

RouhaniThesis.com

Who are we?

We are a group of American and Iranian students in North America universities who have found evidence of serious cases of plagiarism in the doctoral thesis of Mr. Hassan Rouhani, the current president of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Born Hassan Feridon, the 1999 GCU alumnus is now accused of lifting over 60% language (90% in some chapters) in his thesis submitted to GCU as partial fulfillment for a Ph.D. certificate in Islamic Law. Feridon has claimed doctorate since before 1979, more than 20 years before the university prized him one in 1999.

Our Mission

At <https://RouhaniThesis.com/>, we believe in common academic values and authorship rights. We also tend to believe in the power of student movements and the necessity of an academic conscience vis-à-vis unwarranted social climbing on account of the academia. To practice a political correctness antithetical to academic professionalism constitutes an act of injustice and treachery like no other.

In light of the new legal actions due against Glasgow Caledonian University, as the student group behind the investigation, RouhaniThesis.com presently wishes to announce that our attempts to directly engage with the university regarding Hassan Feridon's plagiarism case has come to an end now. Henceforth, while closely following the victims' legal proceedings against the university, RouhaniThesis.com moves toward enlightening the student body at Glasgow Caledonian University.

We, members of the student team at RouhaniThesis.com, call on you not to stand aside, but to stand up and be counted. We call for grassroots campaigns in classes and on campus to mobilize the student body at GCU to demand prompt academic justice for Feridon's plagiarism case. RouhaniThesis.com also calls on all faculty and staff at Glasgow Caledonian University to independently assess GCU alumnus Feridon's Ph.D. Plagiarism Report (accessible on RouhaniThesis.com [homepage](#)) and to speak out against plagiarism and its perpetrators.

Your calculated reaction directly affects numerous students and alumni who hold hard-fought degrees from GCU. It also improves an 80-million-strong nation's face in holding their elected officials accountable.

Top 8 Victims

GCU alumnus Hassan Feridon's thesis consists of about 97,000 words out of which 60% has been proved verbatim plagiarism so far. As of now, Feridon's Top 8 victims of unacknowledged lift is updated as

follows (Please note that the aggregate text volume of the top 4 most plagiarised constitute 42% of the whole thesis, while the top 8 go over 50%):

1. Nearly 16,700 words from Ali Akbar Kalantari of Iran (15,200 words in Chapter 4 + 1,300 words in footnotes + 200 words in Conclusion)
2. Nearly 11,000 words from Ahmad Hasan of Pakistan (10,300 words in Chapters 1, 2, 3 and Conclusion + 725 words in footnotes)
3. Nearly 9,400 words from Hashim Kamali of Afghanistan (8,750 words in different chapters + 650 words in footnotes)
4. Nearly 5,400 words from Abbas Salehi of Iran (5,000 words in Chapter 5 + 430 words in footnotes)
5. Nearly 3,000 words from Juma Mikidadi of Tanzania (2,800 words in Chapter 5 + 100 words in footnotes + 125 words in Preface, Chapter 3 and Conclusion)
6. Nearly 2,250 words from Wael Hallaq of Palestine (2,100 words in Chapter 1 + 150 words in footnotes)
7. Nearly 2,075 words from Chibli Mallat of Lebanon (2,000 words in Chapter 6 + 75 words in footnotes)
8. Nearly 1,600 words from Morteza Motahari of Iran (1,400 words in Chapter 2 + 125 words in Chapter 4 + 110 words in Conclusion)

Background

Beginning in 2013, the Telegraph [reported](#) a possible case of plagiarism in Feridon's thesis based on the then-only-released two-page [abstract](#) on GCU Library blog upon Iranian president's inauguration into office. Publishing footage of his graduation ceremony, GCU had previously [congratulated](#) Feridon on presidency, hoping "his period as a scholar at Glasgow Caledonian University will prove beneficial" to him, while quoting his Ph.D. thesis supervisor Mahdi Zahra describing him as a "very knowledgeable" student who "knew his subject well."

Following initial reports of plagiarism in 2013, GCU dismissed such accusations, maintaining its alumnus has suitably cited references in the thesis body. It stopped short of an official academic investigation into the thesis though, as reported by [the Times Higher Education](#) at the time, while failing to answer to demands for making it publicly available despite an official request for authorization from Feridon as per GCU internal policy. The university claimed it had provided some media access, though.

Starting from 2016, [DAAD](#), an Iranian transparency NGO with access to the [full thesis](#) from Science Ministry's [IRANDOC](#) (Iranian Research Institute for Information Science and Technology), confirmed the "clear and undeniable" evidence that RouhaniThesis.com had uncovered substantiating previous reports of plagiarism in the thesis, saying it "undoubtedly shocks and astonishes any academic." According to

RouhaniThesis.com [report](#), iThenticate had revealed 39 to 43 percent verbatim plagiarism in chapters 1 to 3 of Feridon's Ph.D. thesis, with no credit whatsoever given to actual writers. Further human-based reports indicated over 90% plagiarism in chapters 4 and 5.

DAAD has independently contacted GCU Chancellor Muhammad Yunus for comment. On May 29, 2017, the NGO in charge of increasing transparency and fighting academic corruption in Iran in a letter to Yunus approved the new bulk of evidence for plagiarism that were initially uncovered in GCU alumnus Hassan Feridon's Ph.D. thesis by RouhaniThesis.com.

Response from GCU

Upon deliverance of the full report to GCU Secretary Jan Hulme, we received an inactive message in return merely confirming her receipt of the new evidence, while acknowledging it on behalf of the university as "extensive documentation."

Publicly, GCU has been wholly reluctant in reacting transparently to resurfaced news since 2016, initially attempting to debunk proofs in an interview with [the Times](#) by Ms. Hulme, in so rushed a move it was clearly aimed at blunting the scandal as a libel. This falls in line with GCU's failure back in 2013 to set up an official academic investigative committee to check Hassan Feridon's thesis against initial reports of plagiarism. GCU has also shown itself to be perfectly disinclined to follow up the evidence en clair it has been receiving in repeated emails by RouhaniThesis.com.

Such recklessness is further proved by GCU's

1. Failure to make Feridon's thesis publicly available online for third-party investigators in the course of 4 years since 2013;
2. Acknowledging nothing more than the "receipt" of evidence and/or emails in response to several enquiries;
3. Announcing that "the received material includes extensive text in Farsi as well as a number of unauthenticated translations into English", despite all its considerable number of Persian-speaking students, alumni and faculty, including thesis own advisors, as well as conveniently accessible Persian translation services in Scotland and the greater UK; and above all,
4. Outrageous, ambiguous reiterated claim that it is not "expected to report on individual cases," revealing irresponsible, discreditable and potentially suspicious PR policy.

Global Reactions

GCU is now recognized as complicit by victims of this plagiarism case, including by University of Edinburgh alumnus Prof. Juma Mikidadi Omari Mtupah, now a professor of Islamic Law in the Muslim

University of Morogoro, Tanzania, who recently announced he's asking for \$15 million in settlement from Hassan Feridon merely for his authorship rights regarding the lifting of "over 2000 words" from his works, and has further emphasized that as his next move, he's considering bringing GCU to court for collusion.

On 28 May 2017, Daniel Pipes of Campus Watch [called](#) for public support on Twitter to sign a petition for GCU to reassess Feridon's Ph.D. qualification and revoke his degree. The [petition](#) on Change.org has so far attracted nearly 10,000 signatures.

On 17 May 2017, Al-Monitor [published](#) an interview with Keivan Ebrahimi, a founding member of RouhaniThesis.com, about plagiarism in Feridon's doctoral thesis.

On 27 June 2013, GCU Spokesman Charles McGhee [told](#) University Herald that a US Pentagon activist had independently levelled similar charges against Feridon and provided the university with evidence of plagiarism in his doctoral thesis.

Reception in Iran

In Iran, Prof. Ali Akbar Kalantari, a member of the faculty in Shiraz University College of Theology, who is a major victim of plagiarism for Chapter 4, has called for official measures from the Education and Research Commission of the Iranian Parliament, the Majles, an entity with the constitutional power to oust the president.

On 8 August 2017, faculty professors from Shiraz University publicized a letter they had penned a week earlier to Iranian Parliament's Article 90 Commission along with a 250-page documentation on the president's various legal violations regarding his academic credentials. They called for action to preserve the rights of their colleague, Prof. Ali Akbar Kalantari. On 27 August 2017, they penned a second letter to Iranian Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani, questioning Feridon's qualifications to stand a second term as the nation's president.

Another Iranian victim of Rouhani's academic wrongdoings, historian Kamran Ghazanfari, announced he will accompany Prof. Kalantari in suing the President for plagiarism at the Judiciary.

Four Iranian national papers ran front page articles calling for swift action from the Iranian Parliament and the Judiciary:

[Controversial Certificate](#), 30 April 2017, Sobh-e No (New Morning)

["Copy & Paste"](#), 14 May 2017, Afkar (Thoughts)

[Report on a Plagiarism Case](#), 12 June 2017, Vatan-e Emrooz (Homeland Today)

[Doctorate/Doctors](#), 2 July 2017, Afkar (Thoughts)

[An International Scandal for Iran](#), 8 July 2017, Noh-e Day Weekly (9th of Day, the tenth month in Iranian calendar)

The Iranian president has so far evaded a clear stance in the face of criticism from Iranian media, stating he won his degree “from an internationally accredited university, not in exchange for land.” He didn't confirm or deny the accusations.

On 15 March 2017, Mohammad Javad Abtahi, a member of Iranian Parliament's Education Commission confirmed reports that Iranian president's brother and Special Secretary Hossain Feridon had not followed legal procedures in getting his Ph.D. from Tehran's Shahid Beheshti University, neither.

Academic fraud has precedence in Iranian political sphere. In 2008, Interior Minister Ali Kordan was accused of faking a Ph.D. in law from Oxford University. Responding to an [inquiry](#) by Alef on 11 August 2008, Oxford University [denied](#) it had awarded Kordan an honorary doctorate of law or any other degree. This resulted in his impeachment and removal from office in 2008, and at the same time safeguarded Oxford University's reputation. Alef, the news website behind the revelation, is founded by DAAD's chairman and former MP Ahmad Tavakoli.