

# SETAREH SIEG

**SUMMARY:** International award-winning investigative and human rights journalist, media executive. Roles spanned reporter, foreign correspondent, anchor, TV program and digital platform developer; and network news director. Passionate to gather and disseminate news and information to readers, listeners and viewers via TV, satellite, Internet and social media, particularly to countries where democracy is suppressed, free press prohibited, and human rights disregarded. An Iranian newspaper called her “the enemy of the State who is stopping traffic in her hours of broadcast”. Strong leader continuously rewarded with greater responsibilities to manage 24/7 operation. Proficient in English, French and Farsi; doctorate in political history, with specialization on the Middle East. Career-long focus on human rights, civil rights, press freedom.

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

### **VOICE OF AMERICA, Washington D.C.**

**1998 - Present**

*Largest U.S. international broadcaster, originating and disseminating news and information in 47 languages to 300+ million people each week around the world through digital, television, radio, satellite, FM and microwave. Publicly funded by the U.S. Congress at \$250 million annually, with 960 employees.*

#### **Director, Program Review**

*(2021 -Present)*

Responsible for evaluation of existing programs and their reception and impact to recommend improvements and new strategic program development across all platforms for the 47 VOA languages based on media and political environments of targeted audiences. Support the agency in Congressional relations.

#### **Director, “VOA 365” Persian News Network, 2014 (Deputy, 2012; Executive Editor, 2011) (2011 -2021)**

Executive responsible to initiate, develop and implement all original in-house and contractual programming and operations of worldwide news and information for the Persian audience wherever they were located, across all platforms. Managed hour-to-hour operations and long-term strategic and program direction of 24/7 staff of 200 personnel around the world with a \$20 million budget.

#### **Kelu Chao, Acting USAGM CEO performance ratings for Setareh Sieg 2020:**

*“Ms. Sieg’s overall supervision and management of VOA Persian in 2019-20 deserves a rating of outstanding owing to her ability to keep a very complex and high-priority division performing at a very high level. In particular, Ms. Sieg deftly handled the coverage of numerous crises and major news stories in the target region, directing her team to provide live coverage and analysis on VOA 365. Her ceaseless oversight of the division’s editorial standards and on-air presentation through the COVID crisis, popular unrest in Iran, and heightened U.S.-Iranian tensions has led to increased audience size and trust among the target audience. Ms. Sieg’s efforts to update the division’s digital strategy and to launch new programming has likewise contributed to soaring consumption of VOA Persian”.*

#### **Report from USAGM Director of Digital Strategy, October 30, 2019:**

*“VOA 365 has seen extraordinary growth on digital platforms and is rapidly expanding the channel’s audiences and impact..... VOA 365 has generated 454 million video views. That’s a 180% increase ... and an all-time record for the team”.*

- ♦ **Grew social media initiatives on Facebook (increase of 10%,); Instagram (increase of 178%), Twitter (increase of 60% in engagements); increase of %165 video views per week, increase of 59% overall traffic.**
- ♦ Strategized, planned and supervised the launched of the first USAGM 24/7 Persian network into Iran and the greater ME in 2019, with new programming targeted to Iran’s millennials to draw in younger audience.

- ◆ Reached 23% of adults in Iran through 14 unique daily and weekly TV programs in Farsi, consisting of 4 daily live newscasts; around the clock news briefs; and weekly talk, investigative, magazine, roundtable, culture, sports programs and new high-quality acquisitions from CNN, ABC News, National Geographic TV and the Smithsonian Channel. Exceeded management targets for reach.
- ◆ For the 2020 presidential election in U.S., programmed unprecedented 8 hours of live results in Farsi, with record 4.2 million video views and 775,000 interactions on VOA Persian Instagram, followed by 4-hour inauguration special in Farsi, with 3.5 million views on Instagram. Correspondent at political party conventions.
- ◆ Extraordinary coverage of nuclear agreement between U.S. and Iran in 2015 – hosted hour-long special from Vienna, with Deutsche Welle, BBC, Radio France and Radio Farda participating; oversaw wall-to-wall coverage of 10 Congressional hearings, with simultaneous translation in Farsi; and personally interviewed Secretary of State John Kerry hours after U.N. Security Council endorsed pact. Covered U.N. General Assembly.
- ◆ One-on-one interviews in English, French or Farsi with political leaders, including Vladimir Putin of Russia, Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel; and George W. Bush

**Main Anchor, Reporter, and Managing Editor, VOA Persian News Network (1998 - 2011)**

- ◆ Key developer and lead anchor to inaugurate half-hour nightly Persian-language TV “News & Views” program in 2003 (through 2012). As anchor, described by the Iranian regime’s most conservative daily newspaper Kayhanas “the enemy of the State who is stopping traffic in her hours of broadcast”.
- ◆ Initiated, developed, produced and hosted “Perspectives with Setareh”, half-hour weekly flagship TV program in English for broadcast and translation across multiple language services, with policymakers and political leaders who affected international relations, human rights, and global culture.
- ◆ Reported on U.S. President George W. Bush administration, traveling with White House press corps in 2006- 2008 for coverage of his and other officials’ visits to Afghanistan, Egypt, India, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Latin America, Pakistan, Palestinian territories, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey for live reports in English and Farsi.

**MEHREGAN MAGAZINE, Washington, D.C.**

**1996 - 2004**

*A journal of human rights, politics and culture by prominent writers, poets, human rights lawyers and activists, supported by the National Endowment for Democracy.*

**Managing Editor**

*(1996 – 2004)*

Identified and assigned contributors (including human rights activist Shirin Ebadi, winner of 2003 Nobel Peace Prize); edited and brought to publication journals targeted to readers interested in current affairs of Iran.

**ADJUNCT UNIVERSITY FACULTY, Washington, D.C. metropolitan area**

**1984 - 2012**

*Developed curriculum and taught courses in French Studies; Sociology.*

- ◆ Georgetown University (1998 – 2012)
- ◆ American University (1993 – 1998)
- ◆ Northern Virginia Community College (1984 – 1990)

**PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES**

- ◆ Panelist, “Women’s Rights and Protests in Iran”, Howard University, 2023
- ◆ Guest speaker, “A Battle for Public Opinion, Media in Iran”, Ohio State University, 2022
- ◆ Guest speaker, “Youth, Social Media, and Disinformation in Iran”, Ohio State University, 2020
- ◆ Panelist, “Challenges of International Journalism: Rise of Fake News”, George Washington University, 2017
- ◆ Featured, Iranian Women in American Journalism Project, Foreign Policy Association, 2012
- ◆ Speaker, Iranian American Women’s Leadership Conference, 2015, 2012

**PUBLICATION**

- ◆ “Iranian Terrorism: Focus on the Sponsor, not the Surrogate”, Op-Ed, *Jerusalem Post*, December 28, 2022
- ◆ “Breaking the Law to Go Online In Iran”, Op-Ed, *New York Times*, June 24, 2014

## **EDUCATION**

- ◆ Ph.D., Political History, Summa Cum Laude, University of Paris VII, Denis Diderot, France, 1995
- ◆ Diplome d'Etudes Approfondies (DEA), 1st Year Ph.D., Political History and Middle East Civilization  
University of Paris VII, Denis Diderot, France, 1982
- ◆ Master of Political Science and Bachelor of Art in Law, University of Paris I, Pantheon-Sorbonne, France, 1981
- ◆ General Academic Studies Degree (DEUG), Law, University of Paris II, Assas, France, 1979

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- ◆ “Building Organizational Cultures: A Framework For Leaders”, Harvard College, 2023
- ◆ “Becoming A Leader: “Developing Your Style and Making Sound Decisions”, Harvard College, 2021
- ◆ Certificate, Federal Executive Institute (Leadership Seminar), Aspen Institute, 2012
- ◆ Certificate, National Leadership Institute, University of Maryland, 2012