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Four American-Iranians Detained in Iran After Israel Conflict

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At least four American-Iranian citizens have been detained or barred from leaving Iran following heightened tensions after the June war involving the United States and Israel, according to human rights organizations and legal representatives.

The detainees, two men and two women, are being held or restricted in Iran amid what observers describe as a renewed crackdown. Three are imprisoned, and one has been

prohibited from leaving the country. Human Rights Activists News Agency (HRANA), Hengaw, and Hostage Aid Worldwide, an organization supporting families of hostages, confirmed these developments through contacts with those close to the detainees.

Two of the detentions occurred shortly after Israeli strikes on Iranian territory. One of those detained is a 70-year-old Jewish businessman from New York with ties to Israel, and the other is a California-based woman who had previously been held in Evin Prison. Her current location is unknown after the prison was damaged during Israeli attacks. Another woman, also an Iranian American, had been previously barred from leaving Iran in late 2024. She now faces espionage charges, which carry severe penalties under Iranian law. Her passports have been confiscated.

A fifth case involves journalist Reza Valizadeh, formerly with Radio Farda, a US-funded Persian media outlet. He was sentenced to 10 years in prison in October 2024 on charges of “collaborating with a hostile government.”

Iran’s intelligence ministry claimed on Monday it had arrested at least 20 individuals allegedly working with Israeli intelligence. The arrests coincide with renewed efforts by Iran’s President Masoud Pezeshkian to encourage diaspora Iranians to return home, a message complicated by the ongoing detentions. Pezeshkian has stated he would work with judicial authorities to provide safety assurances to returning citizens.

The US State Department has issued a renewed travel warning, urging Americans not to travel to Iran under any circumstances. It also called for the release of all unjustly detained US citizens, but has declined to comment on individual cases.

Rights advocates warn that the detentions could hinder any potential diplomatic progress. “Securing their release must be a core US priority in any future engagement,” said Siamak Namazi, a former detainee and board member of Hostage Aid Worldwide.