’ and one year for ‘propagating against the regime,’ and a five-year ban on participating in political parties and groups,” said Rassoul Badaghi’s lawyer, Massoud Shafie.

## 8. Question on allegations of forced confessions



**Question:** How do you respond to allegations by former prisoners that the Iranian Intelligence Ministry forced them to make false confessions which were broadcast on Iran's national TV? What have you done to stop this?

### Background:

**Maziar Bahari**, an Iranian-Canadian journalist, spent three months in prison after the Iranian election in 2009. Bahari, who made confessions under duress, told the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran that his taped confession was a fabricated show, coordinated by Iranian state television and certain press outlets close to the Iranian government.

“Three teams of reporters came into the prison, *Press TV*, *IRIB*'s Persian service, and *Fars News Agency*... the interrogator said, ‘We will give some of the footage from your confession to be broadcast on the 8:30 program.’ During the confessions, the *IRIB* team members talked to the interrogators...they were completely coordinated. For example, the interrogator would hand them a piece of paper and would say: make sure you ask this question, too,” said Bahari.

Bahari told the Campaign that when he told his interrogator that he would not be able to remember all the questions and answers he was supposed to repeat before the camera, his interrogator said, “‘In order to make it easier [for you], we will convert the text of your confessions into questions and answers. Therefore, the reporters would ask these questions and you would answer them.’ Therefore each of the three reporters had a set of questions and I gave the answers I was supposed to give. One was a reporter from the *IRIB* Persian service, one was a reporter from the English language *Press TV*, and the other was a reporter from *Fars News Agency*. All three of them and I were reading from a script. The *IRIB* reporters read the interrogator's questions. When I made a mistake, just like an interrogator, the reporter would say ‘It's better if you say it this way.’”

## 9. Question on trials behind closed doors



**Do you agree with holding trials behind closed doors? If your Intelligence Ministry is confident that its claims against political prisoners are valid, why do they force them to appear on camera while they are in detention and talk against themselves? As you know, almost all of those who have confessed to their alleged wrongdoings while in prison, have later said those confessions were made under pressure. Why don't you stop your Intelligence Ministry from committing such gross violations of human rights?**

**- And if you don't agree what have you done to stop this?**

## Background:

The Iranian state-controlled radio and television, *Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB)*, has acted as an arm of intelligence and security agencies implicated in gross human rights violations since the disputed presidential election of June 2009.

The International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran's research and investigations into the content of programs produced and broadcast by the *IRIB* reveal a close working relationship between intelligence and judiciary officials in charge of prosecuting post-election detainees, such as in the case of Maziar Bahari, a *Newsweek* journalist who was detained last year. (See background information on Question 8.)

The Campaign's research indicates that *IRIB* producers worked hand in hand with interrogators, intelligence officials, and judiciary officials to obtain and film false confessions. Through heavily edited segments, scenarios were propagated, promoted by the Intelligence Ministry, to conceal human rights violations and make unfounded allegations against dissidents.

A former IRGC commander and the chief editor of a reformist website, Hamzeh Karami has recently published an open letter to the Iranian Prosecutor General, in which he talks about torture during his interrogation sessions in the more than a year he spent at Evin Prison after the June 2009 elections.

Karami was detained following the June 2009 Iranian presidential election and was tortured into making a false confession of illicit sexual relations with relatives of opposition Green movement leaders. "They put my head in a dirty toilet 20 times to make me give a false confession. When I screamed 'Ya Allah' they said, 'We are your God today and will do to you whatever we want.'" In the forced confession he gave at the Tehran mass trial last August, Karami implicated Mehdi Hashemi, the son of Hashemi Rafsanjani, claiming that Hashemi had been involved in fraud and manipulation of the Presidential election.

## 10. Question on stoning



**Question: Do you agree with stoning? What is your personal opinion about stoning?**

**- And if you don't agree what have you done to stop this?**

## Background

The Islamic Penal Code (IPC) requires the punishment of stoning for married persons accused of adultery. The following are some observations on the law:

□ According to Iranian law, adultery shall be punishable by stoning if it is committed by a married man or woman who has access to their wife or husband for sexual intercourse. If adultery is proven by his/her confession, then at the time of stoning the first stone will be thrown by the *Sharia* judge and then by others. If the adultery is proven by the testimony of witnesses (only male witnesses' testimony is admissible), then the first stone will be thrown by the witnesses, followed by the *Sharia* judge, and then others (Articles 83 and 99 of IPC).

- ❑ During this punishment, it is deemed appropriate for the *Sharia* Judge to inform people about the stoning time and date. It is necessary for a group of believers, no fewer than three, to be present during the stoning (Article 101 of IPC).
- ❑ The stoning of an adulterer or adulteress shall be carried out while each is placed in a hole and covered with soil, he up to his waist and she up to a line above her breasts (Article 102 of IPC).
- ❑ The size of the stone used in stoning shall not be too large to kill the convict by one or two throws and at the same time shall not be too small not to be considered a stone (Article 104 of IPC).
- ❑ From 2006-2008 we know of six cases of stoning being implemented. Currently we have a list of ten prisoners sentenced to stoning and being held in Iranian prisons: three men and seven women.

The six cases of stoning carried out between 2006-2008 all took place in secret. The authorities not only hide the implementation of sentences from the general public, they also avoid any public admission that such sentences are issued and implemented. For example, during the television program aired recently on Iranian TV, in which Sakineh Mohammadi was brought on to make “confessions,” the entire program did not mention the word “stoning” even once and did not admit the international outcry is over the practice of stoning.

## 11. Question on freedom of speech in Iran



**Question: This is what Ali Motahari, the conservative Member of Parliament, says about the situation of freedom of speech in Iran:**

**“Right now, if you criticize high-ranking officials of the government, it won’t get published. Whichever newspaper wants to publish this criticism will be banned or if a website wishes to publish this kind of talk, it will get into trouble. For the past several months, none of the interviews I have done have been published in full.”**

**“Wherever there is the probability that the President or his cabinet might feel insulted, the content is taken out. We ask ‘Why did you take it out?’ They say, ‘If we print it, they’ll ban our newspaper.’ Is this how you wish us to prevent over evil? Unfortunately, the atmosphere is closed. There is an atmosphere of suffocation. Up until a year ago, things could be said more freely, but now the circumstances have changed.”**

**Why can’t you tolerate your critics?**

## Background:

Dozens of newspapers and websites have been banned since Mahmoud Ahmadinejad came into office. Hundreds of Iranian journalists and bloggers have been arrested during the same time, most of them after Ahmadinejad's second election victory. Hundreds of university students who protested the election results were arrested, many of them imprisoned with long prison terms, exiles, and deprivation from education. Dozens of university professors and lecturers have been forced into early retirement or dismissed because of their independence of thought. Ahmadinejad's Ministry of Intelligence, Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology, and Ministry of Education have been instrumental in silencing those critical of the government and persecuting, interrogating, torturing, dismissing, and banning intellectuals, artists, journalists, activists, university students, faculty members, and union activists.

## 12. Question on violations of the right to education



**Over the past 4 years dozens of students have been denied pursuing higher education because of their political activities at universities. Some of them who have tried to object to the decision made by your Ministry of Science and Technology have been sent to prison. Is this not a form of educational apartheid, and are you prepared to end this practice?**

## Background

The right to education is an internationally recognized right and is explicitly enshrined in Iran's constitution. However, since 1980, when the Supreme Council for the Cultural Revolution was formed, it has been extensively violated.

Since Mahmoud Ahmadinejad took office in 2005, these violations have considerably increased with a coordinated assault by the Ministry of Science, Intelligence Ministry, and the Judiciary, aimed at depriving student activists from continuing their higher education.

Since fall 2006, disciplinary committees on university campuses have routinely summoned dissident students and sentenced them to suspension terms. The increasing use of such committees to deprive students of their right to education—in violation of Iran's international legal obligations—is aimed at intimidating the student body throughout the country. Suspension sentences ranging from one to three semesters have been issued.

In many cases, university officials did not even honor their own regulations and issued sentences in absentia without providing students a chance to defend themselves or become aware of the reason for their suspension.

During the last five years, the regime has systematically dismissed students they deem 'dangerous'. According to reports by human rights activists, in the last year alone close to one thousand students were banned from education through this method.

### 13. Question on issues raised by the UN's Human Rights Council



**Do you accept the universality of human rights as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to which Iran is a signatory? And if so, is this not inconsistent with Iran's rejection of about 30 recommendations made by the UN's Human Rights Council last June?**

#### **Background:**

In June 2009, Mohammad Javad Larijani, Secretary-General of the High Council for Human Rights in Iran, and Head of the Iranian delegation to the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva, said that about 30 of the recommendations made to Iran during the June session of the UNHRC session in Geneva were rejected by the Iranian delegation because they were “against Iranian laws,” or “because they were disproportionate or contained poor language.” He then stated cases such as Iran's refusal to join the United Nations Convention Against Torture, stating that **Iran doesn't join the Convention because there are types of punishment in Iran that are considered as torture in the Convention.** He added that torture is prohibited in Iran and this is expressed in the Iranian Constitution.

Contrary to Larijani's statements, there were cases which the Iranian delegation did not accept, deflecting blame by criticizing human rights violations in other countries thereby refusing to address the raised points. At one point, the Head of the Session reminded Larijani that the meeting was to review Iran's report, not other countries. Those cases included prison torture, specifically, the events that took place at Kahrizak Detention Center, arbitrary and secret executions (such as the execution of Farzad Kamangar), long-term sentences after show trials (such as Jila Baniyaghoub's 30 year ban from journalism), the refusal to grant congregation permits to political parties and opposition groups, and others. Larijani reiterated the government's position that the murder of Neda Agha Soltan was committed by foreign agents, stating this claim without any comprehensive investigation into her murder or publication of the results of any such investigations. Many of the points raised in recommendations from other countries are important components of the Iranian Constitution and international commitments of the Iranian government, and are routinely violated by the Islamic Republic of Iran. The issues raised by member countries of the UN Human Rights Council did not have poor language, nor were they against the Iranian Constitution, but simply encapsulated the widespread and systematic violations of human rights in Iran, information Larijani tried to conceal during all his speeches, dodging accountability and instead criticizing the situation of human rights in other countries.

**Larijani said that the main problem is that member countries “view some of our punishments as torture,” such as “flogging.”** Disregarding the fact that Larijani claims that flogging is a legitimate form of punishment and not torture, there are numerous other “punishments” Iran should be held accountable for. **“Punishments” such as solitary confinement, stoning, the amputation of arms and legs, isolation of prisoners from the outside world including refusing them access to their families, lawyers, and fresh air, and psychological pressure for the extraction of false confessions. Iran's accession to the UN Convention Against Torture would make Iran accountable in these areas, despite attempts to redefine methods of torture as “punishment.”**

Larijani considers the criticism of “Western countries” as their support for what he calls the “election sedition.” What he calls the “election sedition” are the instances of widespread violations of human rights in the

past year, which aside from the related political issues, have never been addressed by Iranian authorities. The violators, whether they carried out or issued orders, have never been held accountable by the Iranian Judiciary for their actions. Politicizing the criticism against the widespread violations of human rights in no way reduces the responsibility of the Iranian judicial authorities for giving immunity to those who ordered and carried out post-election violence.

#### 14. Question on criticism of Iran's human rights record by foreign governments and international rights groups



**Question: You defend your country's human rights record. But what do you think about the documented criticism of Iran's human rights abuses by many foreign governments and international rights groups since 1984?**

#### Background

During the June 2010 United Nations Human Rights Council Session in Geneva, many governments and human rights organizations accused Iran of being duplicitous about its record, promising cooperation with the council over human rights issues while busily subverting many of them at home — including freedom of religion, expression and assembly and an independent judiciary.

Amnesty International said the Iranian government was taking aim at students, journalists, political activists, trade unionists, human rights defenders and members of ethnic and religious minorities.

“Executions have been carried out for politically motivated reasons and used to send a chilling message to those who would demonstrate,” the organization said in a statement. “These human rights violations appear to be committed by state officials with total impunity.”

The head of the Iranian delegation to the UN Human Rights Council, Mohammad Javad Larijani denied accusations that special United Nations rapporteurs investigating issues like torture had been denied access to Iran, saying they had an open invitation. He said Iran was held to a standard out of alignment with its Islamic culture.

“We are not a secular system, we are not a liberal system; we are perhaps the only democracy, the greatest democracy in the Middle East,” Larijani said in comments broadcast live via the Internet from Geneva.

(Also see background information on Question 13.)

## 15. Questions on prisoners who died during their detention

Omid Reza Mirsayafi



Zahra Kazemi



**Question:** During the past few years several prisoners have died inside prisons, such as the blogger Omid Reza Mirsayafi in January 2008 and more recently four post-election protesters at Kahrizak prison. Have you done anything to address ill-treatment and torture inside prisons?

### Background

**Omid Reza Mirsayafi:** On 18 March, 29-year-old blogger Omidreza Mirsayafi died while in Tehran's Evin prison. According to an account by Hesam Firoozi, a physician also imprisoned in Evin, Mirsayafi had taken extra doses of his medication. Firoozi's account, as provided by the group Human Rights Activists in Iran, notes that Mirsayafi suffered from serious depression. Firoozi was present during the initial stages of Mirsayafi's treatment inside the prison's medical clinic and reported that prison doctors failed to provide proper care by not sending him immediately to a hospital to save his life. Mirsayafi was prosecuted solely for his opinions expressed in his private blog. He was charged with insulting authorities and sentenced to two years and six months in prison.

**Zahra Kazemi:** Iranian-Canadian freelance photojournalist Zahra Kazemi died while a prisoner at Evin prison on 11 July 2003, almost three weeks after she was arrested for taking pictures outside the prison during a student protest in Tehran. Two days later, it was reported that Kazemi had died in hospital, after suffering a stroke during her interrogations. Two days later, in a contradictory statement, it was said that she had fallen, hitting her head on a hard object. On 16 July 16 2003, Mohammad Ali Abtahi, Iran's then vice-president, conceded that Kazemi had died as a result of being beaten.

Later, the Iranian government would charge an Iranian security agent in Kazemi's death. He was acquitted of a charge of "involuntary murder." In July 2004, Iran's judiciary said the head injuries that killed Kazemi had come as a result of an "accident."

**The four detainees who died inside Kahrizak Detention Center:** Hundreds of protesters were arrested during post-election events in Iran. More than 100 detainees were transferred to Kahrizak Detention Center. Witnesses and reports indicate widespread and consistent beating, torture, and violent mistreatment of detainees occurred at the sub-standard detention center. A 2009 investigation by the Iranian Parliament indicated that the order to send those detained on 9 July 2009 to the Kahrizak facility was issued by the then Tehran Prosecutor, Saeed Mortazavi. The violent treatment of the detainees by officers, the sub-standard hygiene of the facility, the physical abuse of prisoners by authorities, and criminal cellmates under orders from prison authorities caused the deaths of at least four young detainees Mohsen Rouholamini, Amir Javadifar, Mohammad Kamrani, and Ramin Aghazadeh. The young medical doctor who was in charge of the Kahrizak Detention Center's Infirmary, was later found dead under mysterious circumstances.

## 16. Question on the discrimination against members of Iran's Baha'i community



**Question: Do people with Baha'i faith have the same rights as other Iranians? If so, why are Baha'is systematically refused the right to higher education?**

### Background

- ❑ Baha'is are banned from working in government offices.
- ❑ They are not allowed to study at university.
- ❑ Iranian inheritance laws do not apply to Baha'is
- ❑ Baha'i business owners are often denied a license to set up shop.
- ❑ Baha'i cemeteries have been desecrated (in Najafabad, Isfahan, Borujerd, Yazd, [Semnan](#), [Najafabad](#), [Vilashahr](#), [Abadan](#), [Khorramshahr](#), [Sangsar](#), Mashhad, and Damavand)Hateful graffiti on Baha'i houses and shops (in Abadeh)
- ❑ Arrests, detention, interrogation, and punishment of Baha'is in several cities for "propagating and spreading Baha'ism" and "propagation on behalf of an organization that is anti-Islamic."
- ❑ Noticeable increase in the persecution of Baha'is since the election of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.
- ❑ Destruction of properties of Baha'i residents (in Ivel, Mazanderan)

Before his death last year, Iran's Grand Ayatollah Hussein Ali Montazeri, the most senior authority on Shia Islam, issued a fatwa calling on the Iranian government to grant followers of the religion basic civil and political rights.

Mohammed Javad Larijani, head of the Human Rights Council of the Iranian Judiciary, defends court action against the religious group.

"Baha'is have to answer to the courts in Iran because they engaged in cult-type activities contrary to the most basic human rights of the people," Larijani told the United Nations Human Rights Council.



## Interviewers and Human Rights Issues Discussed

Reviewed by the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran

Interviewer	American Hikers	Public Protests	Freedom of speech	Police Crackdown	Prisoners	Other
 G. Stephanopoulos ABC, May 4 '10	*					
 Kim Bildsoe Dutch TV, Jan 8 '10		*	*	*		
 Jon Snow Channel 4 UK, Dec 23 '09			*	*	*	
 Diane Sawyer ABC, Dec 22 '09	*	*	*	*	*	
 Katie Couric CBS, Sept 29 '09		*		*		
 Charlie Rose PBS, Sept 28 '09		*	*	*	*	
 Larry King CNN, Sep 26 '09		*	*	*		
 Christiane Amanpour CNN, June 14 '09		*				
 Amy Goodman Democracy Now, Sep 28 '08						*
 Larry King CNN, Sep 23 '08						*
 Ann Curry NBC, Sep 18 '08		*		*	*	
 Scott Pelley 60 Min, Sep 20 '07						*

## Appendix

### Iranian Officials' Replies to Human Rights Oriented Questions in Previous Interviews



### Ahmadinejad Interview with George Stephanopoulos on ABC's 'Good Morning America' May 4, 2010

They first spoke about relations between Obama, Secretary Clinton, and Iran and the nuclear issue. This portion was about the American hikers:

□ STEPHANOPOULOS: Three American hikers have been imprisoned in Iran since last July 31. No representation. No charges brought against them. Their parents made a direct plea to you to bring them here to the United States on your visit. Did you consider it at all?

■ AHMADINEJAD: Every country has very strict rules to control its borders. If anyone illegally entered U.S. borders, do you think the U.S. Government will let them go freely? Not bother them? Can anyone enter the borders illegally?

□ STEPHANOPOULOS: They would be allowed to have representation. They would be charged.

■ AHMADINEJAD: Allow me. Can anybody enter the borders? No, they can't. These three individuals entered our borders illegally. They have confessed to that. They crossed our border. Now, they're being handled by our judicial system and the judicial system will review their crimes according to the law. We have laws. There's a due process of law that is being observed. The judicial system in Iran is independent of political influence. It's under the influence of judicial laws. Now, I'd like to ask you. There's seven Iranians right now in prisons in the United States. These seven Iranians did not cross American borders illegally. They had official visas another country, a third country. Either for pilgrimage or for business or trade or for fun. Now, the U.S. Intelligence Service illegally arrested them in a third country and brought them to the United States. There is no clear crime stated. They don't have a lawyer. Their families haven't been able to visit them. Do you think this is fine? Do you think this is any respect for human rights? But there's three Americans who've crossed our border. First of all, why did they do that? What was their reason? They have to give a clear response to the judge.

□ ST: They [American hikers] say they got lost.

■ AH: They have to tell the judge exactly why they crossed the border. How do you know they got lost? Were you there? You were not there to see that they were lost.

□ **ST: I told you that's what they said.**

■ AH: Your government is giving you news --

□ **ST: It's a very simple question. Will you allow them access to the outside world?**

■ AH: -- and you accept it. You and I can't judge. It's the judge in Iran that will decide. They have to provide proof and evidence to the judge in Iran that shows that they lost their way or made a mistake.

□ **ST: But there's no lawyer.**

■ AH: No, allow me, when the time comes they will have a lawyer.

□ **ST: They've been in prison since July 31.**

■ AH: I'm not happy when some people are behind bars whether it be in Iran or the United States. I'm unhappy. But I'd like to ask you, do you think the U.S. Government really is concerned about Americans abroad--

□ **ST: Yes.**

■ AH: --or in Iran? Are they really concerned for these three people? Do you know how many American soldiers have been killed in Iraq? If someone is concerned about his own people, he wouldn't enter them into wars. Why did the U.S. Government involve American troops in the war? Do you know how many American soldiers have been killed in Iraq and Afghanistan? They are Americans too. Why were they killed? For what reason? What was the goal? Which goal has come to be true? They should declare that "our goal has been this and that and so far we have made so much advance. We were supposed to reach this point and we have advanced this much." What purpose did it serve? Which goal was even material (UNINTEL)? If the U.S. Government can say, is Afghanistan any more secure or less secure? The insecurity has now spread--

□ **ST: That issue is being debate in the United States.**

■ AH: -- even on security has infiltrated into Pakistan.

□ **ST: I just have a very simple question. Will you allow these hikers to see their families or not?**

■ AH: It's in the hands of the judge but I will make recommendations to the judge but it's up to him to decide.

□ **ST: What is that recommendation?**

■ AH: My recommendation would be that he should cooperate, help them. But the judge is not under my influence.

□ **ST: To see the families? To allow the families--**

■ AH: --rule the judge--

□ **ST: Can-- but you-- you can recommend that. Will you recommend that the family be allowed to see their--**

■ AH: Generally I will recommend that he render maximum cooperation but the judge is not under my influence. And I'd also like to ask the government of the United States who have been illegally arrested in other countries should have access to lawyers and their families be able to visit them. This is a humane request.

<http://abcnews.go.com/GMA/transcript-george-stephanopoulos-interviews-iranian-president-mahmoud-ahmadinejad/story?id=10558442>



## Ahmadinejad's Interview with Kim Bildsoe of Dutch TV January 8, 2010

■ **KIM BILDSOE:** There has been protestors on the street, some have called them also lately, traitors, that they don't understand Iran. Do you think that the young people on the street, making trouble some say, that they are traitors?

■ **AHMADINEJAD:** We should not mix things up. Elections in Iran are very free. It is the highest conceivable degree of freedom. We don't have a party based system. It is a free government, very close to the people. We had a very high turnout at the elections. 85%, that's unique. Then there were some who protested. That's very natural

■ **KB:** Do you think that, as you see it, there is the freedom for young people for the people who want to express their feeling in iran today, that is fair and just? And the people that are saying we are being oppressed by the police by the secret police, that they are wrong?

■ **MA:** I said there is law and order in Iran. Wouldn't the police in Denmark interfere when somebody passes a red light on the street? Wouldn't the police do that? The police must maintain peace and order. But the police acts within the boundaries of the law. and the Courts keep an eye on the police. Everybody must obey the law. Protests also have to happen within the limits of the law. You have probably seen the demonstrations in Copenhagen the day before yesterday. Why did the police take action against the demonstrators? Tear gas, clubs, why did they do that? That's because there is law and order in Denmark. People are free to protest, but they have to respect the law. They must. What happened in Copenhagen also was what happened in Tehran...there is police, law, courts, and the courts take care of complaints. Our complaint system is designed very well. There are four courts of appeal. So the chance of a failure of justice is very small. Because we have four courts of appeal. That is a thorough process. If some are swayed by emotion, and do some things or an authority makes a mistake -- the courts have to take care of it. Everybody is equal under the law.

Part 1: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8z81GVH11\\_I](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8z81GVH11_I)

Part 2: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5aJli5XcOVI>

Part 3: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TCLSpaUmUdk>

Part 4: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=15NwDX7fEhQ>



## Ahmadinejad's Interview with Channel 4 of England's December 23, 2009

■ **JON SNOW:** There have been disturbances there has been awful scenes of violence on the streets and that has disturbed people inside and outside Iran. That makes it difficult to extend hand doesn't it?

■ **AHMADINEJAD:** We are facing same problems here. While the US has a military build up in Afghanistan and killing our brothers in that country. At same time the US is supporting killing of Palestinians, and they extend the resolutions and sanctions.

Worse than that the American police beat people, they arrest people and use batons and tear gas against people...”

□ JS: **“Well, two wrongs don’t make right do they Mr. President? The Basij here, and we have this firsthand from a member of the Basij, he says they were given the permissions to go in and use no restraint and attack people who disagree with you. Women, men were hit with batons – and some were killed.**

■ AH: In my opinion you have access to some information which I don’t know.

□ JS: **Well we have spoken to a Basij who told us what orders they were given.**

■ AH: With whom did you talk to?

□ JS: **We spoke with a member of the Basij who has now run from Iran.**

■ AH: Clearly this source of information must be very exact. I think it is not correct to judge in this way. In our country the law prevails.

□ JS: **But you can see videos Mr President. You’ve scene the pictures of what the Basij were doing and what the Revolutionary Guard were doing. And what he has seen too is the beating and the raping of men and women in detention.**

■ AH: Did you see all of these things on the pictures?

□ JS: **We saw all of the things in the streets – of course we do not get the stories of what happened in the containers where people were being detained.**

■ AH: There have been clashes amongst some people – how can you find out if he was Basij or another person? Let me repeat that. In my country the law prevails.

□ JS: **You deny that the Basij beat up these people?**

■ AH: No, we are not concerned with these things as you claim. The law prevails. Some people may violate the law in any place anywhere. And maybe they have not observed and respected the law during demonstrations or protests they may have participated in illegal demonstrations. Or they might get involved in clashes whether they are ordinary people or from among the Asians.... The law will certainly investigate. Iran is a free country. Do you believe that Iran should be like West? We have freedom in Iran – people are free to express their views. They can also cry for their rights...you are making a mistake....

□ JS: **But you have sent journalists out of the country....**

■ AH: You are making a mistake. And the Western politicians think something happening in Iran and Iran has become weakened. That is a mistake. They do not know Iran. The people of Iran are united and they would certainly defend rights and interests. They would protect their independence. There are different views that exist in this country. There are differences of opinion there are rivals, competitors and they are serious. But the majority of the nation is united and they are determined to protect their independence.

□ JS: **But, Mr President you contrast today....**

■ AH: You can see the scenes on the streets of London where people are being beaten by British police.

□ JS: **But you can contrast today in Iran with even two years ago: there were many foreign journalists here, there was much for freedom – people could watch what ever they wanted on the Internet or whatever. Now, for example any broadcast or Internet appearance by the BBC is jammed, there are no, or very few foreign correspondents. And it is very difficult now to report on....**

■ AH: Who is the BBC owned by? Is it a state owned company or private?

■ **JS: It is a state-owned, regulated company which has independence from the government — we have to pay individually to the BBC to fund it.**

■ AH: Alright. How can a government institution or state-owned company be independent from the policy of the government? Do you know anywhere in the world where the BBC has acted against the policies of the government? The BBC is the instrument of British government foreign policy and the British government has shown that it is against and hostile to our nation. They have shown that for about 100 years.

■ **JS: But is that the same for example with Newsweek? Take Maziar Bahari who worked for Newsweek. He gets thrown into jail, he is beaten in jail, he is tortured in jail, he has told me that himself.**

■ AH: And you have accepted his claims?

■ **JS: He is a man I have known for a long time — I trust him....**

■ AH: People say a lot of things. Do you think freedom prevails in US? And do you think the media in the US is free? Why aren't people allowed to have demonstrations against the Zionists? Do you think all the media in the US I against the Palestinians? They are clear facts. We are not going to deceive each other – they are political and media games. And that period is over. It will have not effect in the world. They offer interpretations based on some lies. That period is over we should focus on realities and we should talk to each other based on those realities, based on the law. And I think that is a mistake made by the political politicians in the West. They make the media themselves – they create them and they say lies. And based on those lies they take political positions. And at the same time they insist that others should believe them.

■ **JS: Let's take a story in The Times [of London this morning. They say that bin Laden's wife lives here in Iran — is that true? Is that a lie or is that true? That one of Bin Laden's wives lives here in a compound outside Tehran with some family. Is that true or false?"]**

■ AH: Why should it be in London? How did they receive that information? Let me...

■ **JS: But you haven't answered me yes or no, Mr President. However they found out this information, the questions is: is it true or is it false?**

■ MA: Let me tell you something else which is more important. Because there are many things like that — they are producing these things everyday. Because this is the instrument to control the world, they create these things everyday and wise people would never waste time answering all these things.

■ **JS: How do you change that?**

■ MA: Statesmen in the UK and the US must accept the realities in the world. The period of influence in the environment through the media campaigns is over. And we know everything about these tactics and policies. We would never be deceived by media campaigns. It has no value to us. We will never base our time on that. For example, about Neda Agha-Soltan. What has the BBC done about her? They created a false scenario based on political campaigns and it has been proven to us. That was a lie...

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F6fldIg-Ui0>



# CBS

## Katie Couric's Interview with Ahmadinejad - CBS Evening News September 29, 2009

**KC:** During and after the presidential election, Mr. President, thousands of opposition supporters and journalists were arrested, badly beaten, and tortured. One woman, 27 year old Neda, as you know, was shot to death while protesting and her death was captured on a cell phone camera. Here is a shot of that, cell phone picture, which I'm sure you've seen. What would you say to her family?

**AH:** We are very sorry that one of our fellow citizens has been killed, as a victim of an agitational circumstance. An agitation that was carried with the support of some American politicians, the Voice of America, the BBC, that actually promoted the agitations.

**KC:** Do you really think so little of your citizens that they can be manipulated and brainwashed by Americans and the UK?

**AH:** No that is not what I'm saying, but I do say that some agitations from outside were there. I mean there are plentiful documents pointing to that. Regrettably one of our citizens lost her life.

**KC:** One?

**AH:** No! I'm referring to the picture you showed, the person that we were talking about. But over 30 people lost their lives as a result of the situation after the elections. And our Judiciary is actually looking at the cases now. I'm confident that the perpetrators of those acts will be punished. Neda Agha Soltan was killed in the midst of chaos. Have you seen this picture?

SHOWS A PICTURE OF AN EGYPTIAN WOMAN IN GERMANY WHO WAS KILLED IN COURTROOM AND DESCRIBES DOUBLE STANDARD OF WESTERN STORIES VS STORIES IN IRAN

**KC:** Mr. President, three months after the protests, hundreds remain jailed and continue to be tortured solely for their dissenting political views. Doesn't this overt abuse of human rights discredit you within the international community?

**AH:** How do you know that they were tortured?

**KC:** Well we've read testimonies from families whose loved ones were jailed and beaten, there are account from fellow journalists who were arrested and beaten, a member of your own Parliament confirmed that a number of young people died at a prison holding protestors, the head of that prison was fired, and the documented case of the son of a political advisor who died in prison after being severely beaten. This is how we're aware of this.

**AH:** In Iran, the Judiciary is an independent body. It does not make decisions based on political circumstances, nor does it make decisions based on propaganda. It makes decisions based on the framework of law.

**KC:** So you refute this?

**AH:** Yes, the way it's said here. No it's not the way you said. There were certain officials that violated the law and the Judiciary is looking into it. And they will be punished. Anyone who violates the law should be punished it doesn't matter who it is.

**KC:** Violating the law by protesting?

■ AH: Yes, if the protests are illegal that can apply to them. The law does apply to them. We have law in our country you know, on a daily basis the number of people who are killed in the US by the police exceed those who were killed throughout the protest in Iran post elections. Just take a look across the country and you'll find higher figures.

Part 1: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mIc2fhDYG78>

Part 2: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QpOq4ofUMCg>



Charlie  
rose

## Charlie Rose Interview with Mahmoud Ahmadinejad September 28, 2009

□ CHARLIE ROSE: Tell me in your words what happened in the election in Iran, and why it resulted in so many people in the street, so many people arrested, so much talk about arrest, torture, death in prisons including children of highly respected Iranians. And are you simply going to leave it to the Judiciary as to what happens now about putting people on trial? Tell me your story of the election and aftermath.

■ AHMADINEJAD: Well you know that in Iran, elections are real elections. Really completely popular ones.

□ CR: In contrast to?

AH: Well no, these are elections not controlled by the people. you know very well what I'm saying. There are places where elections are simply a show at the end of the day. In Iran this is just not possible, you can't carry a show at that level. When the Iranian Revolution happened, Iran established a real republic, over a period of thirty years, we've had thirty national elections of various sorts. Our elections system is a popular based system, 100% of it is. Those who enforce, those who carry out the elections are from among the people. Those trusted by people in localities, in towns, in villages, people select these people. They help carry out the elections. It is done with the supervision of the people. There are actually grassroots groups that come together and supervise the elections within a framework defined by the law. And then people go to the polls. Now in the past election in this time, something new happened which did not have anything to do with our electoral system. It really had more to do by claims made by a few politicians. I want to take you back to 1384 in the Iranian calendar in the last election. If you bear with me I will tell you what I'm trying to get to. In 1384 in the Iranian calendar, the elections took place and the people elected me. Back then, the government in place was behind the person running against me with full force. Even the Ministers in the previous government went to different parts of the country to lead election campaigns for him. And this was really not common and it's not really looked at very well in Iran culturally in our political culture. The officials of the Interior Ministry took a position against me on numerous occasions in that past election. And they were the ones in charge of holding elections. Now two of the candidates said till the very of the end of first tenure of my office that there were electoral frauds that were carried out at that time. They were the ones who carried out the elections, their own friends, followers and supporters were the ones who carried out the elections. But because they didn't like the result they basically said the elections were fraudulent. Now all these politicians all managed to come to office in the past in the history of our Revolution in the same election process that was on the ground when I was elected, they became president, they became heads of state, they became parliament speakers. They thought, they were really believing, that people should simply elect them. And if people could not elect them there is probably something wrong with the system. Now all the polls that were carried out before the elections, showed the same result. Maybe a margin of one percent up or down. There were tens of polls carried out. They all showed that Ahmadinejad will win, but they couldn't accept it. They had organized forces working against...

**CR: The people in the streets who didn't accept, Grand Ayatollah Montazeri didn't accept it. There was criticism from Rafsanjani. So it wasn't just a few politicians, it was a range of people.**

**AH:** It doesn't matter, it matters that what they say has to be right.

**CR: But these are young people, sons and daughters...**

AH: It doesn't matter, that is fine. When they start architecting a situation to take control it doesn't matter what they do cannot determine what is right and wrong. There is a law and there is a truth and that defines what's right. Now a few people may not like or accept it. I ask you, what is exactly is the purpose of elections?

**CR: for the people to choose their leaders.**

**AH:** I got 25 million votes.

**CR: Serious questions were raised about that election in Iran, in your country, so much so that the Supreme Leader raised questions himself and asked for investigations, Supreme Leader. And in the end he confirmed you but there were serious questions, you can't just brush this off. There were serious questions about human rights violations of people. I'm asking you to speak to that, was there? Do you condemn it? And is it time now to be forthcoming about some of those questions?**

**AH:** Please bear with me, please do bear with me. Well Mr. Montazeri actually stood against Imam Khomeini in the early day so the Revolution.

**CR: Well many thought he would be his successor.**

**AH:** True, but it was Imam himself who put him aside. Well I mean he stands opposed to the system. He is considered as an opposition in Iran. From our viewpoint, what he says does not have any legal credibility. It's his opinion. There's a law that defines things in our country. And if we take the law out there is nothing left. When you say why the judicial system cannot or will take charge of these affairs? Well the questions is if not the judiciary than who, which institution which body is supposed to carry through with these issues? We did condemn what happened.

**CR: You condemned what.**

**AH:** Every conflict and clash that there was, some of our fellow citizens were killed, about 30 people. Most of them were actually supporters of the government. Ordinary people, who were in their stores in their cars, who were shopping, who were on their way to a party. These were people who supported the government. Even Mr Ruholamini who lost his son regrettably is one of my own friends. We're friends. However, this was a pre-staged program and it was encouraged by some people. And an effort was made to put a positive spin on an illegal act. And some British politicians and some American politicians and some media were biased into trying to turn an illegal act into a legal act and that was not right. The purpose of elections is to make sure no one goes on the streets.

**CR: The purpose of elections is to make sure no one goes on the streets?**

**AH:** Yes, because the result of elections is meant to demonstrate that the rule of the majority is what carries through. Now without elections people will have to go on the streets to decide who wins and whoever wins on that street fight will then takeover the country. and that's exactly why we have elections in order to channel the process of popular vote and decide who should lead the country and the person who wins the majority will lead the country. In the end in any election there's always a majority and a group who is in the minority. now the group in the minority can't question why they're in the minority and decide to go on the streets and break windows and set stacks on fire and even send garbage cans on fire I mean what kind of methodology is that, I would say it's kind of despicable. I have to tell you at the same time there are some politicians in Iran who think that they own Iran because they have a long record.

**CR: Are you referring to Mr. Rafsanjani?**

AH: It doesn't matter.

**□ CR: Specifically tell me what you think of Mr. Rafsanjani. Because he is a powerful Iranian, with a long history, and for 20 years he's been making the Friday speech and he was not allowed to make the speech this year.**

.....

**□ CR: What effect did all this have on you? Did it make you more powerful? Did it make you aware that you had to reach out? Did it make you angry towards Mousavi or Karroubi? You are the President of Iran who was elected and governments have recognized you, so how do you feel about all of this?**

**■ AH:** I was hoping that these things would not happen. I would have liked to see everyone work hand in hand with me to build our country. I do have my complaints of them, I really do. I mean, people vote, if people don't vote me into office I shouldn't get angry. Why should I get angry?

**□ CR: Is that what happened? They got angry because they didn't get votes?**

AH: It's nothing but that. Because the elections were free, everyone said everything they wanted to say. I mean we had free debates before the elections and in fact their campaign was 10 times stronger than mine. But people voted me into office I mean it was people's decision you cannot punish the people for the decisions they make.

....

**□ CR: Were there any rapes in prison? have you investigated that? Those accusations that came out of torture and rape and death in prison.**

**■ AH:** These were basically accusations made by Mr. Karroubi. A group of the Judiciary, within the Judiciary, had held a meeting with Mr. Karroubi and told him to offer the documents and evidence so that they could follow through. Mr. Karroubi said I got angry when they asked me for evidence and I don't have any documents. You see in Iran we don't kid around with people, with no one, no matter how senior or how regular a person anyone might be, if anyone violates the law whether inside the prisons or outside it is the responsibility of our judicial system to take care of the case based on the principles of our legal system. Now if an officer, basically there is a dereliction of duty or an officer violates the law, well that's a separate question and that needs to be dealt with by the judicial system very carefully. But in the large scheme of things, our law our culture, our religious beliefs, tell us that we really have to get to the bottom of all these cases and God willing we will.

**□ CR: Thank you very much. May I also, I know you've been asked about this on part of the Washington Post and Newsweek. Maziar Bahari, the Newsweek journalist, a lot of us in this context are concerned about him and his release.**

**■ AH:** I hope all prisoners are released, I really do hope so. I think that someone should also be concerned about the Iranian nation.

**□ CR: You're concerned about the Iranian nation? I have many questions I do not want to abuse my time.**

<http://www.charlierose.com/view/interview/10629>



## Ahmadinejad's Interview with Larry King - CNN September 26, 2009

**□ KING: Your country has, you've said, rather, that 40 million people participated in the June elections. Iran uses paper ballots. They're hand counted. Yet the Interior Ministry announced the official results less than 24 hours after the poll closed. How could you count votes so quickly?**

**■ AHMADINEJAD:** It's quite simple. If you're familiar with Iran's electoral process, you'll have the answer quite clearly. Forty million votes in 46,000 polling stations so, on average, there are less than a thousand votes cast in every polling box and there were only four candidates. So you can count all of that within half an hour. It's a very simple task. And there were 500,000 people involved in the counting. So it's the counting is done very easily. It's not a difficult task.

**□ KING: Now how do you explain, though, Mr. President, logically, thousands and thousands of your own countrymen take to the streets to protest the election, denounce it as a fraud? How did you feel about that? I mean, here all these people, thousands of people, complaining about their vote. As a president of an Islamic Republic, did you not feel some pain over that?**

**■ AH:** Sure. But what am I supposed to do? Some people did not get votes and they have complaints. In any election, there's always a winner and someone loses. And that's precisely why you hold elections. Elections are meant for -- to, basically, people to see who wins and vote for the people they like. Now, say their party loses. What are they supposed to do, go on the streets all the time? That doesn't seem like the right thing to do either. There is a legal structure that defines how things are run, including the election process. Now, anyone who has a complaint can basically refer to the law and the law will take care of it.

**□ KING: Didn't it concern you that these people were complaining that this was fraud?**

**■ AH:** Some people -- a few people said that. And they were angered. And that's fine. It doesn't really matter, because, in the end of the day, our nation is unified. You should really rest assured of that. We've had over 30 fully free elections in the past 30 years. So people in our country, you know, interact in a friendly way. And if you wait, there will be future elections as well.

**□ KING: Why did you crack -- why violence against women and children and the elderly? You unleashed against the protesters. Protesters can protest. They protest all the time. Why treat them violently? Why take action?**

**■ AH:** Do you have the news from Pittsburgh today? There were thousands and thousands of people there. What were they protesting? Why did the police use tear gas? Why did they beat people up? Why did they arrest people? Could you tell me that?

**□ KING: I don't justify it. But why did you do it? I'm asking about you. You're the guest. Why did you treat women, children, hitting women and children -- why?**

**■ AH:** Very well. And I'm asking you. I mean, at some point, the police is forced to get engaged. It doesn't make us happy when it happens. But so you know, most of the people who actually were harmed as a result of the protests and the chaos that followed the elections in Tehran were pro-government individuals, not people who were opposed to this government. The majority of them were actually out there defending the government. So in principle, what happened was not a good thing. But again, if someone's voted into office, there's no need to have chaos in the country afterwards -- or agitations. However, having said that, I believe that some British and U.S. officials made a mistake...

**□ KING: Did you make the decision to crack down? You -- you had mass trials after this. No lawyers. People were imprisoned without charges. That's -- that's not done in -- that's not done in an Islamic Republic, is it? That's not done.**

■ AH: Most of it -- I mean, all of the people who went on trial had actually been trained (ph). Both the attorneys said that they acted freely and the -- basically, the plaintiffs also said that they had enough time to review what they had done and they admitted the mistakes they had done. And actually, the courts were open enough to basically take care of due process of law and allow for the trials to happen. And all this was done within a legal framework. Now I ask you, do you know exactly the number of prisoners here in the United States? 3.6 million people.

□ KING: I don't think there are any political...

■ AH: Oh, you probably don't know.

□ KING: I don't know if there are any.

■ AH: Do you know, on a daily basis, how many people are killed in prisons here in the United States of America?

□ KING: Killed in prison? No, I don't think but I don't think many protesters of elections...

□ KING: Back to the elections, Mr. President, we know that people were beaten, raped, murdered. The Ayatollah even criticized what was going on. Surely, you must, in retrospect, say I did something wrong. Surely you must say that.

■ AH: I had no involvement in those accidents and what happened.

□ KING: Accidents? You had no involvement?

■ AH: No, not at all. I did not have any involvement. In fact, in our country, you must understand that our judicial system works independently, and judicial responsibilities are carried out, and enforced as an independent body of enforcement. And whoever violates the law has to be taken care of in accordance with the legal structure. There are punishments there, and I do not have control over the judicial system. In your own country, does the president have the ability to order a judge what to do? Can he?

□ KING: No.

■ AH: And then what happens to justice here? It's the same in our country.

□ KING: Did you make any decisions with regard to the protesters? Did you instruct police?

■ AH: It was not necessary. It was not necessary. The law decides what everyone should -- how everyone should be dealt with. Whoever violates the law has to appear before the judicial system of the country. And the judicial system of the country takes care of it. This is a quite clear logic out there. Nobody cracks down on the it was a violation of the law that had to be dealt with by the law.

□ KING: Let's discuss the violent death of a young woman Neda. During the June protests, she was captured on video and shown around the world. Everybody saw it, and you have said that her killing is being treated as a suspicious death. What does that mean? Is there an investigation? What have you learned? What happened to Neda?

■ AH: Now, let's see what happened. First of all, it's indeed regrettable. I'm very sorry that one of our fellow citizens was killed, especially a person who wasn't, I mean she was not a person who was not in a protest, and she was walking on a side street where no demonstrations were happening. According to basically the report issued by, she was killed by a small rifle. It was a closed shot, in other words. And that leaves a serious question in our mind unanswered. Now, when she was proceeding from the main street, there was a camera recording her movements for about 100 meters while she was walking. The same camera that then publicized the scenes of her death.

AHMADINEJAD EXPLAINS THAT BECAUSE OF THERE BEING ONE CAMERA, THE US AND EUROPE ARE TO BLAME FOR NEDA'S DEATH

Part 1: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6DXAe3cXAAA>

Part 2: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wLtpfyxjdE>

Part 3: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cx8zV1\\_qA94](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cx8zV1_qA94)

Part 4: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0\\_XQy8VbWgE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0_XQy8VbWgE)

Part 5: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0f6\\_6JNOGuc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0f6_6JNOGuc)



## **Diane Sawyer of ABC's 'World News Tonight' Interview with Mahmoud Ahmadinejad December 22, 2009**

**□ DIANE SAWYER: The three American hikers who say they accidentally wandered into Iranian territory while looking at waterfalls, Shane Bauer, Josh Fattal, and Sarah Shourd. You said you were going to do your best to set them free and to hope that it happened as soon as possible, are you still going to do your best to set them free?**

**■ AHMADINEJAD:** Yes, but I've got a question for you, how do you know they have accidentally crossed into Iran, how do you know that they were looking at waterfalls?

**□ DS: Do you have evidence that it was not accidentally, young people on a hike on a vacation?**

**■ AH:** Who has told you this? Are you a judge? Permit me..have the intelligence agents told you that? It is a judge who should identify whether they have entered accidentally or intentionally. I don't distinguish this and you don't distinguish this. I announced that we don't like anybody to be imprisoned, but if somebody commits a violation, a judge should investigate it. There is law.

**□ DS: Will they go on trial?**

**■ AH:** I am not a judge...

**□ DS: Their mothers and families, in enormous anguish, have asked can they go to see them? Can they speak to them by telephone?**

**■ AH:** We are upset too..

**□ DS: Would you help arrange that?**

**■ AH:** We are not happy about it either, we are unhappy that all prisoners in America, there are 3.5 million prisoners, we are unhappy about all of them. They are also away from their families. But a judge should make the judgment.

**□ DS: They will go on trial?**

**■ AH:** I am not a judge, I am not a judge. We should ask the judge. They might be able to do it. I think they have corresponded. We aren't happy with the fact that people are imprisoned, but eventually if somebody commits a violation, the judge will attend to it. There is law.

**□ DS: A question also about Iran and as I said we hope so much to be able to return ourselves and see what is happening but we see the videos on the Internet, we see the Twitter calls from the protestors in the street, we see the signs that say "Death to Dictator." You have said that any one in Iran can express their point of view, that it is fully permitted. Are you saying these demonstrators in the next few days can go to the street in any number they want, and they can protest and they will be safe?**

■ AH: Do you think such a thing exists in America? Can the people there come to the streets whenever they want, say whatever they want?

□ DS: **You can apply for a permit, yes?**

■ AH: Are you sure?

□ DS: **And they can go to the street and express their opinions, yes?**

■ AH: Are you sure?

□ DS: **If you apply for a permit...**

■ AH: During Pittsburgh meeting, there was a demonstration by 1,000 people. The police beat them and attacked them with tear gas and boiling water. A large number of people were arrested. Did they have the permission to demonstrate or had they come there without permission? Did they have the permission or not?

□ DS: **But thousands of people are allowed to come out and criticize the government, routinely.**

■ AH: It is the same in Iran, but my question to you is, those people who were beaten in Pittsburgh, were arrested and attacked with tear gas, what were they saying? What was their demand? Was it against the law or was it legal? Why were they beaten?

□ DS: **I would like to debate it, but I'm afraid our time is so short. I want to make sure that I ask this question because so many people have written here in the United States about it. They are reporting that there is a division in the Iranian government between you and the Supreme National Security Council. Is there is a division in the Iranian government now between you and the Ayatollah [Ali Hoseyni] Khamenei and the council on nuclear issues? And what about the division we see with the Ayatollah [Hussein-Ali] Montazeri, with [Ayatollah Akbar Hashemi] Rafsanjani taking to the streets to criticize the government.**

■ AH: Well, in every country -- translate it for me. She didn't get me.

■ AH: In Iran we have got freedom, more than what there is in America.

□ DS: **More?**

■ AH: They are free to speak and demonstrate. Yes, we have got elections in Iran. Whoever wins the most votes forms the government. Some people oppose the government. This is natural. There is no problem. They speak their mind.

□ DS: **But as you know, human rights activists, Amnesty International says 4,000 people were arrested among the protesters, that there have been executions, some of them, mass executions of protestors, striking fear in their hearts.**

■ AH: These things have to do with the judiciary. We have got laws. There is the judge. These people have got lawyers. These are not political questions. They are judicial and legal questions. In our country, we have got a detailed process of legal investigation. There are five stages of investigation with a review stage included. Of course, the judiciary has not yet announced anything. In Iran, the judiciary is independent. I would like to repeat my question to you. Were human rights considered in relation to those people who were beaten up in Pittsburgh and inhaled poisonous gas, tear gas? There are 3.5 million prisoners in America. Has the legal process been applied in relation to them or have they been arrested illegally? In proportion to the population, the number of prisoners in America is five times as much as that in Iran.

□ DS: **But not political prisoners...**

■ AH: Do the American people commit more offences or human rights are violated? Which one is true?

Transcript: <http://abcnews.go.com/WN/diane-sawyer-interviews-irans-president-mahmoud-ahmadinejad/story?id=9401194>

Preview: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p7XwyvYokCQ&feature=related>



**Interview with Mahmoud Ahmadinejad on CNN and Iran Press TV by Christiane Amanpour  
June 14, 2009**

**CHRISTIANE:** You said that you are the president of all Iranians no matter who they voted for. I'd like to ask you, what is the situation with your challenger Mr. Mir Houssein Mousavi and will you guarantee his safety, and why have opposition reform individuals, officials been arrested?

**AHMADINEJAD:** The situation in the country is a very good condition, Iran is the most stable country in the world and there is the rule of law in this country. All the people are equal before the law. The election have witnessed people's massive turnout, as I said, even in a soccer match the people may become excited and that may lead to a confrontation between them and the police force. This is something natural that a person coming out of a stadium and may violate the traffic regulations, he will be fined by the police no matter who he is, an ordinary person or even a minister. So these are not problems, these have not caused any problems for the people of Iran and 40 million people participated in the elections. And these 40 million people will safeguard the elections based on the Iranian culture. There is no partisanship on the basis of the western concept in fact the people are friends with each other and they are going to cast their votes in favor of any candidate they like. And of course such a voting process will not lead to any hostility among the people. And you go to the street and you see people are friends with each other and in Iran no one asks the other to whom are you going to vote for? The situation is very good, and Iran is on the threshold of making considerable progress. And definitely in the next four years the status of Iran in the world will be further promoted. We are going to witness Iran's economic, scientific, and cultural progress taking place. Making considerable progress Iran will turn into a major economic power in the world, of course it is already a political power as well.

**CA:** I may have missed the translation, I was asking whether you were going to guarantee their safety...no just the first question.

**AH:** What is your first question?

**CA:** Last night you said you were the president of all Iranians...

**AH:** Yes yes I did respond to your question. I said that people come out of a stadium, one person may be angry and he may pass the traffic light violating the traffic regulations and he will be fined by the police. He is also a member of the Iranian nation of course he has been fined for just violating the traffic rules. This has nothing to do with your question, I'm the president of all Iranians as I have been in the past four years. All people are respected and all people are equal before the law. And I like all the people, all members of this nation. Of course I'm not happy with a person violating the traffic rules.

<http://www.mofopolitics.com/2009/06/14/video-christiane-amanpour-vs-mahmoud-ahmadinejad-on-legitimacy-of-victory/>



## Democracy Now's Amy Goodman Interviews Ahmadinejad September 26, 2008

□ **AMY GOODMAN: (Re: Homosexuality) On Wednesday, I asked the Iranian President to clarify his statement.**

■ **AHMADINEJAD:** I didn't say they don't exist, not the way they are here. In Iran it's considered as a very unlikable and abhorrent act. People simply don't like it. Our religious decrees tell us that it's against, all divine laws actually believe in the same. Who has given them permission to engage in homosexual acts? It's considered as an abhorrent act. It shakes the foundations of society, the family foundation, it robs humanity, it brings about diseases. It should be of no pride to American society to say that they defend or support homosexuality. It's not a good act in and of itself to then hold others accountable for banning it. And it's not called freedom either. Sure if somebody engages in an act in their own house without it being known to others we don't pay attention to that. People are free to do what they like in their private realms. But nobody can engage in what breaks the law in public. Why is it that in the West all moral boundaries have been shaken? Just because some people want to get votes they are ready to overlook every morality? This goes against the values of society? it is the divine rule of the Prophets. And then of course in Iran it's not an issue as big a concern as it is in the United States, there might be a few people who are unknown. In general our country would not accept it. And there is a law about it too. Which one must follow.

□ **AG: July 19th is a day that is honored around the world, where two gay teenagers, Iranian teens were hung. This is a picture of them hanging. They were two young men named Mahmoud Askari and Ayaz Marhoni (?). Do you think gay men and lesbians should die in Iran?**

■ **AH:** There is now law for their execution in Iran. Either they were drug traffickers or they had killed someone else. Those who kill someone else or engage in acts of rape could be punished by execution. Otherwise homosexuals are not even known who they are to be hung. So we don't have execution for homosexuals. Of course we consider it an abhorrent act but it is not punished by capital punishment. Basically it is an immoral act, there are a lot of acts that can be immoral but there is on capital punishment for them. I don't know where you obtained these pictures from. Either they are a network of drug traffickers or people who generally might have killed someone else. You know that we take our social securities seriously. What would you do if someone picked up a gun and killed a bunch of people? If there is a person to complain than there is capital punishment awaiting. For drug traffickers if they carry above a certain volume of drugs with them they can be executed in Iran.

□ **AG: There is the death penalty in the US but many in the progressive community feel that it is wrong and are trying to have it abolished.**

■ **AH:** There are different opinions about it. It's lawmakers, legal professionals and sociologists that must examine it and see what best suits every society. Because the rights of society sit above the rights of individual. I don't wish to say anything about it. These are experts who must do it.



## Ahmadinejad's Interview with Larry King - CNN September 23, 2008

■ KING: By the way, you mentioned human rights in Israel. Don't you have some human rights problems of your own in Iran?

■ AH: What do you mean by human rights problems?

■ KING: People protesting that they don't have the same rights as other people? Homosexuals -- you said last year, you denied there were homosexuals. There's homosexuals everywhere.

■ AH: I said it is not the way it is here. In Iran this is considered a very -- obviously most people dislike it. And we have actually a law regarding it and the law is enforced. It is a law that was passed. It was legislated. And it is an act that is against human principles. A lot of things can happen. It can cause psychological problems, social problems that affect the whole society. Remember that God rules are to improve human life. In our religion, this act is forbidden and the Parliament has legislated about it. Not now, 70 years ago. This is something that happened 70 years ago, before the Islamic Republic became --

■ KING: So what happens to gay people?

■ AH: Let me -- well, of course, nobody has held protests. You are -- are you concerned for 70 million Iranian people or a few homosexuals? Let's assume in Iran -- let's assume in the United States that 200 million people drive cars and a million violators are rounded up and they just basically violate driving laws. Should we be worried for the 199 million people whose safety you must be concerned about or the one million violators? The law is the law. It's law. And it must be enforced, of course. Of course we do pay attention that in Iran nobody interferes in the private lives of individuals. We have nothing to do with the private realm of people. This is at the not private, public morality. In their own house, nobody ever interferes.

Part 1: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hjuCXuESyyA>

Part 2: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RQezkb5MRsM>

Part 3: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JxYT0PBPniY>

Part 4: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V415rE4WZ1M>

Part 5: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U5Qxoqq8ECo>

Part 6: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y2YtiQOwdug>



## Interview with Mahmoud Ahmadinejad by Ann Curry of NBC News September 18, 2008

□ ANN CURRY: You are a father what do you say to the families who accuse this government of brutalities, torture, disappearances of their sons and daughters?

■ AHMADINEJAD: You are expressing certain claims that by and large are being leveled by those who oppose the Islamic Republic. I'm not in a position to answer or to judge whatever you are claiming. Does your heart really and sincerely go out to the people? Is that really the truth?

□ AC: I know people Mr. President who believe were innocent, who were tortured...

■ AH: It's possible

□ AC: ...in prisons.

■ AH: I don't have such information, people tortured in prisons, maybe you have more specific information. Our Judiciary in accordance with the law will deal with this matter.

□ AC: Inside and outside of Iran, people are questioning the legitimacy of your presidency so it is important to ask you Mr President, did you steal this election?

■ AH: In Iran expressing ones points of view is permissible, it's free. And if a person has an opinion to express within the confines of the law they are free to express such opinions. I don't see any problems.

□ AC: Would you like to answer that question more directly? Given it is a question people around the world have asked, would you like to address the question, did you steal the election sir?

■ AH: I don't know what you mean by that.

□ AC: Did you create conditions so that you would win no matter what the vote?

■ AH: It is very clear, whoever becomes a candidate will start a campaign and will do his utmost to win. I think we should be courageous enough to accept the vote of the people it's more courageous than participating in the vote itself.

□ AC: I want to give you an opportunity because i think it's important to react the video which was seen by millions of people around the world showing the death of Neda. People were very upset watching this, she has come to symbolize the violence in the streets, I want to know what were your emotions when you saw this video?

■ AH: I was saddened as well all the Iranian people were saddened. We think that this incident is a suspicious death we are treating as a suspicious death and we are very sorry about this. And I am sure that the truth will come to light.

□ AC: She has come to represent what some on in Iran and some outside Iran say has been a series of examples. Human rights organizations estimate 4,000 people were arrested in these protests, some are still missing, there are reports of torture, there are even reports that some women protesters were raped in prison. Your government has acknowledged that some protesters were killed, you often speak of compassion here inside Iran, the question has to be asked, where was

**your compassion for your people?**

■ AH: First of all, all of us regret the fact that some people were killed. Two, the police officers and those who accompanied the officers were killed, there numbers are higher compared to others.

□ AC: **Iran has now agreed to negotiating what could lead to the first significant talks between Iran and the US in nearly 30 years, what do you want from the US?**

■ AH: Today, a new arrangement should be put in place based on new principles so that the world is directed towards peace and tranquility. We have always believed in talking in negotiating, that is our logic, nothing has changed.

□ AC: **Are there conditions under which Iran would weaponize?**

■ AH: Well, nuclear arms, we believe they belong to the past and the past generation.

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/3032619/vp/32903607#32903607>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aOh35qHJ0r0>

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## Iranian Officials' Replies to Human Rights Oriented Questions in Previous Interviews

Charlie Rose's Interview with Mohammad Khazaee - Iranian Ambassador to the United Nations  
December 6, 2007

### No discussion of human rights issues

Part One: <http://www.charlierose.com/view/interview/8822>

Part Two: <http://www.charlierose.com/view/interview/8827>

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Charlie Rose - An Hour with Mahmoud Ahmadinejad - August 22, 2008

### No discussion of human rights issues

<http://www.charlierose.com/view/interview/10612>

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Charlie Rose Interview with Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, President of Iran - May 3, 2010

### No discussion of human rights issues

<http://www.charlierose.com/view/interview/10990>

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Charlie Rose - A Conversation with Mahmoud Ahmadinejad - September 24, 2007

### No discussion of human rights issues

<http://www.charlierose.com/view/interview/8707>

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A conversation with Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki by Charlie Rose - October 6, 2008

### No discussion of human rights issues

<http://www.charlierose.com/view/interview/9293>

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Russia Today Interviews Ahmadinejad - May 2010

**No discussion of human rights issues**

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dD0\\_MuTjEJU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dD0_MuTjEJU)

NEW YORK TIMES: An Interview with Mahmoud Ahmadinejad by Neal Macfarquahr - May 4 2010

**No discussion of human rights issues**

<http://video.nytimes.com/video/2010/05/05/world/124746777813/an-interview-with-mahmoud-ahmadinejad.html>

Ahmadinejad's Interview with NBC Nightly News' Brian Williams - September 2006

**No discussion of human rights issues**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ykd-syzZ4ZY>

Ahmadinejad's Interview with NBC Nightly News' Brian Williams - July 28, 2008

**No discussion of human rights issues**

Part 1: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IeSRTfWkVdc>  
Part 2: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=57uW5kZqSZg>  
Part 3: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ITb4SAjICM>  
Part 4: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NvCQILXmdEU>

George Stephanopoulos of ABC's 'This Week' Interviews Ahmadinejad - April 27, 2009

**No discussion of human rights issues**

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=II9sPW6\\_Le0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=II9sPW6_Le0)

Ahmadinejad's Interview with Al-Jazeera's Alireza Ronaghi - March 20, 2009

**No discussion of human rights issues**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=787J4Dr4c-k>

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's coming visit to New York, for the opening of the 65th session of the United Nations' General Assembly, will be his second visit to this city since the disputed election of June 2009 and his fifth trip to the United States. It is expected that he will be a center of international media attention, similar to his previous trips. Journalists will most likely seek his views on Iran's nuclear program, economic sanctions by the UN Security Council, US-Iran relations, and the Middle East peace process.

Human rights in Iran, a subject of utmost importance for the security and future of the Iranian people and their neighbors in the Middle East, also deserves extended coverage. The International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran is urging journalists to make human rights concerns a major component of their interviews with Ahmadinejad.

While Iranian journalists have no opportunity to hold Ahmadinejad accountable for Iran's human rights crisis, it is critical that when he travels abroad, particularly during his visit to New York, the international media give top priority to Iran's human rights crisis.

We hope this document will help journalists who interview Mahmoud Ahmadinejad -or other senior Iranian government officials-frame pertinent questions about Iran's human rights situation, including the lack of freedom of speech and assembly, media censorship, political executions, stoning of women, and many other egregious abuses described in this report.

**INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN**  
**FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN IRAN**

[www.iranhumanrights.org](http://www.iranhumanrights.org)