

Iran: The Week in Review

July 18, 2013

- July 11: ISNA posted [photos](#) of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad touring recent industrial projects and attending an inaugural ceremony in the port city of Hormozgan.
- July 11: 516 students from the University of Science and Technology wrote an open [letter](#) to President-elect Hassan Rouhani congratulating him on his election win but also reminding him to adhere to his campaign promises of changing the prevailing security environment in the country and calling for the release of political prisoners and other jailed critics. The letter was written to coincide with the “month of Tir,” which is the month of the 1999 student uprising that shook the nation.
- July 11: In an article titled, “70 key statements that Rouhani should not forget,” ISNA writes, “In the run-up to this year’s presidential election, President-elect Hassan Rouhani promised and expressed his opinion on many matters regarding students, politics, the economy and social issues.” The article lists 70 [statements](#) that Hassan Rouhani made during the campaign period. A few of them include: “The people want honesty...A free media isn’t afraid of democracy...Humiliating people is not acceptable...We can benefit from the advice of Mr. Rafsanjani...War with the United States is unacceptable...The period of suspension of (nuclear) enrichment has passed...Cinema needs to be revolutionized...The people want stability, security, and a peaceful life...Higher education is an important factor in human development...Nobody should be punished without a trial...The future government will be a government in which men and women are equal...We cannot produce scientific knowledge if the environment of our universities is dominated with a security presence...etc.”
- July 12: In an interview with ILNA, former reformist MP Ahmad Shirzad [spoke](#) about the growing public discussions about Hashemi Rafsanjani returning to the Friday Prayer podium. Shirzad said, “Public interest over the years in regards to Mr. Rafsanjani has had its ups and downs, and at the moment there is a steady rise of interest in him. I personally prefer the manner in which he speaks and connects with the people in a calm, firm manner. Even in these past few years when he wasn’t speaking at Friday prayers, people still heard what he had to say.”
- July 12: Another well-known reformist politician Hojjat Al-Islam Majid Ansari also spoke about Rafsanjani returning to the Friday prayer podium [saying](#), “In my opinion Rafsanjani should immediately return to Friday Prayers during this sensitive period because he fully understands religious and global political issues. I believe his presence at the podium is greatly missed. In regards to his return, I believe (certain) extremist individuals are controlling the higher authorities (on this issue).”
- July 12: Tabnak News posted a series of [photos](#) of Friday Prayers at the University of Tehran with President-elect Hassan Rouhani in attendance.
- July 13: Tabnak News posted a series of photos of [women](#) attending the second of two volleyball matches of the World League Finals between Germany and Iran over the weekend. Some female fans had to wait outside of the Azadi Sports Complex while a certain number of women were allowed inside to watch the match. Another set of [photos](#) of the match reveals Vice President Mohammad Reza-Rahimi in attendance as well as the female section of spectators.
- July 13: Lenziran posted a 45-minute [interview](#) in Persian with Ali Mohamad Besharati, a long-time career politician in Iran. He has held many different positions in government including former member of parliament as well as numerous ministerial positions, and has served as an advisor to former President Ayatollah Hashemi Rafsanjani. Besharati discusses his life before and after the Iranian Revolution and his substantial political career.

- July 13: Fars News posted a series of [photos](#) of former presidential candidate Gholam-Reza Haddad-Adel being honored at a ceremony celebrating his contributions to the arts. Former presidential candidates Saeed Jalili and Ali Akbar-Velayati were also present at the ceremony to show support for their fellow politician. During the ceremony, Adel [declared](#) that the recent presidential elections were “the pride of the nation and the government,” and also touched on the topic of cheating in the 2009 presidential elections and “slander from seditionists.” Adel pointed out, “The nation won’t forget the hypocritical behavior and slander from the seditionists.”
- July 13: On his personal website, Iranian MP Ali Motahari [said](#) his offices were illegally wiretapped and under video surveillance. According to Motahari, surveillance equipment was discovered in the air conditioning ductwork, and when his staff reviewed their office’s surveillance cameras they discovered that up to nine men entered the premises the previous night. He also said neighboring shop keepers were forced to comply and remain silent about the intrusion into his office. “When a well-known representative of parliament is treated like this, who knows the level of oppression that normal-everyday people are faced with?” said Motahari. The MP from Tehran [urged](#) the Ministry of Intelligence to review the videos and to provide an explanation since, “wiretapping is only acceptable when the judiciary has issued an official warrant, and permission is granted by the Speaker of Parliament.” The aforementioned branches of government are headed by the Larijani brothers.
- July 14: President-elect Hassan Rouhani made a visit to the Iranian Parliament with his senior advisors to discuss the status of the relationship between the executive and legislative branches of government as well as the economy and subsidies. ISNA posted [photos](#) of the symbolic event where Rouhani and Speaker of Parliament Ali Larijani gave speeches. Rouhani [said](#) his future government doesn’t want a confrontational relationship with the parliament and representatives of parliament will not be deceived by inaccurate statistics. Both statements are seen as indirect criticisms of outgoing President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s administration. Lenziran also posted a four-minute [video](#) clip of Rouhani’s speech (in Persian) where he cited a 42 percent inflation rate for the country.
- July 14: During the same joint-session of the new government and members of parliament held at the parliament building, Speaker of Parliament Ali Larijani used his time at the podium to introduce the president-elect and [expressed](#), “Over the years, Mr. Rouhani has held many different responsibilities in the Parliament, today, in this manner, he returns (to Parliament) to his place of origin.” He continued, “Our dear guest today, Mr. Rouhani bears the heavy responsibility of the executive branch, fortunately over the years Mr. Rouhani has had many important responsibilities as secretary of the National Security Council, which has made him extremely familiar with much of the country’s issues. We hope that Mr. Rouhani’s previous experiences in Parliament and the National Security Council will help in the solving of the sensitive and complex issues facing the country in a scientific and rational manner.” Larijani also warned, “Now more than ever we need to unite (politically) in order to be strong in the face of international issues.”
- July 15: ISNA posts a series of [photos](#) of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad at a ceremony celebrating the work of female and family activists. During the ceremony, the outgoing president [said](#), “They say that behind every successful man, there is a successful woman... I believe that this statement brings women down and doesn’t give women the credit they deserve.” The president continued, “During the election (2013 presidential election) some people said that they would bring four women into their cabinet, while others said they would bring five. I told them that this was cowardly. Do you think the character of a woman should be used and advertised for political purposes in an election? How are you any different from someone who sticks a picture of a woman on a product in order to sell more of it? Unless it is that the election is more important than women?” Toward the end of the ceremony, the group of women activists also recognized the work of President Ahmadinejad’s wife (Azam Farahi) in their shared field, and expressed their appreciation and gratitude to her.

- July 15: Member of the Women's Council on Reform and former Deputy for Social Affairs of the Ministry of Interior, Ashraf Boroujerdi [said](#), "Fortunately, under Mr. Rouhani's plan to promote discussion and differing perspectives amongst various groups, there has been no exclusivity in this relationship... We have not met with him yet due to his busy schedule but up until now we have had six meetings, and women from various fields with different intellectual perspectives were present during these meetings. We have officially submitted the demands of these women (that were made during the meetings) in writing to the president-elect."
- July 16: President-elect Hassan Rouhani [spoke](#) at a ceremony honoring veterans and martyrs and compared the context during "the holy defense" (Iran-Iraq War) with the international problems that Iran currently faces today. Rouhani said, "We won the frontline battle against the world because whenever we are act in a more pure, creative, harmonistic, and brotherly manner, we have always been victorious, and today we need to use the same methods." Rouhani also warned about domestic political issues and the current mistrust between society and the government. "I thought that the enemy in recent election was the perpetual fissure between the government and the people. This is increasing day by day and this fissure will never be filled," warned Rouhani. Mehr News also posted [photos](#) of the ceremony.
- July 16: In an interview with ISNA, the Secretary General of the Women's Society of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the daughter of the late Ayatollah Khomeini, Zahra Mostafavi [said](#), "It is necessary for the future government to prevent the rights of humans, both men and women, from being violated. If I speak with Mr. Rouhani I will tell him to look at men and women with an equal eye."
- July 16: During a ceremony celebrating the 16th anniversary of the Iran's Social Security Fund, outgoing President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad emphasized, "It is the responsibility of government to frequently redistribute wealth into society and to prevent the accumulation of wealth (in the hands of a few) and to prevent ghettos." ISNA posted a series of [photos](#) of the event that reveal controversial presidential advisor, former Head of the Social Security Fund, and current caretaker, Saeed Mortazavi, in attendance.
- July 16: Iran's House of Cinema, which acts as the country's only domestic organization that supports independent films, has been closed since January 2012. The CEO of the House of Cinema published an open [letter](#) addressed to all three branches of government, and even security forces such as the police, to reveal the plight of the group and to find a way to solve the situation "before it's too late." In conjunction with the letter, Iranian filmmakers held a rally at the headquarters to draw attention to their situation. Mehr News posted a set of [photos](#) of the public rally.

By Hanif Zarrabi-Kashani



Additional updates of "Iran: The Week in Review" are available [here](#).