

**IRAN**  
**LEAVING HUMAN RIGHTS BEHIND**  
**The Context of the Presidential Elections**

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## INTRODUCTION

On May 23, 1997 Iranians go to the polls for the seventh time to elect a president of the Islamic Republic. The incumbent, Hojatoleslam Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, has served the two consecutive four-year terms permitted by law. The transfer of power by way of elections is a notable event in a region in which most leaders do not voluntarily leave power or subject themselves to any type of open electoral process.

Nevertheless, as with last year's elections for Iran's parliament, the *Majles* or Islamic Consultative Assembly, the control exercised over the election by the ruling clerical elite severely circumscribes the choices presented to Iranian voters. The elections are made less free by the arbitrary exercise of power by the Council of Guardians, a body of six senior clerics and six jurists appointed by the leader of the Islamic Republic to supervise elections.<sup>1</sup> Notably, the council keeps the field of candidates within narrow limits. As a result, Iranian voters will not have the option to vote for candidates opposed to the government; rather, they face a choice between candidates who emphasize different aspects of the government program, but who are part of the now-ruling clerical leadership. The Council of Guardians is also empowered to annul the results of elections, which it did in many districts after the 1996 parliamentary elections, without providing any justification.

The human rights situation will be an important factor in assessing the outcome of Iran's seventh presidential election. The Council's actions, combined with a more general lack of respect for basic rights to expression, association and assembly make it unlikely that the election will reflect "the free expression of the will of the electors."<sup>2</sup> This report documents violations of international human rights standards to which Iran is committed by treaty, including the rights of freedom of assembly and of expression, as well as the right to participate in public affairs.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Human Rights Watch urges the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to take steps to enable its citizens to participate equally and fully in the conduct of public affairs, specifically, to:

- Amend the constitution to remove discriminatory provisions that prohibit women and members of Iran's religious minorities from serving as president.
- Allow candidates to stand for election to the presidency without regard to their religious, political or other beliefs.
- Exclude candidates from running for president only on the basis of reasonable and clearly-defined criteria that are applied impartially to all candidates. Those denied permission to stand should be informed of the reasons and given the opportunity to challenge them before an impartial body.
- Uphold the right of peaceful assembly for all, including supporters of opposition groups and parties.
- Halt the prosecution, imprisonment and harassment of writers, publishers and editors for exercising their internationally recognized right to express themselves; and repudiate the edict calling for the death of British writer Salman Rushdie for writing deemed apostasy.

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<sup>1</sup> The leader of the Islamic Republic is not elected. He is appointed on the basis of his credentials as an Islamic leader by the ninety-person Assembly of Experts.

<sup>2</sup> International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 25(b).

- Take appropriate punitive and preventive measures to curb the activities of groups commonly known as “*hezbollahi*,” whose use of violence to violate others’ rights to freedom of assembly and expression is presently tolerated by government and religious authorities.

## BACKGROUND

The president of the Islamic Republic is not the head of state. That title belongs to the leader of the Islamic Republic, the position created by and for Ayatollah Khomeini and currently held by Ayatollah Khamene’i. Nevertheless, the president is the head of the executive branch of government, and under the 1989 amendments to the constitution wields considerable power. The president is elected by universal suffrage in a secret ballot. In order to win, a candidate must receive an absolute majority of the votes cast. If one candidate fails to secure a majority after a single round of voting, a run-off between the top two candidates is held at a later date.

Prospective candidates must be approved by the Council of Guardians. According to Article 115 of the constitution, a presidential candidate must be a political personality to be eligible. The use of the Arabic word *rajol* [man] clearly denotes that the personality cannot be a woman. A candidate must have also a firm belief in the principles of the Islamic Republic, be a devout Shi’a Muslim, possess management skills, and have a reputation for integrity, wisdom, and piety. Candidates register with the Ministry of Interior, which then forwards the file to the Council of Guardians for approval. The twelve-day official election campaign period begins after the Council of Guardians announces its decision on the candidates eligible to stand.

By the deadline for registration, April 29, 1997, 238 candidates had applied, including nine women. On May 8, the Council of Guardians announced that it had vetoed all but four of the candidates: Speaker of the Islamic Consultative Assembly Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri, former Minister of Islamic Guidance Mohammad Khatami, former Minister of Information Mohammad Mohammadi-Reyshahri, and judicial advisor Reza Zavarei, who is a member of the Council of Guardians. Nateq-Nouri and Khatami are viewed as the leading candidates. Nateq-Nouri is supported by the Jame-e Ruhaniyat-e Mobarez (Militant Clerics Society, JRM), the major clerical political organization and the dominant force in the current parliament. The JRM is generally conservative on social issues, such as the role of women, and is close to the powerful bazaar merchants who have prospered under the Islamic Republic. Khatami has the support of the Kargozaran-e Sazandegi (Servants of Construction), a group of technocrats who advocate greater integration into the global economy and are generally more progressive on social issues. Khatami also has the support of the Majma-e Ruhaniyun-e Mobarez (Militant Clergymen’s Association, MRM), a clerical group committed to a broader redistribution of wealth. Outgoing President Rafsanjani has not endorsed any candidate. He is closely associated with both the JRM and the Servants of Construction, so both leading candidates can claim to be following in his footsteps.

## ACCESS TO POLITICAL PROCESS

Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Iran is a State Party, requires that:

Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity, without any of the distinctions mentioned in Article 2<sup>3</sup> and without unreasonable restrictions:

- a. To take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives;
- b. To vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors;
- c. To have access, on general terms of equality, to public service in his country.

The actual practice of the Council of Guardians in vetting candidates is a clear obstacle to the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs and the rights to freely choose one's representatives.<sup>4</sup> The council is required to assess subjective criteria, such as a candidate's piety and wisdom. It is also required to select only prominent political figures as candidates.<sup>5</sup> Thus, while the constitution provides for the president to be directly elected by the people, the Council of Guardians determines who are the eligible candidates.

The council is not required to give reasons for excluding candidates, and candidates denied permission to run have no right to appeal the decision. The council's logic is sometimes hard to follow. For example, Said Rajai'e Khorasani, a former leading member of parliament whose candidacy for last year's parliamentary elections was approved, was excluded from the presidential ballot without explanation.

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<sup>3</sup> Article 2 requires States Parties to ensure for all individuals subject to their jurisdiction the rights in the ICCPR "without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status."

<sup>4</sup> For more on the Council of Guardians, see Human Rights Watch/Middle East, "Power Versus Choice, Human Rights and Parliamentary Election in the Islamic Republic of Iran," *A Human Rights Watch Short Report*, vol. 8, no. 1 (E), March 1996.

<sup>5</sup> Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, art. 115.

In addition to the council's powers to veto candidates on the basis of loosely defined, uncontested criteria, the constitution establishes discriminatory criteria at variance with international law regarding who is eligible to be president of the Islamic Republic. For example, by requiring that the president be a Shi'a Muslim, the constitution excludes approximately 20 percent of the population. Moreover, the constitution requires in Article 115 that the president be a man, contrary to international human rights standards prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender. Despite this constitutional prohibition, nine women put themselves forward as candidates. This may be explained by the Council of Guardians' past practice of overriding constitutional provisions when it deemed that the interests of Islam so required. One of the women excluded explained her candidacy by saying, "Though women cannot become president in an Islamic regime, there is no rule forbidding them to enter the race."<sup>6</sup> She explained further that her decision has "at least the merit to force the legislators at the Council of the Guardian [sic] to take a firm decision on the possibility of women becoming president and to announce it officially."<sup>7</sup>

The power of the Council of Guardians over elections has been a controversial issue in Iran for some years. Last year, for example, the council annulled the parliamentary election results in numerous districts without providing any reasons for its actions. The Majles (parliament) passed a resolution in April 1997 permitting representatives of presidential candidates to observe the council's supervision of the elections, with a view to bringing some transparency to a closed process. The Council of Guardians, however, using its powers to veto legislation that it finds to be incompatible with Islam, ruled that the parliament's resolution was contrary to Articles 75 and 99 of the constitution. Article 75 deals with the obligation of parliament to include ways and means of implementation in any legislation that reduces public revenues or increases expenditures. The financial implications, if any, of monitoring the council are unclear. Article 99 of the constitution establishes the council's supervisory role over elections. The parliament had not proposed to challenge this role, merely to observe it. Nevertheless, the council rejected the resolution without reservation or explanation.<sup>8</sup>

The parliament's concern over the role of the council in the elections is fueled by the fact that the council's members have made no attempt to hide their endorsement of one of the presidential candidates, Hojatolislam Nateq-Nouri. All six clerical members of the council are also members of the JRM, which backs his candidacy. Moreover, members of the council have made clear their preference for Nateq-Nouri in widely reported public statements. For example, Ayatollah Jannati, a leading social conservative, addressed Friday Prayers at Tehran University, a nationally televised event, and declared "a presidential candidate should not be a liberal," a clear reference to Hojatolislam Khatami.<sup>9</sup> Hojatolislam Mohammad Emami Kashani, secretary of the Council of Guardians and chairman of the presidential election supervisory board, declared on May 1, "Our duty is to support and vote for Hojatolislam Nateq-Nouri in the seventh presidential elections."<sup>10</sup>

While there are concerns that the council may unfairly favor one candidate from within the religious leadership over another, candidates from outside leadership circles face total exclusion from the process. In a joint statement issued April 28, 1997, three prominent non-clerical candidates, Ebrahim Yazdi, leader of the banned but tolerated Freedom Movement, Ezatollah Sahabi, a minister in the 1979 government of Mehdi Bazargan, and former Oil Minister Akbar Moinifard, accused the government of preventing non-clerical candidates from airing their views:

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<sup>6</sup> Azam Taleghani in an interview with Radio Pezhavak, the Persian service of Swedish Radio, May 4, 1997.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> *Abrar* daily newspaper, special election supplement, May 1, 1997.

<sup>9</sup> Voice of Islamic Republic of Iran, February 28, 1997, as reported by BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, March 3, 1997.

<sup>10</sup> *Akhbar* daily newspaper, May 1, 1997.

In the more than fifty days since the announcement of our candidacy, we have faced many obstacles and deprivations...the doors of all public places have been closed to us, and even private establishments do not dare give us access because they fear for their security.<sup>11</sup>

These three candidates, along with other opposition figures, were not permitted to run.

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<sup>11</sup> Associated Press, April 28, 1997.

Shi'a Muslim clerical leaders whose views differ from those of the ruling circle are also excluded from participation in the political process. Grand Ayatollah Hossein Ali Montazeri, who was dismissed from his post as deputy leader of the Islamic Republic in 1989 shortly before Ayatollah Khomeini's death, has been forced to live under virtual house arrest in Qom, the center of Shi'a religious learning in central Iran. Since then he has emerged as a rallying point for disaffected clerical opinion. According to unconfirmed reports from Ayatollah Montazeri's office, more than 1,200 Shi'a clerics are currently in detention because of their nonviolent criticism of the government. These include numerous followers of Montazeri as well as followers of other senior clerical figures such as Grand Ayatollah Mohammad Shirazi. In January, Ayatollah Montazeri reportedly wrote to the leader of the Islamic Republic, Ayatollah Khamene'i, urging him to "provide more freedom to the people, particularly during the next presidential elections."<sup>12</sup> The authorities have not heeded Ayatollah Montazeri's advice, and the repression of dissident clerical voices continues.

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

The right to freedom of assembly is provided for in the constitution of the Islamic Republic, but qualified by a requirement that exercise of this right "should not violate the principles of Islam."<sup>13</sup> Article 21 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states:

The right of peaceful assembly shall be recognized. No restrictions may be placed on the exercise of this right other than those imposed in conformity with the law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order (*ordre public*), the protection of public health or morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

The context of the presidential election highlights again the severe restrictions placed on this right by the Iranian government. Non-clerical opponents to the government like Ebrahim Yazdi, the leader of the Freedom Movement, and Ezzatollah Sahabi, the former minister, have been prevented from addressing political gatherings in the run-up to the elections. For example, on May 7, 1997, Sahabi, who is also the editor of *Iran-e Farda* magazine, was prevented from addressing an audience at a mosque in Shiraz on the presidential election.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Statements attributed to Grand Ayatollah Montazeri's office received by Human Rights Watch, April 1997. On file at Human Rights Watch.

<sup>13</sup> Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, art. 27.

<sup>14</sup> *Ettela'at International*, May 8, 1997.

The lack of respect for the right to freedom of assembly has even interfered with the election campaign of one of the candidates approved by the Council of Guardians. At a meeting held at the Howz-e Loqman mosque in Mashhad in northeastern Iran on April 22, 1997, a small group of *ansar-e hezbollahi* (partisans of the party of God)<sup>15</sup> vigilantes disrupted a gathering addressed by Hojatoleslam Khatami while security forces reportedly stood by and did not intervene. The hezbollahi, according to the April 24 edition of *Hamshahri*, carried knives and iron bars and injured some of the people in the crowd. Khatami was unable to complete his remarks, according to *Hamshahri*, a daily that supports Khatami. In Isfahan, on April 24, Khatami's speeches at the Sadr Theological Seminary and the Seyyed mosque were disrupted by groups in the audience chanting slogans against him.<sup>16</sup> The disruption of Khatami's political gatherings, and indeed Khatami's candidacy generally, has sparked a lively debate between different factions within the clerical leadership. For example, after the events in Mashhad, seminary students and teachers in that city issued a statement condemning the disruption as "unethical and an affront to the sanctity of the house of God." They stated, "such action will only harm the hallowed Islamic system." Their protests were echoed by seminarians from Tabriz and several other cities.<sup>17</sup>

Apart from the context of the election, the government has repeatedly shown its intolerance of nonviolent gatherings critical of its policies. For example, on February 16, 1997, riot police broke up a protest by striking oil refinery workers outside the oil ministry in Tehran. Hundreds of demonstrators were detained by the authorities and taken away in buses. The fate of the detainees is unknown, although Human Rights Watch has received unconfirmed reports that four people were executed for participating in this demonstration. Use of force by the security forces or by civilian groups operating with official support is habitually used to break up unauthorized gatherings critical of government policies. Participants in such protests may be detained indefinitely without charge or trial and without access to lawyers or family members. Such tactics inevitably have a chilling effect on the right to freedom of assembly.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Article 19(2) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights provides clear obligations for Iran to uphold freedom of expression, including the freedom "to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds." The Iranian constitution upholds the right to free expression with the qualification that expression must uphold "Islamic principles" and the "interests of the people." These loosely defined directives provide the authorities with broad latitude to suppress newspapers, books and other forms of expression of which they disapprove.<sup>18</sup>

Although controlled by the clerical leadership, the mainstream press has featured spirited exchanges between supporters of the two major candidates. However, dissident voices have been confined to the lower circulation, and restricted independent press.

For example, magazine editor Heshmatollah Tabarzadi, whose candidacy was vetoed by the Council of Guardians, stated in March 1997, "As soon as one speaks about freedom of speech, press freedom or respect for the people's views, he is accused of weakening Islam and revolutionary values." Tabarzadi had been detained in November 1996 for continuing to distribute copies of his magazine, *Payam-e Daneshju* (Message of the Student), after he had

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<sup>15</sup> *Hezbollahi* groups frequently have allegiance to various figures in the government and the clerical leadership. They have usually targeted government critics and free-thinkers of all kinds, burning property, beating individuals and disrupting gatherings, while government security forces take no action to restrain their activities.

<sup>16</sup> *Iran* newspaper, April 24, 1997, as reported by BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, May 3, 1997.

<sup>17</sup> *Hamshahri* (Tehran), April 24, 1997.

<sup>18</sup> See, Middle East Watch (now Human Rights Watch/Middle East), *Guardians of Thought, Limits on Freedom of Expression in Iran* (New York, Human Rights Watch, August 1993).



been banned from running it by a court decision in July 1996. He criticized “the growth of sanctimonious piety in society” that has “turned the law into a club to hit the independent press.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> *Kar-va Kargar* (Tehran), March 11, 1997, as reported by BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, March 20, 1997.  
Human Rights Watch/Middle East 9 May 1997, Vol. 9, No. 2 (E)

The recent pattern of banning newspapers and prosecuting editors and writers critical of the government continues. In April 1997, a court in Mashhad convicted Mohammad Sadegh Javadi-Hessar, the editor of *Tous* magazine, for "causing public confusion." The court banned him from journalism for ten years and fined him the equivalent of U.S.\$1,000 for publishing an article critical of the Islamization program in Iranian universities. In an interview with the Reuter news agency after the sentence, Javadi-Hessar stated, "Most of our friends believe we are being pressured because *Tous* is the only paper that supports [presidential candidate Mohammad] Khatami in this region."<sup>20</sup>

In January, Karamollah Tavahodi, a Kurdish writer in Mashhad, was detained and sentenced to one year in prison because of the content of volume five of his work, *The Historical Movement of Kurds in Khorassan*. The book had been banned prior to his detention. Faraj Sarkouhi, the editor of *Adineh* magazine, was arrested in February and detained on charges of attempting to leave the country illegally. His brother Esmail, arrested on the same charges, was released. Sarkouhi has been denied permission to meet with his family members, his lawyer, or foreign diplomats who have requested to see him.

Since 1995 several newspapers and magazines have been closed down, either by administrative order or through punitive court actions initiated by the government in response to critical articles they published. These include *Jahan-e Eslam*, *Omid*, *Takapou*, *Gouzaresh*, *Gardoun*, *Bahar*, *Azin-e Mehr*, and *Zendehroud*, in addition to *Payam-e Daneshju* and *Tous*.

Further pressure on freedom of expression has been exerted by the death in uncertain circumstances of two prominent intellectuals. In January, Professor Ahmad Tafazzoli of Tehran University was found dead in Punak, a suburb northwest of Tehran. *Hamshahri* reported that "a halo of ambiguity surrounded Dr. Tafazzoli's death."<sup>21</sup> A prominent Iranian writer told Human Rights Watch, speaking on condition of anonymity, that regardless of its cause, Professor Tafazzoli's death had created a climate of fear at the university, adding, "No one would now dare to speak out publicly against the government's policies."<sup>22</sup>

In February 1997, Ebrahim Zalzadeh, publisher of the independent magazine *Mayar*, disappeared in uncertain circumstances. His body was discovered in the morgue of the city coroner of Tehran on March 29. Members of his family believe that the authorities were responsible for his death, in what may be part of a pattern of repression directed against independent writers and publishers in Iran. Mr. Zalzadeh was one of eight writers and publishers who had offered to share in the punishment of Abbas Maroufi, the editor of *Gardoun* magazine, who was sentenced to receive twenty-five lashes in February 1996 for writing an article critical of the government.

In February 1997, the 15 Khordad Foundation, a quasi-independent institution based in Tehran, increased the bounty on the head of the threatened British novelist Salman Rushdie from the equivalent of U.S.\$2 million to \$2.5 million. The increase in the bounty was seen as a product of intense political rivalries in Iran in the run-up to contested elections. President Rafsanjani declined to condemn the increased bounty, or to make any comment on the continuing threat to the author's life arising from the publication of his 1989 novel, *The Satanic Verses*. Iran's leaders today appear to treat the Rushdie issue primarily as a venue for displaying defiance at international pressure and to pressure their political opponents.

The suspicious deaths and harsh punishments handed down by courts against some writers and editors have created a climate in which a broad range of government critics are fearful and less willing to speak out. In an interview

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<sup>20</sup> Reuter, "Iran court bans editor from press work for ten years," April 10, 1997.

<sup>21</sup> *Hamshahri*, January 18, 1997.

<sup>22</sup> Human Rights Watch telephone interview, March 1997.

with *Al-Hayat* newspaper in February 1997, Ezzatollah Sahhabi stated, "We politicians and educated people also feel that there is neither security nor safety. Every now and again the regime raises the issue of a cultural assault and uses it as an excuse to remove someone or suspend a cultural publication."<sup>23</sup>

Even within the officially supported mainstream media, which is divided between editorial supporters of Nateq-Nouri and Khatami in the presidential election, there has been controversy over allegations of bias and violations of election laws. The law bans newspapers or broadcast media that receive funding from official sources from making propaganda on behalf of any individual candidate. This has not stopped highly favorable coverage of the two candidates. Iranian radio and television, which is controlled by supporters of Nateq-Nouri, has, perhaps not surprisingly, been dominated in recent months by news stories about Nateq-Nouri, featuring what amount to his campaign speeches around the country. Meanwhile, coverage of Khatami, his main rival, has been sparse. On the other hand, the largest-circulation national newspaper, *Hamshahri*, owned by the Tehran municipality, whose mayor Gholamhossain Karbaschi is one of the founders of the pro-Khatami Servants of Construction, has been criticized for printing special advertising supplements supporting Khatami's candidacy.

The more conservative members of the Council of Guardians, like Ayatollah Jannati, have made pointed statements about the need for the election rules to be strictly adhered to by the press. On May 6, 1997, *Hamshahri* was obliged to explain its actions in response to an official complaint from the committee for the supervision of electoral campaigning, established by the Council of Guardians to observe adherence to the regulations. *Hamshahri* denied that it had disregarded an order from the leader categorically banning electoral publicity by newspapers that are publicly funded, and said that it had stopped issuing such publicity after the leader's instruction was issued on April 27, 1997.

*Salam* newspaper, a Tehran daily that has often run into controversy because of its criticism of the government, has also been a supporter of Khatami's candidacy. Since May 5, 1997, apparently succumbing to official pressure, *Salam* has halted its heavy coverage of election-related issues and stopped reporting on them altogether.

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<sup>23</sup> *Al-Hayat* (London), February 11, 1997, as reported by BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, February 13, 1997.

Within the clerical leadership there is a real contest between two candidates with contrasting views on several major issues, including the economy and government enforcement of social mores. But this competition is far from being inclusive of all of Iranian society. As Freedom Movement leader Ebrahim Yazdi, who was disqualified from running for president, told *Al-Hayat* in February 1997, "Even in totalitarian regimes, the parties which support the regime have complete freedom...our movement however, is forbidden from expressing its ideas and views through its own media organs, and is not given any facilities for undertaking activities at its headquarters. The security organs hamper all our activities and exert some pressure on us, despite the fact that the constitution guarantees general freedoms."<sup>24</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The U.N. Special Representative on Iran, Maurice Copithorne of Canada, in his recent report to the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, concluded that "human rights, having been left behind, now requires urgent and sustained attention."<sup>25</sup> This conclusion is borne out by a review of the human rights context in which the presidential elections are taking place. The right of Iranians to participate fully in the election of a president is undermined by the same absence of binding legal safeguards that undermines the protection of other fundamental rights and freedoms provided for by international law.

Constitutional safeguards of basic freedom are qualified by a general reference to "Islamic principles" that are subject to broad and variable interpretation by political bodies. The Council of Guardians and other governmental bodies feel able to override constitutional provisions in the name of these principles when they see an interest in doing so. Even more disturbingly, groups within society take it upon themselves, with government acquiescence, to use violence to silence or intimidate politicians or intellectuals with whom they disagree, cloaking their actions by claiming to act in defense of Islam or revolutionary principles.

While narrow competition between political adversaries may be better than no competition at all, the presidential race highlights the fundamental human rights problems for which the government of Iran bears responsibility. The challenge facing the government is to create a legislative and judicial climate in which basic freedoms and rights are upheld through the law. The events of the run-up to the presidential election have demonstrated that Iran still has far to go if that is to be achieved.

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### *Human Rights Watch/Middle East*

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<sup>24</sup> *Al-Hayat*, February 6, 1997, as reported by BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, February 8, 1997.

<sup>25</sup> UN Doc. E/CN.4/1997/63, para. 71.

development director; Cynthia Brown, program director; Barbara Guglielmo, finance and administration director; Robert Kimzey, publications director; Jeri Laber, special advisor; Lotte Leicht, Brussels office director; Susan Osnos, communications director; Jemera Rone, counsel; Wilder Tayler, general counsel; and Joanna Weschler, United Nations representative. Robert L. Bernstein is the chair of the board and Adrian W. DeWind is vice chair. Its Middle East division was established in 1989 to monitor and promote the observance of internationally recognized human rights in the Middle East and North Africa. Eric Goldstein is the acting executive director; Joe Stork is the advocacy director; Virginia N. Sherry is associate director; Clarissa Bencomo, Elahé Sharifpour-Hicks, and Nejla Sammakia are research associates; Gamal Abouali is the Orville Schell fellow; Shira Robinson and Awali Samara are associates. Gary Sick is the chair of the advisory committee and Lisa Anderson and Bruce Rabb are vice chairs.

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