Ramin Jahanbegloo (Persian: رامین جهان‌بگلloo, born 1956 in Tehran) is an Iranian philosopher and academic who is currently based in Canada. He teaches at the University of Toronto as a professor of political science.

Biography

Jahanbegloo was born in Tehran, Iran. He has a doctorate in philosophy from Sorbonne University in Paris, France where he lived for twenty years. He was a post-doctorate fellow in Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University. He is married to Azin Moalej, the cousin of renowned Persian philosopher and scholar, Seyyed Hossein Nasr.

Academic and intellectual career

Jahanbegloo's intellectual activity focuses on fostering constructive dialogue between divergent cultures. He has written numerous books and articles in Persian, English and French on the subject of Western philosophy and modernity.

In 1997-2001, he was an adjunct professor of Political Science at the University of Toronto in Canada. During this period, he published his book for the first time in English, Conversations with Isaiah Berlin (which had previously been translated into French. The book records a series of interviews with the famous philosopher Isaiah Berlin, which cover intellectual questions ranging from the moral philosophy of Tolstoy to the meaning of liberalism.

In 2001, he served at the National Endowment for Democracy as a fellow at the a federally funded program, known as the Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellows Program.

Upon returning to Tehran, he was appointed head of the Contemporary Philosophy Department of the Cultural Research Center. In his efforts to promote dialogue, he has interviewed scholars and intellectuals from all over the world, among them George Steiner, Noam Chomsky, Ashis Nandy and the Dalai Lama. In recent years, he invited Richard Rorty, Timothy Garton Ash, Antonio Negri, and Michael Ignatieff and other Western intellectuals to Iran.
Political detention

In late April 2006, on his way to an international conference in Brussels, Jahanbegloo was arrested by the Iranian authorities.

On May 3, Iran judiciary branch officials confirmed that he was arrested and sent to Evin Prison. According to some sources, he was accused of spying. The following day, a friend told CBC News that Jahanbegloo had been moved to a hospital. Human Rights Watch expressed concern over Jahanbegloo being detained without charges and called for his immediate release.

According to Canadian newspaper reports on May 6, Jahanbegloo's friends suspected that he was being tortured. Their fears increased in the wake of reports that Jahanbegloo had been examined twice at the medical clinic of Evin Prison, a detention facility for political prisoners.

An Iranian newspaper, Jomhuri Eslami, accused Jahanbegloo of links to the CIA and the Mossad. "He is considered as one of the key elements in the American plan for the smooth toppling" of the Islamic regime", the newspaper stated, further charging that he was being paid by the United States to conduct "cultural activities against Iran."

On May 13, the Defenders of Human Rights Center (DHRC), an Iranian human rights group headed by Iran's Nobel Peace Prize laureate Shirin Ebadi, voiced concern over the arrest and jailing of the prominent intellectual.

On May 15, the Council of the European Union, following a meeting in Brussels, issued a press release expressing concerns about the detention of Jahanbegloo, including its underlying message that Iranians ought not to communicate or associate with Europeans:

The Council is seriously concerned about the detention of the Iranian philosopher Dr. Ramin Jahanbegloo. The Council calls upon Iranian authorities not to penalize Iranian citizens for their contacts with Europeans, including embassies, universities and cultural institutes.

On May 19, more than 400 prominent international figures, including Nobel laureates, scholars and human rights activists, in an open letter demanded Jahanbegloo's immediate release. Among the undersigned are Noam Chomsky, J.M. Coetzee, Shirin Ebadi, Umberto Eco, Jürgen
Habermas, Timothy Garton Ash, Leszek Kolakowski, Antonio Negri, Richard Rorty, Krzysztof Zanussi, and Howard Zinn.

On June 13, Reuters reported from Tehran that Jahanbegloo was barred from seeing a lawyer during his interrogations.

On July 10, the Council of the European Union issued another press release reiterating its concerns about the detention of Jahanbegloo:

The EU is particularly alarmed about the continuing detention of the respected Iranian academic Dr. Ramin Jahanbegloo, who is well known for his commitment to philosophical and moral principles, non-violence and dialogue.

On August 30, 2006, Jahanbegloo was released from prison after four months of confinement.

On June 29, 2009, commenting on post-election chaos, Iranian minister of intelligence said, "there is no practical possibility of a velvet revolution in Iran" though he accused United States and Britain of trying to orchestrate one.[citation needed] He disclosed that people such as Ramin Jahanbaglou and Haleh Esfandiari had been arrested in connection with such foreign assisted plots to instigate the Iranian intelligentsia but due to legal complications, no prosecution could take place.

Career after imprisonment

In 2006 and 2007 he was Rajni Kothari Professor of Democracy at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies in New Delhi, India. In January, 2008 he returned to the University of Toronto as a professor of Political Science, Massey College Scholar-at-Risk, and Research Fellow at the Centre for Ethics at Trinity College. In 2009, he wrote a book, Talking Architecture: Raj Rewal In Conversation With Ramin Jahanbegloo. The book was inaugurated on 19th December, 2009 in New Delhi, India.

Awards
In October 2009 Jahanbegloo became the winner of the Peace Prize from the United Nations Association in Spain for his extensive academic works in promoting dialogue between cultures and his advocacy for non-violence.

Works

- The Clash of Intolerances (2007)
- Talking India: Conversations with Ashis Nandy (2006)
- Iran: Between Tradition and Modernity (Global Encounters) (2004)
- Gandhi: Aux sources de la non-violence: Thoreau, Ruskin, Tolstoi (Le temps et les mots)
- Conversations with Isaiah Berlin (2000)

Education

- 1999: Post-Doc Middle Eastern Studies (Harvard University)
- 1997: Ph.D. Philosophy (Sorbonne University-Paris IV) with honors
- 1986: M.A. Political Science (Sorbonne University-Paris I) with honors
- 1984: M.A. History (Sorbonne University-Paris I) with honors
- 1981: B.A. Philosophy (Sorbonne University-Paris IV)

Honors, Grants and Fellowships

- 2007: Distinguished Visiting Professor (Central European University- Budapest)
- 2005-2007: Rajni Kothari Chair in Democracy (CSDS- New Delhi, India)
- 2001-2002: Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellow at the National Endowment for Democracy
- 1998-1999: Yarshater Fellow at the CMES (Harvard University)
- 1995-1996: Centre National du Livre (French Ministry of Culture)

Teaching and research career
2008-: Associate Professor in Political Science and Research Fellow at Centre for Ethics (University of Toronto)

July-October 2007: Visiting Professor at Central European University, Budapest

2005-2007: Rajni Kothari Chair in Democracy (CSDS- New Delhi, India)

September 2002-2005: Head of Department for Contemporary Studies, CRB-Iran

September 2003-2005: Professor of Political philosophy at Azad University (Dept. of Political Science)

May 1999-September 2001: Adjunct Professor at the University of Toronto (Dept. of Political Science)

1997-1998: Visiting Scholar at the University of Toronto (Dept. of Political Science)

1995-1997: Lecturer and Researcher in Philosophy (Farzan Publishing House-Tehran-Iran)

1994-1995: Senior Researcher at the French Institute for Iranian Studies (Tehran-Iran)

1993-1994: Lecturer in Political Philosophy at the Iranian Academy of Philosophy

Areas of Research

Iranian Studies, Political Philosophy, Nonviolence

Languages

English, French (native fluency), German (reading), Persian, Italian (reading)

Advisory Boards

PEN Canada (2008-)
The Liberal (2008-)
The Review of Politics(2008-)
Gulf 2000( Columbia University)