

NEWS ON IRAN

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Palestinian Elections

NCR Secretariat, Jan. 22 - NCR President Massoud Rajavi sent a telegram to Yasser Arafat, congratulating him on his victory in the elections and on the formation of the Palestinian Representative Council.

In his telegram, Mr. Rajavi said: The Palestinian people's overwhelming participation in this election is a clear and absolute rebuff to the religious, terrorist dictatorship ruling Iran which spared no effort to display its enmity to the establishment of regional peace and tranquillity and its opposition to democracy and national sovereignty for the deprived people of Palestine.

Kurdish Delegation meets Rajavi

Iran Zamin, Jan. 22 - NCR President Massoud Rajavi received a delegation representing the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran - Revolutionary Leadership (KDPI-R.L.) in Baghdad.

Both parties stressed the need to overthrow the ruling fundamentalists and establish democracy in Iran. They condemned any form of rapprochement with the mullahs and denounced the regime's interventions in Iraqi Kurdistan.

The Kurdish delegation and the NCR President also reiterated the need to observe the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in tomorrow's Iran.

Special Representative's Mandate

Iran Zamin, Jan. 22 - At least 400 victims of the Khomeini regime's persecution, held a rally across from the United Nations European headquarters, calling for a firm policy against Tehran's rulers aimed at compelling them to unconditionally open the gates of their prisons and torture chambers to the Special Representative of the UN Human Rights Commission, enabling him to prepare a full report on the mullahs' atrocities in the last 17 years.

A seven-member delegation of the families of the victims of political executions in Iran, went to the Palais des Nations and presented the Special Representative's assistant with 150 letters written by victims of persecutions in Iran.

Public Hanging

AFP, Jan. 17 - Two people charged with murder were publicly hanged in Narmak, Tehran. The victims, Isma'il Hosseini, 27, and Jafar Najafi, 25, received 74 lashes before their execution.

KDPI, Jan. 18 - Dozens of people have been arrested and imprisoned in Paveh and other regions in Kurdistan in the past three weeks. Fearing arrest, scores of others were fled the area. Six of those arrested were Jahangir Hatami, Sabour Khani, Mohsen Ahmadi, Khasseh Hatami, Borzan Doroudgar, and Nouredin Lotfi.

Protests

Voice of Mojahed, Jan. 18 - Workers at Isfahan's Pars Fastoon textile factory gathered in front of the factory and halted their work. The security forces prevented entry of

non-workers. Pars Fastoon factory is on Isfahan-Tehran road and has 1,200 workers who work in three different shifts round the clock. The workers first began their protests in December.

Voice of Mojahed, Jan. 18 - Students at Isfahan's Industrial University protested the school's one-year expulsion of 25 students, including five of their female cohorts. The decision followed extensive student protests and clashes with the security guards in the previous months.

Reports from Arak, central Iran, say that the students of Free University's technical school also staged a protest against university officials.

Freedom of Opinion and Suffrage

Tehran radio, Jan. 19 - Excerpts from the Friday prayer sermon by Chief Justice Mohammad Yazdi:

The argument is over who has the right for legislation? Who must decide on the laws? Who determine what to say and what not to say? Who can say whether this book is allowed to be published or not? Who can say whether this demonstration can take place or not? Who can tell us whether we can leave the country or not? The main argument is that human life naturally deems the necessity of obeying some law. But who makes this law? Our difference with the world is rooted here, over this very issue. The world says it is these very same people who must legislate and decide the rules and limits...

In our regime, however, the judicial apparatus is supervised by the *Vali-e Amr* (Guardian of all affairs). Not only the responsibility of the judicial system, but those of the entire regime rests with the *Vali-e Amr*. We do respect the popular suffrage... But we say that it is not credible. Why? Because we regard the popular suffrage as subordinate to the will of God... It does not matter if it is a majority vote or a consensus. As long as the suffrage counters the will of God, it does not count....

Tehran radio, Jan. 13 - Qom's Friday prayer leader, Javadi Amoli: Satan lives **deep** in the mind. Man must be pure in his thoughts and must guard his memories... Books, pens, actions, and expressions about the Islamic regime, sometimes about the separation of church and state, or about the separation of science and religion, or religion and wisdom, etc., all present a perverted Islam, saying that ours is not presentable... The one who wages war on God today, was an opponent yesterday, and used to be just a dissident the day before. Dissent never remains as a difference of opinion. The difference is a legitimate spring board for opposition. And opposition is an

ominous tool for waging war on God. It is not that all those who wage war on God began doing so when they were in the wombs of their mothers...

High prices, poverty

NCR statement, Jan. 19 - Bread price increases in recent weeks have led to many protests by the public in most cities across the country. The state-controlled daily, *Jomhuri- Islami*, reported on January 16 that the price of "barbari" bread had risen in Tehran.

According to official government figures, bread accounts for more than 50% of the people's calorie intake, and only one out of every four Iranians has access to suitable food. Fearing the outpour of protests by the public, the regime has put all its suppressive units on alert.

Jomhuri Islami, Jan. 16 - A housewife waiting in the queue tried to hide her tears. She said the poor are being deprived even from bread. "I do not know whether I should cry about the high housing rents and prices of consumer goods, or over our meager income. We really do not know how to survive." Having learned of the price of barbari sold at 150 rials per loaf, the woman left the queue without making any purchases.

Kayhan, Jan. 17 - The price of rice has once again risen, due to the increase in the price of bread. This is while the price of potatoes also rose over the past few weeks.

Ettela'at, Jan. 15 - Based on official statistics published in Tehran, the price of goods and services increased 85% in summer compared to the same period last year.

Ettela'at, Jan. 18 - In its session on how to increase the government's income, the Majlis approved tax hikes on cigarettes, charging two additional rials for each cigarette.

Financial corruption

Reuters, Jan. 18, Tehran - The former head of Iran's state tobacco company has admitted taking \$6.3 million in commissions from foreign firms but denied using the money improperly, a newspaper said on Thursday.

Ali Asghar Samet told an Islamic court he made another 6.4 billion rials (\$2.1 million) from selling free cigarettes supplied by the companies on the black market, but added that he used \$4.5 million of the sums on building projects at the state tobacco company and on charities, the daily *Jomhuri Islami* said.

The daily *Kayhan* quoted Samet as saying he also gave \$1 million and 22,000 pounds sterling (\$33,000) of the money to Iran's Intelligence (Internal Security) Ministry.

An economic downturn

AFP, Jan. 17, Tehran - High inflation, low industrial production, plunging economic growth: several months before the elections in Iran, the economy of this country faces another tumult. Although the government curbed the inflation last summer by fixing the dollar exchange rate at a single rate, inflation has gone out of control in recent weeks. The price of many of food stuffs have

increased by 10-20%, prompting strong criticism in the Majlis and the press....

Issa Kalantari, the Minister of Agriculture, acknowledged that Iranian families can no longer afford buying rice, one of the main staples. According to *Akhbar* newspaper, the Iranian Central Bank puts the inflation rate in the first nine months of the current year at 64%. Many Iranian and foreign experts believe this figure is much lower than the actual rate and think it will exceed 100% in the current year. Mohammad Baqer Bahrami, chairman of the Majlis administrative and employment affairs committee, confirmed this pessimistic estimate and predicted that the buying power of wage earners will decline by 50% in the coming year....

While the economy grew by 4.5% in 1994, and 12% in 1991, last year, it expanded by less than 2%. Iran's financial authorities do not predict any growth for 1996....

Elections

Salaam, Jan. 12-15- Letters to the editor:

- I am neither educated, nor a university graduate. I don't want to take part in the elections. I am one of the many destitute people who fought at the warfronts. But I swear to God that I will not take part in the elections because the outcome is already determined.

- It is better that we do not participate in the elections. The situation could not get worse than the status-quo.

Internal conflicts

Tehran radio, Jan. 19 - Mullah Mo'men, a member of the Council of Guardians and member of the Assembly of Experts, was seriously wounded in a car accident and is presently hospitalized in Tehran. Previously the director of Qom's seminary, he was ousted by Khamenei last October for undermining Khamenei's efforts to become the Marja (source of emulation). In 1994, the revolutionary guards and agents of the Ministry of Intelligence raided his house.

Carlsruhe resists pressures from Bonn on Fallahian case

Tages Spiegel, Jan. 18, Bonn/Berlin- Mr. Nehm, the General Federal Prosecutor does not let the Federal Government's opposition affect him in his investigation against Ali Fallahian, Minister of the Iranian Secret Services. Nehm rejects the idea of halting judicial proceedings against Fallahian who is accused of murder. The Minister of Justice confirmed in a letter the General Federal Prosecutor makes it clear to the Federal Government that invoking paragraph 153C does not constitute a sufficient reason to halt his judicial investigation and prosecution. According to para. 153C, if a penal procedure inflicts any harm on the Federal Republic, it can be stopped.

Ali Fallahian has been accused by the highest Judicial authority in Germany of having ordered the murder of four exiled Iranians in September 1992 at the Mykonos restaurant in Berlin. The German internal security organization (BVF) received reliable information in

November 1995, according to which a hit squad from Fallahian's bureau in Tehran flew to Berlin a week ahead of time to coordinate the plot against the exiled Kurdish oppositionists with the agents based in Berlin.... Since the start of the judicial proceedings against Fallahian, the Federal Prosecutor has faced repeated

explanatory briefings from the Federal Government whose objective is to convince this department of the need to put a stop to this investigation in favor of higher interests.