

NEWS ON IRAN

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DOMESTIC

Special Representative's Visit to Iran

Reuters, Feb. 9 - United Nations Human Rights Commission new special representative on rights in Iran Maurice Copithorne will travel to Tehran on Saturday for a six-day tour, U.N. officials said on Friday.

In a message to Copithorne the opposition National Council of Resistance of Iran called on him to investigate what it called specific cases of rights abuses.

These included mass executions, torture and rape of female prisoners, Council President Massoud Rajavi said.

In the past, the Iranian government has declined to accept U.N. rights investigators. Rajavi said in his letter to Copithorne that Tehran had accepted the new investigator's visit reluctantly "and for a very short and insufficient duration."

Rajavi also asked Copithorne to question the Iranian authorities about the number of political prisoners it had held since the 1979 revolution, "the burial sites, including mass graves, of execution victims, and the number of those executed under the age of 18."

Council officials in Geneva said they had information from Tehran that political prisoners were being moved out of prisons that Copithorne was likely to visit in Iran.

They said Iranians who had tried to send messages to the investigator in Geneva had been arrested after their telephone lines were tapped.

AFP, Feb. 17 - The UN Special Representative on Human rights announced Saturday that a large number of people had tried to meet him during his recent visit to Iran to speak to him about their missing family members and their daily living problems...

Mr. Copithorne said that in brief conversations and in letters, many Iranians complained that their relatives had disappeared. A number of people had grievances over being mistreated and the government's economic policies.

He evaluated: "We do not see things black and white. We might face change." He expressed satisfaction over having met the officials and those outside the government, whom he had asked to meet. A number of people were imprisoned in Evin. Mr. Copithorne said he spent half a day in prison and spent thirty minutes meeting the prisoners...

Three from same family executed

Reuters, Feb. 15 - An Iranian opposition group said Iran had executed three of its members, all from the same family, in prisons in the west of the country.

The Paris-based National Council of Resistance of Iran named the three as Azar Hassani, 31, her brother Alireza Hassani, 36, and their cousin, Sadeq Hassani.

The Council called on a United Nations human rights investigator now in Iran to look into the alleged executions.

The Council statement identified the three as "Mujahideen political prisoners" and said the executions took place some 10 days ago in Hamedan and Kermanshah.

Elections

Israeli radio, Feb. 11 - The Ansar-e Hezbollah (helpers of God) issued their first statement on the Majlis elections in Tehran in which they expressed opposition to the election of individuals opposed to the Guardianship of the Jurisprudent, or those who are known as liberals and technocrats. The Ansar-e Hezbollah wrote: We urge the Council of Guardians to show decisiveness against the infiltrate agents of the Arrogance, the liberals, technocrats and dissidents, and prevent their entry to the Majlis. The President of the Council of Guardians, to whom the statement is addressed, is Jannati who also heads the Ansar-e Hezbollah and is their main backer.

Clerics and women's rights

Al-Hadth weekly, Jordan, Feb. 7 - Analysts pause on the greater role of women in the Iranian society, while four years ago the mere mentioning of this matter had been rejected in the Majlis. Rafsanjani has no other way but to agree with the formation of women's organizations and approach the problem as a social issue, analysts say. They have even gone further and interpreted the request by Rafsanjani's daughter for the allocation of 50% of the Majlis seats to women as jumping over the experience of the Mojahedin, as Maryam Rajavi's activities and appearance increase in the televisions of Iran's neighboring countries.

Christians persecuted

AP, Feb. 15 -- Witnesses testifying before a House subcommittee recounted dozens of abuses, including killings, beatings, imprisonment, denial of medical treatment and harassment. The hearing follows a call last month by the National Association of Evangelicals to coordinate efforts against persecution of Christians abroad.

"While some Iranian Christians have lost their lives, others have found no choice but to worship in small underground house churches," said Abbe Ghaffari,

executive director of Iranian Christians International. "A small percentage, about 1 percent, find ways to flee Iran."

Iraqi Refugees Pressured in Iran

As-Sharq Al-Awsat, Feb. 12 - Informed sources said dozens of Iraqis residing in Iran have been arrested... A spokesman for the arrested families said the Iraqis have a shaky situation in Iran because the Iranian officials have not extended their work and residence permits since 1980. Those who have come after 1980, do not have a proper legal status... Due to economic problems, the Iranian regime intends to expel the refugees but the spokesman for the refugees said there are other reasons for the arrests as well.

FOREIGN

Iran abducted dissident in Germany

AP, Feb. 16 - An Iranian opposition group Friday accused the Tehran government of organizing the kidnap and torture of an Iranian dissident living in Germany.

Bonn police have said the 28-year-old victim told them he was abducted at gun point near Bonn Feb. 2 by four Farsi-speaking men who locked him up in a basement for two days and mistreated him. The man told investigators he escaped when his captors stopped at a gas station while trying to transfer him to another location.

Police said the man had serious wounds, mainly on his back. Ebrahim Zakeri, a member of the Iranian National Resistance Council, accused the Iranian secret service of carrying out the kidnapping.

Zakeri told reporters Friday that the dissident had spent time in a terrorist training camp in Iran before breaking with the regime and fleeing to Germany, where he has applied for asylum.

Bonn police and the local prosecutor's office are investigating the case.

Zakeri charged that the Iranian embassies in Bonn and the Dutch capital, The Hague, were involved in the abduction.

Mohammed Mohadessin, another Council member, criticized Germany's policy of refusing to isolate Tehran. "The appeasement policy and the concessions of the German government to the regime and the comprehensive economic ties encourage the mullahs to commit further terrorist acts," he told the news conference.

Mohadessin called on Germany to close all Iranian diplomatic offices in the country, saying they were bases for spying on and terrorizing Iranian dissidents.

Senator urges anti-Iran campaign by Germany

Reuters, Feb. 13 - U.S. Senator Al D'Amato stepped up his attempt to pressure Germany into cooperating with

the United States to tighten the noose around Iran's economy.

In a February 13 letter to German President Helmut Kohl, the second in a month, D'Amato raised concern about Bonn's credits to Iran and rescheduling of Iran's debt at low rates. "I urge you in the strongest terms to seek an immediate end to the preferential treatment of this terrorist regime in Iran," he said.

Senate banking committee chairman D'Amato, author of a bill passed by the Senate to penalize foreign companies that invest in Iran's oil and gas sector, said Germany had rescheduled Tehran's debt at 5-7 percent, without a 12 percent risk premium which would apply to it in commercial markets.

Critical dialogue criticized

AFP, Feb. 14 - Niels Helveg Petersen, the Danish Foreign Minister said Wednesday, that critical dialogue has not proved effective with Iran because the death decree for Salman Rushdie is still binding. In an article published in the Foreign Ministry's *Udenrigs* magazine wrote: "The policy of critical dialogue with the Tehran regime, with Denmark being one of its initiators, has made some progress but much less than what was expected..." Morten Haahr, member of the Committee to Defend Salman Rushdie, said: "If not accompanied with political and economic punishments, this policy will always remain in an impasse."

Middle East Peace

AFP, Feb. 16 - Ali Akbar Nouri and Rafsanjani, the Iranian President, reiterated their unaltered opposition to the Israeli regime in their speeches before tens of thousands of audience on the occasion of the Day of Qods (Jerusalem). Nateq Nouri said: "Even if all the leaders of the world recognize Israel, we will continue our struggle with it because Islamic resistance against a Jewish state is a religious duty and no Muslim can turn his back on it."

Rafsanjani said: "The people of the region will never submit to an American peace. The World of Islam, including Iran, has its own opinion and will never budge an iota of its rights."

U.S. terrorism list completed

UPI, Feb. 16 -- U.S. officials said that Iran, Iraq, Libya, Cuba, Sudan, North Korea and Syria will remain on the State Department's list of nations that support international terrorism.

Tehran: 17th Anniversary of Revolution

Small turn out and A Gloomy Atmosphere

The small number of demonstrators, amounting only to tens of thousands, and the gloomy atmosphere of the ceremonies marking the revolution's anniversary in Tehran, were too obvious to be concealed by and the

regime's propaganda about the participation of "million-strong" crowds.

At least 10,000 participants were Afghan refugees who received money and food staples for their participation. Consistent with their routine every year, the regime had ordered soldiers from nearby base camps, families of the war victims, factory workers, high school students, and government employees to show up. A few soldiers said their leaves had been canceled and that they were ordered to take part in the ceremonies.

Anti-riot police and special forces of the Guards Corps were stationed around the Revolution square and at all the intersections and roads leading to the Azadi square. They were in patrol cars and vans equipped with machine-guns.

For the first time, portraits of Rafsanjani, whose presidential term ends in a little more than a year, were no where to be seen. This important political development signaled Rafsanjani's political demise and Khamenei's upper hand in the upcoming Majlis elections.

Mr. Massoud Rajavi, the President of the National Council of Resistance, said yesterday's demonstrations

in Tehran was a political setback to the mullahs, indicating the Iranian people's rejection of Khomeini's heirs. Recalling the enthusiastic gatherings of Iranians in Dortmund, Germany, (June 16, 1995) and in Oslo, Norway, (November 2, 1995), the NCR President said: Had Maryam Rajavi, the Iranian Resistance's President-elect, and not Rafsanjani, been speaking in Tehran's Azadi square, everything would have been different.

In his message on the seventeenth anniversary of the fall of the shah's dictatorship, beamed into Iran via the Resistance's radio and television, Mr. Rajavi declared: After 17 years, the mullahs' regime is devoid of any social base and political legitimacy and is rapidly approaching the zero hour. The call for the boycott of the Majlis elections by the Iranian people and the Resistance has aggravated their internal differences and deepened their political and economic crises.

The NCR President called for an international boycott of the terrorist, religious dictatorship ruling Iran and the recognition of the Iranian Resistance's democratic alternative and its President-elect.