

RELEASE IN FULL

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Subject: Fw: Hunger striking Iran opposition prisoner dies (Reuters)

From: OpsNewsTicker
Sent: Sunday, June 12, 2011 11:52 AM
To: NEWS-Mahogany
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Subject: Hunger striking Iran opposition prisoner dies (Reuters)

TEHRAN (Reuters) - An Iranian prisoner who had been on hunger strike to protest at the death of an opposition figure died on Sunday, local news reports said.

The death of Reza Hoda Saber, a journalist and political activist, coincided with the second anniversary of the disputed re-election of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, an event that sparked months of huge protest rallies in 2009.

Opposition website Kaleme said Hoda Saber had begun a hunger strike after opposition activist and women's rights campaigner Haleh Sahabi died at the funeral of her father on June 1 after scuffles broke out with security forces.

Sahabi was on release from prison herself when she died, having been arrested during the post-election unrest.

Opposition websites reported that she was pushed or punched by plainclothes forces at the funeral for her father, a prominent opposition figure and head of a group called the Nationalist-Religious Coalition.

Iranian authorities deny there was any brutality at the funeral and say Haleh Sahabi died of a cardiac arrest due to natural causes.

Kaleme said Hoda Saber, a member of the Nationalist-Religious Coalition, was on hunger strike aiming to prevent the "repetition of such atrocities against defenceless people."

He died in hospital of a heart complication which doctors said "originated both from the hunger strike as well as his late transfer to hospital," from Tehran's Evin jail, Kaleme said.

Hoda Saber was serving a 10-year sentence, Kaleme said, with one of his crimes being "complicity in setting up an illegal civil organisation", Kaleme said. He was initially arrested in 2000, then released, but picked up again last year and jailed, it said.

Kaleme reported a heavy presence of security forces in Tehran in preparation for possible protests in connection with the second anniversary of Ahmadinejad's re-election.

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