

Iran: The Week in Review

July 26, 2013

- July 17: During the first meeting of the Guardian Council's new session, Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati was [chosen](#) to remain as head of the power vetting council. Mohammed Alizadeh was also re-elected as the Deputy Secretary of the Council.
- July 17: Rahmatollah Hafezi, a member of Tehran's newly elected 4th City Council, said that currently the city council is in the process of choosing the next Mayor of Tehran and at the moment there are about 20 people being discussed. When asked about the possible retention of former presidential candidate Mohammed Qalibaf as mayor, Hafezi [said](#), "We prefer the relationship we have with Qalibaf... There will be two to three rounds of screenings in which three to four individuals will be invited to share and present their plans that they have for the position of mayor of Tehran." Hafezi concluded, "After the candidates have made their presentations, the city council will begin to debate the choices, and we predict that after the first city council meeting we will be able to introduce the selected mayor of Tehran."
- July 17: Fars News posted photos of one of the last meetings of the 3rd City Council of Tehran, in which council member and [sister](#) of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Parvin Ahmadinejad is present. She was not re-elected to Tehran's 4th City Council during this summer's city council elections. Fars News also posted a series of photos of Parvin's brother [Mahmoud](#) heading one of the few remaining cabinet meetings of his administration.
- July 18: Ayatollah Naser Makarem Shirazi [cited](#) statistics that brought him to the conclusion that most marriages that have ended in divorce are among married students. "Unfortunately, today in Iran, divorce is rising and marriage is decreasing, and divorce is a social necessity, but only when there are no other options." He went on to say that "Islam never prohibited divorce," and that, "We need to bring divorce to a minimum in our society. Today in our society, it is not easy for two people to marry one another, but it is easy for them to divorce." Shirazi concluded, "After a divorce, the woman may be allowed to stay in the spouse's house and be free to do what she likes and not have to wear a hijab in the house until a certain amount of time, where the tension and animosity subsides and then they could reconcile."
- July 18: MP and First Deputy Speaker of Parliament Mohammed Reza Bahonar [said](#), "The people have seen eight years of Reformist rule and eight years of conservative rule and have seen their narrow mindedness. After 16 years the people have turned toward moderation." Bahonar also admitted, "Running the country at this current moment is a very difficult task."
- July 18: Filmmakers and artists once again protested outside of Iran's House of Cinema building today. ISNA posted photos that reveal that during their latest rally, the protesters somehow opened the lock that authorities placed on the doors. As a result, security forces intervened to stop any further escalation. Photos also reveal Iran's very own Oscar winning [director](#), Asghar Farhadi, also present at the rally.
- July 19: During Friday prayers, the head of the Guardian Council Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati [emphasized](#) the responsibilities of the Guardian Council. "Since its establishment, the Guardian Council has been bound to the law and the policies of the Supreme Leader. The Guardian Council has carried a heavy burden with legal, religious, and political issues in multiple elections. But sometimes we encounter situations in which not everyone is satisfied, especially in elections in which some (people) find it hard to restrain themselves and hold their tongue, while some feel free to say what they want. But we tolerate them because it is our duty to do so." Jannati also referred to "seditionists" (the term used for people who disputed the 2009 election results) and said, "Those who claimed cheating in the 2009 elections should face the people and be ashamed of themselves. Why did they disregard the votes of the people and leave such a bitter taste in people's mouths? Up until now we have been too nonchalant with them (seditionists)."

- July 19: Minister of Intelligence Hojjat al-Islam Haydar Moslehi [responded](#) to recent reports of surveillance equipment found in MP Ali Motahari's office and said, "This story is important and raises many questions. We have been following this (case) since last Thursday. The ministry met with Ali Motahari, re-inspected his office, and made the necessary orders to pursue this matter."
- July 20: Female MP and a member of the parliamentary national security and foreign policy committee Zahra Elahian [spoke](#) about the possibility of former British foreign minister Jack Straw attending the inauguration ceremony of President-elect Hassan Rouhani. "It seems that Mr. Straw is trying to coordinate with this country's government (Iran) and show his willingness to re-open the British Embassy in Tehran." She added, "Mr. Rouhani and his foreign policy team should not adopt such a passive stance in regards to this relationship (with the British)." Elahian continued her warnings by citing British meddling in Iranian domestic affairs in after the 2009 elections, and how "the BBC broadcasts psychological warfare against the Islamic Republic of Iran."
- July 20: Ahmad Montazeri, the son of the late dissident cleric Ayatollah Montazeri, has [written](#) a letter published on his personal website to Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei in which he asks that Mir-Hussein Mousavi, his wife Zahra Rahnavard, and Mehdi Karroubi be released so that they can attend the inauguration of President-elect Hassan Rohani. Montazeri also called for the release of other political prisoners and prisoners of conscious as well. "Today, due to the political and economic conditions of our dear country, now more than ever we need to put effort into creating unity and national solidarity. The inauguration ceremony (for Hassan Rouhani) can be used to provide national unity and solidarity by having representatives from different opposition and current ruling political groups attending."
- July 21: During an Iftar ceremony at the Hosseini Imam Khomeini mosque with a group of senior Iranian officials, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei [said](#) that he was not opposed to talk with Washington on certain issues. "I am not optimistic about negotiations with the United States, although I have not rejected negotiations over certain issues such as Iraq in the past years." Khamenei also added, "We have always believed in interaction with the world," but any interaction must be based on a proper recognition of the other side." Mehr News published a set of [photos](#) of the event which reveal every top official in the Iranian government in attendance.
- July 22: During a press conference, the spokesperson for Iran's judiciary Gholam-Hossein Mohseni-Ejei was asked about speculation regarding Iranians that left the country after the 2009 election and the possibility of them returning to Iran as tied to the changing of administrations, and if this was in fact legally possible. Mohseni-Ejei [said](#), "If an individual has committed a crime inside Iran, or if an Iranian outside the country has committed a crime, the judiciary can prosecute them. The judiciary will not ban anyone from entering Iran if they have committed a crime. It is possible that the individual could be forbidden from leaving the country once inside, but if the individual has committed a crime, we won't stop them from entering the country but once inside, we will investigate the charges against the individual."
- July 22: Member of the Women's Council on Reform, and former Deputy for Social Affairs of the Ministry of Interior, Ashraf Boroujerdi [said](#), "The formation of an inclusive female (political/social) party is an extremely difficult task. If the group's purpose is to form a group with women who hold and believe in different ideas, it will not be possible." She continued, "A (successful) party is formed with a collection of like-minded individuals with clear goals... in this field (women's activism) there many different types of ideas and the expression of those ideas somewhat defeats the purpose (of the group)."
- July 22: Former president Mohammed Khatami celebrates an Iftar ceremony with a room full of poets. ISNA posted photos of Khatami [laughing](#) and smiling during the ceremony.

- July 23: In his weekly press conference with reporters, Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokesman Abbas Araqchi [emphasized](#) that "this is the first time since the victory of the Islamic Revolution that it has been decided to invite foreign officials to attend the inauguration ceremony." In a turn of events, Araqchi threw cold water on the widely [reported](#) possibility of a U.S. official being invited to the inauguration. "Our invitation includes all the countries (of the world), of course with the exception of the United States as well as the Zionist regime that we do not formally recognize us as a country," said Araqchi.
- July 23: Outspoken MP and member of the Parliament's Cultural Commission, Ali Motahari [weighed](#) in on a potential future role for former president Mohammed Khatami in the Rouhani administration, as well as the recent controversy surrounding whether or not former British foreign secretary Jack Straw should attend President-elect Rouhani's inauguration ceremony without pre-conditions. "Currently he (Straw) has no position in the British government. If these prominent figures request to attend the inauguration ceremony of the new president, why should we not allow them? Sometimes through such means, governments can improve their relationship. Iran could also send appealing figures such as (former president) Mohammed Khatami to some foreign countries in order to resolve some of the country's foreign policy issues... these methods are commonly used in today's world. Former and retired officials can sometimes thaw the frozen political relations between countries." Motahari concluded his remarks by addressing the comments of a number of Iranian MPs regarding whether or not Straw should apologize before coming to Iran. "If Jack Straw has to apologize to the Iranian nation, the occupiers of the British embassy in Tehran should also apologize," said Motahari.
- July 23: While speaking to staff members of the judiciary, head of the judiciary Sadeq Amoli Larijani [claimed](#) that "Islam was the true harbinger of human rights," and that the West imposes its own principles on the world. "Ignoring the situation in Bahrain and Egypt are prime examples of inconsistent behavior and respect for freedom that the west has for human rights."
- July 23: Majid Abhari, a pathology and behavioral science specialist, [told](#) ILNA that "67% of youth inside Iran have no real goals for their future." His research with the Institute of Behavioral Sciences was fielded from numerous cities around Iran and studied over 8,000 boys and girls between the ages of 17-26. According to Abhari, the main factors for this phenomenon are "lifestyle changes induced by friends, satellite TV, and the Internet." In order to solve this issue, Abhari claimed that the "best way for youths to reform this behavior would be to return to their Iranian and Islamic lifestyle."
- July 23: The director of Tehran Air Quality Control, Yousef Rashidi, [said](#) that based on pollution measuring stations in Tehran, "The air quality index today is at an unsafe condition as pollutant particles and particulates from car emissions are currently 2.5 microns beyond the safe limit." He advised people with sensitive medical conditions to remain indoors or at least reduce the number of hours they spend outside. The city of Tehran [annually](#) battles and chokes on a fog of air pollution, usually in the winter and summer months.
- July 23: In an interview with Khabar Online, the managing director of Iran's Aviation Industries Organization (IAIO), Manouchehr Manteqi, [spoke](#) about the status of Iran's aviation industry as well as new aerospace projects and said that Iran has designed and domestically manufactured a 52-passenger airplane. He also said that at the moment "Iran's national aviation industry in conjunction with seven international companies are producing a short to medium range 150 passenger plane that can be compared to a Boeing 737 series airplane or an Airbus 320 airplane." Manteqi admitted that international sanctions have had an effect on Iran's aviation industry but that "Iran has prepared and dealt with sanctions from early on, and has a mechanism to deal with them." ISNA posted a series of [photos](#) of an airplane manufacturing plant in Isfahan that resembles the 52-passenger plane that Manteqi is speaking about.

- July 23: Tabnak News posted [photos](#) of Tehran's police conducting their third sweep of "thugs and criminals in the capital of Tehran." The items and evidence that were allegedly confiscated during the sweep were put on display for the public and media. They include guns, knives, swords, axes, drug paraphernalia, alcohol, jewelry, and prohibited music CDs from Western countries. The security forces also made sure to publicly shame those who were arrested during the photo-op by exposing the tattoos of those arrested. Tattoos are deemed by authorities as un-Islamic.
- July 24: Members of the Central Council of the Islamic Students Association wrote an open [letter](#) to President-elect Rouhani with regard to who he wishes to name as his education minister. The letter begins with concern, "In choosing your minister to steer the ship of education, we expect you to carefully pick someone who will build the future generation, and who has the utmost intelligence."
- July 24: At an Iftar banquet, former presidential candidate and MP Gholam Reza Hadad-Adel was asked whether he had been suggested as a possibility to serve in President-elect Rouhani's still to-be-determined cabinet. To which Adel [responded](#), "No, I have not been recommended (to serve)."
- July 24: During a meeting meant to praise representatives of the media that have covered the outgoing president for the past eight years, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad [said](#), "We (the 10th administration) appreciate everybody, writers that are in agreement (with my policies), as well as writers that are opposed, we all work toward higher goals." Ahmadinejad then flashed a little bit of his well-known charisma and said, "I want to add a little humor right now. One day a friend of mine told me, it is not important whether they write in favor about you, or write against you, what is important is that they are writing about you, and in this regard, I'd like to thank all my media friends in attendance today." ISNA also posted a set of [photographs](#) of the event.
- July 24: In a meeting with the staff of the Expediency Council, the head of the council and former president Ayatollah Hashemi Rafsanjani [spoke](#) about the recent presidential election and said, "God realized in the hearts of the people, a sense of consciousness and responsibility, and under the worst conditions they came out (to vote). We must utilize this situation and not let the hope of the election turn into disappointment." Rafsanjani then referred to the "biased political grudges that the enemies of the Islamic Revolution have toward Iran" by saying, "There were no expectations that after the elections the new conditions would make them (enemies of Iran) behave out of the norm or diplomatic."
- July 25: At an Iftar ceremony, former reformist presidential candidate and MP Mostafa Kavakebian [said](#), "I am not saying that Mr. Rouhani is 100% reformist, but his discourse is reformist." Kavakebian also remarked on the notion that Rouhani would not have won the election without the help of former presidents Mohammed Khatami, Hashemi Rafsanjani, as well as other reformists. "This could be true, but Rouhani had great potential and capacity (to win.)"
- July 25: The office of outgoing President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad [announced](#) that, at the president's behest, this Friday's ceremony meant to celebrate the past eight years of Ahmadinejad's tenure and the work of his governors, deputizes, and ministers has been canceled. "In keeping with the spirit of simple living and conservative lifestyle, avoidance of extravagancies, and keeping in mind the lower levels of society, the beloved president has decided to cancel the event. In the last days of the tenth administration, this is yet another golden mark in his brilliant public service record."

By Hanif Zarrabi-Kashani



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