

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

A Reflection on the Past, an Outlook for the Future On the 57th anniversary of PDKI	1
PDKI's Politburo Press Release concerning the dissolution of Freedom Movement Party	2
Kurds and the rights to self-determination	4
In the memory of the dreadful tragedy of 1988	6
Amnesty International: Iran, a legal system that fails to protect freedom of expression and association	7
Struggle against oppression, a fundamental concern in Dr. A. R. Ghassemlou's life	8
<u>News In Brief:</u> Rocket shell kills young man, Iranian agents accused of liqui- dating Kurdish official, Canada returns terror suspect to Iran, Report claims Iran running Bekaa training camp, The assassination of a Kurd from Iran in Hawler...	12
Report on the Condition of Kurds from Iran refuge in Turkey	14
Press Review: Youth-led uprisings on the horizon?: Iran may be lurching into unknown	15

A Reflection on the Past, an Outlook for the Future

On August 16th of this year, PDKI stepped into its 58th years of struggle. When the Party reviews its struggle experiences and the 57 years of its activity, it prides in its past because:

? 57 years ago, when it was established by our eternal leader, Qazi Muhammad, it was the first political party in the history of the Kurds that stepped into the struggle stage for the liberation of Kurds with a clear and advanced political programme that was able to rally all social segments for national objectives.

? Just in the first year of its formation, taking advantage of extraordinary regional and international circumstances, for the first time in the history of the Kurdish people, it established "Kurdistan Republic", and acquainted Kurds with freedom and the right of governing their affairs.

? From the first day of its inception, it has paid an eminent importance for attracting intellectuals into its ranks; it has encouraged women for their presence in political and social arena, and struggle aimed at the realization of their rights and freedoms; it has constantly contemplated training and educating the youth with a unique objective, and it has been the founder of the first exclusive Kurdish women and youth associations.

? Not only during the reactionary and barbaric offensive aimed at overthrowing the Kurdish Republic, but also in all of its oppressed history, it has never retreated from sacrifices in the field of defending freedom, preserving the entity of the Kurdish people and the triumph of the struggle of this nation.

? PDKI has retained a developed guideline in representing the wills and demands of progressive and democratic forces of Kurdish society; Furthermore, it has always adopted appropriate and realistic policies and positions in the fields of cooperation and striving solidarity with compatriot Iranians, parties and organizations related to Kurds

in other parts of Kurdistan, and also in its association with regional and international actors.

? PDKI has never distanced itself from the position that "Kurdish issue does not have a military solution", and it has always been very devoted to political and peaceful resistance for the realization of the just rights of the Kurds in Kurdistan; however, whenever the oppressive authorities have hindered the possibility of a peaceful resistance, and have pursued the course of crushing the resistance of the Kurdish people, not only it has not surrendered, but quite contrary, it has united its followers for confrontation and resistance against the barbaric oppressors and occupiers; furthermore, it has recorded an epic in the history of its peoples' struggle, and left behind dangerous and difficult stages with full pride.



? In promoting nationalist and freethinking sentiments among the people of Kurdistan, in establishing and endorsing the fundamentals of cultural and political literature of the Kurdish people, and in enriching revolutionary experiences of our people, PDKI has reached a position that its denial is

hardly possible by any one.

? All the political and other important accomplishments of the Kurds in Iran and any developments in the liberation movement within the period of more than half a century is in some way correlated with the struggle of this Party; in addition, the direct and indirect results of the successful activeness of the Party has been the unquestionable support of the mass for its policies.

PDKI posses a proud history, but it also foresees a bright future. The Party in the eve of its 58th years of struggle more than ever envisions future with optimism and hopefulness because:

? Even though it is the oldest defiant organized Party, still, not only its leadership is continuing to progress, but it is also generating favourable conditions for the execution of its historical mission.

? If in the past, emancipation from captivity and retaining the rights to self-determination was an objective that only a small part of the Kurdish people were struggling for its realization, today ruling their destiny has become the objective of every awakened Kurd that exceed millions in number.

? If at once the influence and popularity of Democratic Party was limited to a portion of Kurdistan, currently after close to a quarter of a century of struggle against the regimes in Iran, the circle of influence and popularity of the Party has dominated all the Iranian Kurdistan; moreover, any where in Iran and outside Kurdistan that Kurds live, the liveliness and the popularity of the Party is apparent.

? PDKI's decades of efforts for filing away this baseless suspicion that "meeting the national demands of the Kurdish people is analogous to the idea of separating from Iran" - since in practice it has been proven otherwise - it has had a satisfactory and perceptible result; in a way that talking about the fulfillment of the national



rights of Kurds and other peoples of Iran - an issue at once strictly limited to Kurdistan - has gone beyond the agenda of gathering and meetings of intellectuals and national activists of the oppressed peoples of Iran, and being widely and seriously discussed in the Iranian newspapers and in the official and political centres of the country.

? PDKI possesses such an ability, essence and elegance to become the Party of all the social,

cultural and political movements of today's society that demand the establishment of a modern society based on democracy, pluralism, social and economic justice, and rejecting any sorts of ethnic, national, religious and gender discrimination.

? PDKI enjoys a priceless moral asset to pursue its duties, and reach its objectives. The lessons and experiences of decades of resistance in different spheres, departing many ups-and-downs of the struggle, a report filled with sacrifice that has been achieved with the hard efforts of thousands of indefatigable, and with the price of close to five thousands activists and dozens of competent leaders, and also the existence of thousands of skilled activists who are fully ready to accept any political,

organizational, diplomatic or military responsibility are also considered as PDKI's major assets.

However, no doubts, more important than any thing is the eminent credibility of PDKI among the Kurdish people, the Iranian compatriots and the world community.

Such a proud esteem that has come about as the results of adopting appropriate policies, positions and methods of struggle has been followed with the wide-spread support and protection of many segments of Kurdish society. PDKI prides in such trustworthiness, influence and support, and considers their strengthening and deployment as the key for the advancement and success of its future initiatives.

PDKI's Politburo press release concerning the dissolution of Freedom Movement Party

21st division of the revolutionary Islamic court of Tehran finally publicized an imposed verdict on dozens of members of Freedom Movement Party (FMP) after more than 16 months of detainment. According to the verdict, a number of recognized leaders and members of the organization have been

sentenced to up to 10 years of imprisonment, and they have also been forbidden from social activities for the period of their imprisonment. The verdict has also declared the Party banned.

The court has charged the FMP with jeopardizing national security, attempts to change the

establishment, conducting special operations to overthrow the regime, contacting foreigners and possessing weapons and narcotics.

The banning of the Party and imposing harsh sentences and long-term imprisonment on the leaders and members deserves consideration from several aspects: First, according to the political party by-law political crimes and party violations shall be investigated in a general court openly and attended by a jury; therefore, the verdict delivered by Tehran's revolutionary court in regards to the banning of the Party is "unconstitutional" which has been delivered by an "incompetent" court. Second, these charges that have been inflicted upon FMP are far from the truth, and contradict with the nature of the Party. This Party in the period of its activeness under the regime of Islamic Republic has continuously declared its loyalty to the regime's constitution, and has never taken up the slogan of overthrowing the regime. In the eyes of Iranian people and from the perspective of a considerable number of officials of the regime, it has been viewed as an discontented opposition that has agreed with many of the regime's policies and stances in many occasions, which has sometimes resulted in public anger towards the Party. Third, the imposed verdict was issued at the end of April, while its delivery has been postponed so far, which is also puzzling.

The dissolution of FMP in current circumstances, on one hand is an indication of the regime's apprehension and anxiety of the people's unrest and the result of dilemmas that it faces more and more every day; On the other hand, it is a clear indication of increasing pressure on opponents and public in general and freedom activists in particular.

The "unconstitutional" verdict of the revolutionary court in regards to FMP clearly reveals that Khamanie's (supreme leader) latest threats towards all those organizations and individuals who think apart from him or his camp, will be put into practice very soon indiscriminately.

The harsh verdict, first and foremost is a lesson for the leaders and members of the Party who believed that it could and it is possible to bring about reform within the constitution of the Islamic Republic in the

benefit of freedom and the well-being of the people of Iran, and thinking that in the current circumstances of the country, the leader of the regime aiming to reduce internal tensions and unrest would reach out for help and solidarity. It is also an awakening for all those people who have been deceived by the gleaming, but unclear and meaningless promises of Mr. Khatami and those referred to as reformists within the ruling camp, and were optimistic of "dialogue of civilization", "national solidarity", "Iran for all the Iranians" and things of such nature so they can discover their derailed path of reaching rights and freedoms, and distance themselves from the so-called reformists front within the establishment who have reached a dead-end in their reform process, and back-tracked more and more every day from their pledges. Especially that Khatami the President as the prominent figure of the camp has proven that he is an inseparable agent of this regime,

and nowadays he mostly acts as the spokesperson for the hardliners, and has remained silent against the increasing pressure on public and legalizing the dictatorship of *Velayate-Faghih* (juriscouncil).

The dissolution of FMP and particularly the infliction of such unjust verdict on its members and leaders apart from its entire discontentment must become the starting point for the union of all the forces that struggle against dictatorship of juriscouncil and the establishment of Islamic Republic in its entirety, and those who are assured that in the context of this regime there is no room for any positive change and public safety and security.

PDKI along with condemning the banning of FMP and the imposing of unjust sentences on the leaders and members of the Party, hopes that the decisiveness of the public force and all the freedom-lovers of Iran grant a new and effective boost to the struggle against the regime, and finally the rights and freedoms of the peoples of Iran with the struggle of all Iranians becomes realized.



**Political Bureau of
Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan
26/07/2002**

Kurds and the rights to self-determination

By: Sharif Behruz

Let me begin by stating the notion that whenever there is a nation, it is entitled to some sorts of statehood. This was seen by President Woodrow Wilson as the basis for international peace and security following the First World War. Opponents of the such approach argue that it has also been a recipe for a great deal of conflicts, and every major war in the 20th century had its origin in the disjunction between state and nations without considering the fact that such wars erupted as the results of peoples' deprivation of their rights to self-determination for centuries.

Daniell Turk, political specialist for the United Nations states that the question of self-determination is a problematic one. On one side there are legal definitions such as people, free will and political status that give the right to people to freely decide on their political, economic and social status, while in practice, it will never be possible to embrace all the political situations that are likely to emerge in practice.

So a few problems emerge when we talk about self-determination: First, international rules and norms. Internationally speaking, the principle of self-determination has been and will be used selectively as a guiding principle that can only be tolerated on a case-by-case basis. Second, state obligations; the existing states have no obligations to recognize the emerging states. Chairman Arafat toured around the world to win support for his independence agenda, but considering every thing else he failed. The Quebec leaders in Canada have had a hard time persuading the current allies of Canada – even the French government and the French public opinion – to recognize them as a separate state in the wake of a victorious YES vote. Furthermore, there exists no systematic approach by the international community in the case of political circumstances in quest of self-determination. The case of the newly emerging states after the demise of the Soviet Union cannot be applied to Palestine, and the case of East Timor cannot be

looked as an example for Kurds. The three major periods in the 20th century where disintegration of empires and superpowers have taken place, and new states have been created, the approaches to self-determination has been based on self-interest rather than a systematic approach.

The politics of self-determination is the politics of the possible. Even though self-determination implies various political statuses, and the most ideal forms of self-determinations for any nation would be statehood, in practical politics, where international and regional political circumstances are in favour, any forms of self-determination even the least cultural rights should not be rejected by any nation. Any opportunities that emerge for a nation must be taken as a bonus even if your demands are not fully on the table.

Defining self-determination in every case does not lead to statehood, but rather there has been and still is an emerging process to define self-determination to other political statuses within an existing state, including the idea of autonomy, which has been viewed as a semi-independent status, which can lead to other political dispensations, such as federative or other special status of territory, bi-national arrangements, and so on



and so forth.... This has been one of the fundamentals of the Kurdish movement and the Kurdish leadership in Iran. Even for autonomy as one of the solutions to self-determinations, there are no sets of governing principle that can determine the framework of an autonomous region. The autonomous region of Quebec within Canada has different arrangements with the government of Canada than the Basques in Spain or the Palestinian authority.

Another major ingredient of self-determination is democracy. It must be respected both by the state in question that compromises any concessions, and it must also be respected by the nation demanding self-determination. An autonomous-democratic nation or

region is impossible in the arms of a dictatorship or totalitarianism. So if all sides reach a point where they need to work out their differences, and the state recognizes the right of a particular people to some sorts of political, economic and cultural rights, it is their responsibility to design the nature of their arrangement. The case of the Kurds in Iran and their struggle for self-determination is a good example to show that autonomy can be formulated in just a few important points: During the Iranian Revolution, the Kurdish delegation proposed the government with a detailed version of their autonomous demands, and later with the unwillingness of the ruling clerics, and their deceitful intentions, negotiations did not succeed; however, the Kurds in Iran were still committed to peace talks and negotiation for some sorts of arrangements, and compromised in their demands that would force the emerging rulers to at least agree with the fundamentals of autonomy as the rights of Kurds to self-determination that would become a model for the rest of Iran. The rulers of Iran preferred tyranny to democracy and totalitarianism to pluralism, and they still ignore the most fundamental demands of the Kurdish people in Iran for democracy and autonomy; therefore, for a peaceful political, economic and cultural settlement, there has to be a good-will gesture from all the parties involved, which in the case of the Kurds of Iran, they not only faced a total blackmail by the clerics, but they also confronted a massive military presence in their territories, and they still continue to suffer from such a policy.

Even though the international community does not compromise any border changes, they agree that it is possible to guarantee some sorts of rights and freedoms for people in quest of self-determination and preserve the overall integrity of the existing state. There was a notion in early 1990s that self-determination to be defined in the framework of autonomy by the United Nations General Assembly, but as it was already mentioned the lack of a systematic approach and the unwillingness of many member states fearing the consequences of such declaration that might lead to disintegration of so many states, it failed. Since then, there has been no discussion of such degree at the General Assembly level on the issue of self-determination.

One important factor in the case of the Kurds in Iran is the nature of Iran's entity. Iran is made up of different nationalities that unlike Turkey, Iraq, and Syria, accommodating the demands of Kurds will not solve the overall self-determination issue. The Kurds in Iran feel that a federal democratic Iran as a Swiss

model would be an adequate solution to the current crisis in Iran; however, there needs to be a systematic movement among other nationalities of Iran for such as an arrangement. They feel responsible for the fate of all the Iranian nationalities, but they will not act as their representatives nor they do for the Kurds in other parts. As the results, the Kurds in Iran have adopted autonomy for their part, first considering international boundaries, rules and norms, and second understanding the nature of Iranian politics and history; otherwise, a federation as was mentioned is a perfect model for the multi-ethnic Iran.

Least but not last, Kurds are a single nation. Their territory has been and will remain as Kurdistan; however, the people have been divided and their territory partitioned. Ideally, it is their own fundamental human rights to determine their own form of political, economic and social arrangement. However, in a global world where economic and political interests recognize no boundaries, and the recreation of an independent state, especially in the case of Kurds, requires the re-bordering of several states, it would be most feasible for Kurds at the movement to engage in the current political establishments and seek self-determination in the forms that are more internationally accepted. As for the Kurds in Iran, if they can become the leading force in bringing democracy and freedom to alter the existing system, and at the same time have strong international presence to convey their message further into the effective institutions, autonomous Iranian Kurdistan is an imminent possibility; Furthermore, the Kurds in Iran as the results of their historical linkage to the Persians can become the uniting force of all the Iranian nationalities.

At the end, Kurds in the Middle East can also become a major factor in bringing stability to the region if their rights and freedoms are recognized within the existing states. In another words, if democracy prevails in these concerning countries, and the Kurds in each part have proportionate influence in administrating their affairs and the affairs of the country, their presence can lead to diminishing hostilities and rising cooperation between the existing states. So the accommodation of the rights of Kurds to self-determination within these states can become a building bridge to bring these countries together in peace and harmony at the verge of globalization.

References:

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In the Memory of the Dreadful Tragedy of 1988

mercy for enemies is simple-mindedness. Islam's decisiveness against the God's enemies is of the fundamental and undoubted principle of Islamic discipline. We hope that with your revolutionary anger and hatred in regards to the enemies of Islam, you earn the Almighty God's endorsement... Part of Khomeini's decree to the "Death Councils" in regards to the massacre of political prisoners – taken from biographies of "Ayatollah Montazeri"

In the name of God: execution... Those folks, who are in charge of making crucial decisions, do not hesitate or recess, but attempt to treat the infidels with extremist manner possible. Having doubts in the judicial revolutionary Islamic affairs is to conspire at the pure and holy martyr's blood. The verdict of one of the judges in the files of one of the victims of the event of massacring political prisoners

September of this year, 14 years has elapsed of the barbaric crimes of collective execution of thousands of our country's best youngs - by the agents of the religious rulers – in the dreadful prison of the cleric rulers. In this dreadful crime, thousands of the brave citizens of this country that in a way had resisted its medieval ruling or had possessed beliefs different from the reactionary and totalitarian ideology of the regime's authorities - in which *Khomeini* was the leading figure - with the order of the founder of the Islamic Republic, and in the name of "God's enemies and for the God's content", and in the name of "executing the undoubted principles of Islamic discipline" were massacred by the regime's mercenaries.

Now, we remember this inhumane crime with the latest disclosures in the recent years, especially with that of *Montazeri* who himself was from the top ranks in the course of the events of that period, that important information has leaked out, though the revealing of all the dimensions of the tragedy and the barbarity of the regime requires more time. Of course, as experience has proven, the massacring of political and conscious prisoners in the summer of 1988 was not performed by the regime's authorities and above all *Khomeini* merely as a response to the political situation back then or to the measures taken by any political organization or for creating further palpitation in the country's political atmosphere, and escaping the side-effects created by the defeat from the 8 years old war with Iraq, so as to prevent the spread of public anger; rather, the roots of the regime's commitment in its totality must be sought out in its philosophical essence. From the perspective of a regime that considers its ruling divine, and considers opposing and suppressing its opponents as "God's enemies", such crimes are legitimate and necessary. The mentioned characteristics were revealed the day after seizing power:



obstructing and monopolizing the political atmosphere of the country, the suppression of all the political forces consisting of left, right, and in general all the intellectual forces, the Islamization of all the aspects of society, the suppression of liberties, the brutal suppression of the Kurdish, Azeris, Baluch, Turkman and Arab nationalists who had brought up their national demands after the victorious Revolution of 1979, forcing the people of Iran to chose the system of Islamic Republic versus the monarchical system – that had fundamentally failed – are the visible instances of such characteristics. In other words, the collective and barbaric killing of thousands of political prisoners composes one of the most apparent cases of suppression and brutality of the regime and its criminal rulers against the people of Iran.

With such attributes, *Khomeini*, only a year away from his death, without any hesitation took measures to issue decree and ordered "quickly vanish the enemies of Islam" and "death Councils in central and other parts of the country without demanding a slight of clarification, secretly took the lives of many political

prisoners in country's notorious garrisons, and in a very short period thousands of those who were reluctant to confess were forcefully killed (shot or hanged). Of course, reluctance to confess or not was a pretext for the "death council" to issue the execution order of political prisoners because in principle confessing or remaining silent had only one outcome: execution. The agreement of the two people from the three people body who composed the death squads (councils?) made up files by the prison chiefs, and even taking revenge by the prison guards could result in the death verdict of the prisoners.

Taking inhumane measures, and the continuing of the Islamic regime's atrocities against opponents within the national borders and even abroad certifies the

argument that this regime in principle believes in eradicating its opponents to accomplish its barbaric objectives in any way possible. In this regard, yesterday's friends and the faithful of the system, and today's critics have not been protected. In short, the system is a divine order and no one should commit the crime of criticizing or opposing it!

In the 14th anniversary of the barbaric massacre of thousands of freedom activists, and in circumstances in which the resistance of the people of our country has taken important steps towards freedom and the overthrowing of the regime, it is necessary that the leaders of more than 20 years of resistance against this backward regime (parties, progressive freedom activist figures, political prisoners relieved of the dreadful prisons of the Islamic regime and etc...) utilize all their



power to convey the reality concerning the crimes of this inhumane regime with the full awareness of our compatriots especially the youth, and the world public opinion so as to pave the ground for the trial of the murderers of our compatriots. This is the least of possible initiatives that can be performed on the commemoration of our martyrs to prevent the spread of reactionism.

In the commemoration of the massacre of the political prisoners of the summer of 1988, remember the memory of all those who sacrificed their lives that as the results of their dedication and commitment, struggle for the ousting of the regime and establishing freedom and democracy

continues.



Freedom of expression and association in Iran is curtailed by legal restrictions and by flaws in the administration of justice. It has resulted in a catalogue of unfair trials and the imprisonment of prisoners of conscience.

Iran's Constitution guarantees freedom of belief, yet restrictions on freedom of expression and association in Iranian law go beyond both the Iranian Constitution and international human rights treaties to which Iran is a state party. Restrictive, contradictory and vaguely worded provisions contained in the Penal Code, the Theologians' Law - a body of law that deals with offences committed by clerics - and the Public and Revolutionary Courts' Procedural Law undermine the right to freedom of expression. For example, the Penal Code prohibits a range of activities, such as those connected with journalism or public discourse, which do not amount to recognizably criminal offences.

Structural flaws in the judicial system, including with respect to its independence, often result in irregular trial procedures. The judiciary does not enjoy the independence accorded to it by constitutional provisions. Lower court judges are under pressure to investigate and prosecute allegations that may be brought by a superior judicial official who is often the official directly responsible for their appointment and continued employment as a judge and the functions of investigator, prosecutor and judge are

frequently combined, bringing the impartiality of the judge into question.

Limits on the Bar Associations, re-established in 1999 weaken its independence and, as a result, safeguards for defence against unfair trial. The function of the Bar Associations to grant licences to newly qualified lawyers and to freely choose its own representatives are, for example, essential safeguards of the independence of the Bar Associations. Recent legislation, however, has removed these functions. The judiciary controls those eligible for apprenticeship places with the Bar Associations, their entry into the legal profession and their continued functioning as a lawyer. This weakens the independence of the Bar Association and undermines the professional integrity, security and independence required by lawyers.

Taken together, these flaws have obstructed the delivery of justice. Over recent years there have been numerous victims of arbitrary detention, unfair trial and imprisonment for no reason other than the expression of their conscientiously held beliefs. Such practices are not only contrary to Iran's own Constitution but also violate international human rights standards.

Struggle against oppression, a fundamental concern in Dr. Ghassemlou's life

BBC Persian Service's Behruz Yusef-zad in an interview with Dr. Ghassemlou (in late 1980s)

BBC: *What changes have occurred to you in the years of your struggle?*

Dr. Ghassemlou: One of the fundamental issues for me that I have fought for from my early youth has been the eradication of ethnic and nationalist oppression. On this stand point, I have not changed. Of course I have piled up plenty of experiences in my political life, and in general I have become more realistic. I have always been optimistic in my life, and been able to preserve my self-esteem in the harshest circumstances, and I am still unchanged. I am obsessed with reading; I follow almost all the magazines, foreign and Iranian newspapers in Kurdistan, and I am also very interested in reading scientific novels and books; however, I can not imagine myself without poetry. In Kurdistan, they arrange poetry nights and I contribute poems. I have a deep interest in classical Iranian poetry such as *Hafez, Saadi, Khayyam, Baba-Tahre Oryan* and *Ferdosi*. I am also interested in the classical Kurdish poetry especially *Goran's* poetry, a 20th century Kurdish poet, and also *Ahmadi Khani's* poetry, a prominent classical Kurdish poet. Among the modern poets, of course *Nader Naderpour* and *Ahmad Shamlou* are my favourites, and I have their poetical works. I also read *Parvin Ehtesami's* works because I think her poems are much relevant to my life in current circumstances.

Of course, you know, political struggle especially if one is accountable, and the existence of the internal conflict prevents one from devoting her/his time to hobbies and in this case my interest in poetry and music, which is problematic. One of the difficulties of my life is the loss of my close comrades which is the biggest discontentment of my life. If I could decide on my own, I like to pursue further knowledge, and keep myself busy with cultural works and literature. But since I am in Kurdistan, I feel a sense of responsibility to the people of Iran and Kurdistan.

BBC: *Where do you think you will be or do in the next 10, 20 or 30 years?*

Dr. Ghassemlou: In the current circumstances that we are situated predictions are hard. I like to engage in further scientific works and writings in years ahead if I can. Now, it has been 40 years that I am involved in the struggle. I like to put my experiences in writing; however, in any situation, I like to be among the people, and in the current struggle distancing from the people is very hard. I hope that things change in such a way that our country becomes independent and safe. It is in this case that I like to spend my retirement in one of the Kurdish villages, preferably Ghassemlou – you might not know that there is a village with such a name, which I am named after – and write and read until the end of my life.

Ghassemlou described by others

When I think of you, Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou, I think first of your laugh; you were capable of laughing at everything and everyone. Your immense culture, the gaze which, as a historian and an intellectual, you brought to bear on all that was relevant to your subtle analyses, gave you a distance which made for breadth of vision.

You were the man of the Third World whom I admired the most. At once as a guerilla and a liberal, faithful to strategy, adhering to a firm political line, and constantly proposing the essential by which I mean – you meant – democracy.

Bernard Kouchner, Secretary of State for Humanitarian Actions 1989

He was broad-knowledged, a pan-Kurdish leader who saw struggles in other parts of the world as being connected to the cause he was fighting for. He was a global politician, in the real sense of the word, a brief, a true internationalist, yet totally devoted to his own people.

Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou and Abdullah Ghaderi-azar, fighters for human rights and peace, were struck down by reactionary and corrupt forces. We all know that their work, their ideals and their legacy will influence the future to come.

Thomas Hammarberg, Former Secretary-general of Amnesty International

A man of great culture, steeped in history, in that of the Kurdish people and that of Iran, but also in ours, you had acquired the conviction that the Kurdish cause could be won only through negotiations... By your side for five years, we came to appreciate in harmony with the landscape within which it developed, the greatness of the cause defended by Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan, which you led for more than 15 years... Rahman, you are not dead, nor your Abdullah, we shall remain faithful to your message, ever present by the sides of our Kurdish friends, now orphans like ourselves.

Dr. Bernard Granjon, Vice-President of World's Doctors

From the precious words of Dr. Ghassemlou

A nation that seeks freedom shall also pay its price. No notion without struggle and great effort, without sacrificing its valuable youth has attained freedom.

Kurdish nation, and our Party, as the forerunner of the Kurdish national struggle, understands that freedom requires devotion and self-sacrifice; our martyrs' caravan is long, and it might even be longer than that...

Our struggle is a legitimate cause; it is the struggle for the liberty of a nation; struggle for the future of our children and the coming generations...

Those who are frightened die every day, those who are not, die only once.



Democracy and the national rights of the peoples of Iran:

Preserving democratic freedoms, strengthening and embedding the basis of a proper system all over Iran, is the fundamental guarantee for the advancement of the revolution and the realization of the rights of self-determination for all the peoples of Iran... Without a true democratic regime, the rights of Kurdish people will not be respected, and without the national rights of the Kurdish people, the regime - in the real sense of the word - will not be democratic.

Women's cause:

In our political and organizational struggle, a unique position must be granted to women who constitute more than half of the population of our country... In the belief of our Party, the more women participate in social and political activities, the more developed will become the society; and the more they become active in the political resistance of our nation, the more advanced the movement, and the more likely of its success.

Condemning Terrorism:

We as Democratic Party condemn mass killings because an organization that is supported by a nation needs no engagement in activities of such nature. We condemn terrorism anywhere.

Democracy:

Never struggle for democracy must be placed under the shadows of struggle for national or class rights because this is the essential reason behind

the creation of PDKI, and until PDKI is remained democracy will be the aim and objective.

Democracy, just democracy... I think that it is possible to go from a dictatorship to a democratic regime without having to pass an intermediate dictatorship... Admittedly, it takes longer to explain than to give orders, but ultimately it works out well from the point of view of both morale and efficiency...

Commemorating Dr. Ghassemlou's Martyrdom

PDKI in the period of its 57 years of struggling history has left behind many vulnerable stages. Hard and difficult struggle filled with strained circumstances, heaped up with sudden events and unpleasant tragedies. In the past, the despotism of monarchy, and in this period the reactionary regime of Islamic Republic's oppression have continuously been waging on our Party as a disturbing nightmare. These regimes have not withheld from any inhumane plans and actions for the elimination of our Party leadership, surrendering its members, and to put an end to its political and organizational history.

Qazi Mohammad who was the founder, and the leader of PDKI, and the establisher of the Kurdistan Republic was hanged on March 30, 1947 on the order of Mohammad Reza Shah, only with the offense that he had lived for his people, and had been in the service of his national aspirations. No doubt, the unpleasant tragedy of July 13, 1989 too was not only painful that it will never vanish from the memory of Kurds, but it also afflicted and touched upon the hearts of democratic liberation activists, and defendants of human rights globally. It was in this day, that Dr. Ghassemlou, the Secretary-general of our Party, and Abdullah Ghaderi-Azar, member of the Central Committee and the official representative of the Party in Europe, were assassinated in the city of Vienna by the terrorists of Islamic Republic. A plan that the regime's mercenaries had drafted in the name of negotiation ended with the assassination of Dr. Ghassemlou and his comrades. Regime's authorities had hoped to achieve from this terror the demise of our Party, the disappointment of the people of Kurdistan in their just cause that the PDKI had been leading.

Dr. Ghassemlou was a talented and a capable personality of our Party. Within the

organization and the Kurdish community, he was a popular and a well-respected individual. He was not only a charismatic leader within the Kurds, but he was also known as a knowledgeable individual in diplomacy and a messenger of peace and dialogue in the world of politics, in international community, and democratic organizations, and his global fame emanated from these characteristics.

Ghassemlou's mission to lead PDKI dates



back to 1950. When he started to perform this mission, from PDKI had remained a big name, but a destroyed city. It was because of his leading role that the political-organizational structure of the Party was redrawn from the start, and was organized based on a modern platform that was reflective of the contemporary conditions of struggle, and a developed programme and charter for the Party was proposed. After these changes, absolutism was abolished in the Party forever; internal democracy flourished; meetings, conferences and conventions took place; the leadership of the Party was elected from these conferences and conventions; collective cooperative activities proliferated; the principle of criticism --aimed at eliminating shortages and solving difficulties-- and development was given top priority; education and training of members with organizational courage, and struggle in the direction of raising their level of political-organizational knowledge spread, and organization became the most important weapon of political activeness.

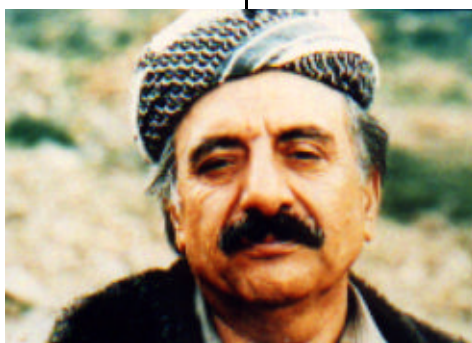
The thesis of living Ghassemlou on healthy internal relations were blended with mutual understanding and friendship; not only the borders between accountability and friendship did not fall and were not disrupted, but also each on its own place was respected. The circumstances were changed in a way that the member of the Party from the top of the pyramid to its bases, were transformed

into members of a family. The effects of such changes on the members were so drastic that they considered the Party theirs, and were extremely active in preserving their Party personality.

Dr. Ghassemlou theorized the Party's relations with the Kurdish organizations and parties in a way that the layout of these relations should be analyzed as a historical necessity, and established on the basis of mutual respect and non-intervention in each other's affairs, and most importantly no Kurdish organization should allow itself to establish regional and international relations with countries on behalf of another organization.

Ghassemlou believed in the unity of the Kurdish nation. It was from this perspective that he published "Kurdistan and Kurds". However, his world understanding of the Kurdish issues was very realistic. He had felt all the obstacles that had been created by the sensitive geographical location of Kurdistan. He would critically analyze the level of capability and power of the international forces in the Middle East region. In this analysis it was important that between "national interest" and "political consideration", he had chosen "the possible". This thesis was followed by the synthesis slogan of "Democracy for Iran, Autonomy for Kurdistan", a slogan that has still remained as the strategic slogan of the Party, and has gathered members and sympathizers under its umbrella.

Ghassemlou observed a special dialectical relationship between "national democracy" and "regional autonomy", and identified a precise and logical relationship method that the Party developed with national Iranian organizations. These relations were rooted on the basis of finding common grounds and mutual respect, and the avoidance of any emerging hegemonic force. Those segment of organizations and national parties that respected democracy and the rights of oppressed nationalities of Iran were placed on the front ranks of the organizations that the Party should establish relations with, and it was meant that these relations should be strategic and long-term. PDKI in this respect also attained many important achievements.



Its prestige increased day by day among the popular masses of Iran and other democratic political personalities and nation-wide organizations. The political-organizational capability and credit of the Party in regards to the destiny of Iranian political alternative has reached a scale that any national or united democratic or progressive front in Iran without the cooperation or participation of PDKI is considered weak and incomplete.

Ghassemlou's thesis in regards to the presence of the Party in international gatherings and communities was also very effective and decisive. Previously, if there existed any relationships between our Party and the international groups and organizations, it was not reflective of our Party's resistance circumstances and conditions. It was Ghassemlou who with experience and awareness of the culture and politics of Eastern and Western European countries, cleverly and masterly strived on these matters and experimented

many ways, and showed to the world a real image of a democrat; it reached a stage that now mainly as a result of his non-stop struggle, PDKI has been admitted to the ranks of Socialist International as a member to carry across the just demands of the Kurds in Iranian Kurdistan to the world via this universal tribune.

Ghassemlou had dedicated the last 20 years of his life serving Party objectives. He was himself a school of humanity, national sentiment, and performance of Party affairs. The changes that he brought into the Party organism was so effective, dynamic, and appropriate that after his martyrdom left behind a strong, firm Democratic Party with many experiences. The precious lessons and advices that the companions of Democrat had learned from the school of Ghassemlou, had brought them about in a way that they had remained in the stage of struggle with a firm belief and courage more than before; by keeping the ranks of the Party united, they remained faithful to the path of development, and did not allow the anti-ethnic regime, the Islamic Republic to carry out its polluted objectives.

News In Brief:

Rocket shell kills young man, wounds 2 teenagers in Iranian Kurdistan

The explosion of a rocket shell that was found by three teen-agers in the suburb of Oshnavieh, Iranian Kurdistan, killed a young man and left two teenage boys seriously injured.

Ahmad Jahangiri, 17 was instantly killed, and Eisa and Amar Jahangiri were taken to hospital in critical conditions.

AFP reported the incident as a landmine explosion based on the Afrinash daily's report.

Every year hundreds of children become victims of explosions left over from heavy militarization of the Kurdish regions, and also the live military trainings that are conducted in these mountainous border regions.

Iranian agents accused of liquidating Kurdish official

OSLO, AFP reported that according to the Kurds living in Norway, Iranian agents were behind the killing at the weekend (2 August 2002) of Taher Hamidi, a former Kurdish guerilla commander, Aftenposten newspaper reported on Wednesday.

"This was my first thought when I heard that he had been killed," Mohammad Kharzi, a former Kurdish guerrilla who once fought with Hamidi, told Aftenposten, Norway's leading broadsheet.

"The Iranians have earlier shown that they do not hesitate in killing Kurds who have been fighting for the guerilla and live in European cities," Kharzi said. Hamidi fought PDKI during the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s. He was stabbed in his taxi in the western city of Stavanger, some 400 kilometres (25 miles) west of Oslo late on Sunday.

The fact that some local currency worth several hundred euros (dollars) was found untouched in the taxi has strengthened the theory among Kurdish refugees in Norway that professionals were behind the killing.

Norwegian police have been reluctant to comment on the murder while it is still being investigated and say they have very little evidence to work from.

Hamidi was actively involved in the Iranian Kurdish freedom movement in Norway and was recently preparing an event to celebrate the anniversary of the creation of PDKI, the newspaper said.

This is not first time that Iranian Kurds especially those who have been active with the Kurdish movement under the leadership of PDKI have been targeted by the Iranian agents abroad.

Dr. A. R. Ghassemlou, then the Secretary-general of PDKI was assassinated in Vienna along with two of his associates in 1989 by the Iranian terrorist-diplomats. In 1992, another PDKI leader, Dr. S. Sharafkandi, Dr. Ghassemlou's successor was also assassinated in Berlin along three other PDKI cadres. Since 1992, more than 300 PDKI activists have been assassinated outside of Iran mainly in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Former Iranian President paid to cover the bombing in Argentina

The New York Times said a high-level Iranian intelligence agent who defected to the United States said in a secret court deposition that Menem was paid from a Swiss bank account controlled by then Iranian president Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.

The paper said it was given a copy of the deposition by Argentine investigators frustrated at the lack of progress in the investigation into the bombing, which killed 85 people.

The intelligence agent, Abdolghassem Mesbahi, said Menem agreed to "make declarations that there was no evidence against Iran," the paper reported.

Menem, who refused to talk to the New York Times, told CNN, "It is a disgusting fabrication, it is a lie."

He added, "I am going to hire a US law firm to file a suit for damages .. for slander. I'll open the doors for the whole world to investigate." Menem was president from 1989-1999, and is seeking his party's nomination again for the elections in March next year.

Canada returns terror suspect to Iran

OTTAWA — Canadian Press reported that an eight-year legal odyssey ended this week for a suspected Iranian terrorist. Mansour Ahani, 37, was escorted by RCMP and Immigration officers aboard a plane that left Toronto's Pearson International Airport on Tuesday night. The flight was met on arrival by Iranian immigration authorities, a spokeswoman for Citizenship and Immigration Canada confirmed today. "We've been relentless in our efforts to counter (Ahani's) attempts to stay in Canada," said Danielle Sarazin. "It sends a strong message that Canada will not be a haven for people who are a threat to national security."

It took more than a month to finalize his return home with government officials in Iran, Sarazin said.

Ahani, a father of one, entered Canada from Iran in 1991 and claimed refugee status. He was arrested and jailed after intelligence officials turned up links to the Iranian ministry of intelligence and security, which they described as a terrorist organization.

Federal lawyers, in submissions to the Supreme Court, said Ahani is "a trained assassin and terrorist who has been found by ... the Federal Court to be a danger to Iranian dissidents living in Canada."

It is a surprise to many that Canada sends its troops abroad to fight terrorism while it is ignoring terrorists in its own back-yard. If there is enough evidence to refuse one's refugee application based on terror charges, there should also be enough evidence to indict the suspect for the terrorist activities committed or about to be committed.

Report claims Iran running Bekaa training camp

A report compiled by Western intelligence agencies and obtained from the Daily Star claims that a detachment of Iranian Revolutionary Guards (IRG) are in Lebanon training elite units of Hizbullah and Palestinian fighters to fire rockets and carry out underwater suicide operations as part of a \$50 million program.

The report claims that some 10 people met in Darjah in Tehran. Among those gathered for the meeting were Ahmed Jibril, leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine General Command, Ramadan Shallah, leader of Palestinian Islamic Jihad, representatives of Hizbullah and two senior officers from the Iranian Revolutionary Guards. One of the IRG officers was named as General Ali Reza Tamzar whom the report claimed is the commander

of the Iranian forces in the Bekaa. Also present at the Tehran meeting, according to the report, was Imad Mughnieh, who is suspected of masterminding anti-Western attacks in 1980s Lebanon and is ranked second after Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden on America's most wanted terrorist list. The report said that an Islamic Gulf figure wanted by the US for affiliation to bin Laden's Al-Qaeda network also attended.

Kurdish publisher in hot water over translation of US book in Turkey

PARIS, (AFP) - Turkish publisher Abdullah Keskin is facing criminal charges after putting out a translation of a US book that makes reference to a "Turkish Kurdistan", the International Herald Tribune reported.

Keskin, who has Kurdish roots, could go to prison for up to three years and be fined the equivalent of 2,500 euros (dollars) if the charges of spreading separatist propaganda are sustained, the Paris-based newspaper reported.

It said the book, the Turkish-language version of "After Such Knowledge, What Forgiveness? My Encounters with Kurdistan" by Jonathan Randal, a former Washington Post reporter now living in Paris, has also been banned.

Keskin, in Paris on a visit, said: "I have no interest in provocation. My only aim is to inform the Turkish and Kurdish people to enable them to participate in a pluralistic debate."

The assassination of a Kurd from Iran in Hawler, Iraqi Kurdistan

According to Kurdistan newspaper, a 17 year old Kurd from Iran, Masood Karimian, from Sardasht, Iranian Kurdistan, who had fled the intelligence and revolutionary corps, was gunned down in 10 August 2002. The assassin has been captured by the Kurdish security forces in Iraqi Kurdistan, and he has being questioned. Iraqi Kurdistan has been a camping ground for terrorists under the pay of Islamic Republic to fight its own kind of war on its dissidents, especially the Kurdish opposition.

Report on the Conditions of Kurds from Iran taking refuge in the city of Van, Turkey

Sheila Mohammadian, A Kurdish-American from San Diego, California, went to visit the Eastern [Iranian] Kurdish refugees in Turkey from July 2001 to October 2001, on own personal expenses as a volunteer for the Kurdish Human Rights Watch, US. This is a summary of Sheila's report on the refugee situation. She speaks English, Kurdish, Farsi, Turkish and Swedish.

There are more than 5000 Kurdish refugees in Turkey. Approximately 2500 Kurdish refugees have fled to Van-North [Turkey's] Kurdistan because of threats to their lives because of their political affiliations. Iranian authorities arrest and execute Kurdish members and supporters of Kurdish political groups in Iran.

The living situations of the Kurdish refugees in Van are terrible. They lack clean water, adequate housing, sufficient food and health services. Many are severely undernourished, and critically ill. Social services of any form are not provided. There is no hope for these forgotten and mistreated families. Their living conditions are inhumane. They feel abandoned and forgotten by the whole world.

During my visit to Van three Kurdish refugees were deported to Iran where they were executed by the Iranian government.

With my eyes I witnessed starving children with horror and helplessness. Many will perish if they don't receive health services and food. Many of these refugee children have never tasted meat nor eaten a wholesome meal.

The UNHCR in Van apparently does not act in accordance with the basic standards of humanitarian organizations or the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights. I witnessed mistreatment and abuse of Van refugees by UNHCR staff in Van. The mistreatment of these refugees is an everyday occurrence. For example I witnessed the following events:

- On several occasions I witnessed UNHCR staff

verbally and physically attacking Van refugees. Van refugees reported to me that they are regularly beaten and verbally attacked by UNHCR staff.

- In some cases the UN staff turn refugees over to Turkish authorities that in turn deliver them to officials of the Iranian Government. During my visit to Van three Kurdish refugees were deported to Iran where they were executed by the Iranian government. UNHCR was fully cognizant of the fact that they would face execution if they were forced to return to Iran.

- Most of UNHCR Interpreters in Van don't speak or write Kurdish, Persian or English and in most cases the refugees are under the mercy of these Interpreters.

I have made recent contacts with the Kurdish refugees in Van-Turkey via email, phone and fax and their situation has further deteriorated since my visit in October, 2001.

In order to help these Kurdish refugees in Van, Turkey, there are certain actions needed to provide safe havens and the opportunity of being treated as a human being in a safe third country. These actions are:

- UNHCR headquarters should send a delegation to investigate this situation. Also other Humanitarian organizations should be asked to investigate this matter. I am willing to be a part of any delegation.

- Reopen these cases for review and reconsideration.

If you like to discuss this report with Shiela, she can be contacted at (858) 603-2241 or at Kurdish Human Rights Watch (San Diego Office) at (619) 447-9933 and by E-mail at: sheilakurd@yahoo.com.

Youth-led uprising on the horizon?: Iran may be lurching into unknown

By Tim Judah

TEHRAN: It is Friday prayers at Tehran University. A wizened, elderly mullah is preaching to thousands about the need for Muslim unity. Beside him is a Kalashnikov rifle and in front, in Persian and English, are the slogans of the revolution. Then in unison the faithful begin to chant: "Death to America! Death to America!"

But these are the slogans of a bygone age, of an ossified revolution that is almost a quarter of a century old. Now, almost unnoticed by the rest of the world, Iran has lurched into the throes of a new revolution - although where it will lead nobody knows.

Seven years ago 69 per cent of Iranians elected Syed Mohammad Khatami as president, a man who pledged to reform the Islamic Republic in order to save it. Now his reforms have stalled, blocked by powerful hardliners such as Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the supreme religious leader and successor to Ayatollah Khomeini.

The hardliners believe Khatami must be stopped. They compare him to Mikhail Gorbachev and say unless his reforms are stopped the Islamic Republic will drift towards collapse - in the same way that reform killed the Soviet Union.

Take a look at the faces at Friday prayers and one thing is clear. Few here are students at Tehran University. They are middle-aged men who made the revolution, alongside blocks of young soldiers, policemen and other members of the security services who had been bused in. The look of boredom as they raise limp fists to chant 'Death to America!' says it all.

Iran's new revolution is not one that is spilling on to the streets - or at least not yet. Although there are increasing numbers of demonstrations by students

and angry, unpaid workers, this is not where the real force for change lies.

For the moment it is a social revolution. It is a revolution that is transforming this country from the bottom up, whether the politicians like it or not. Two thirds of Iran's population is under 30 and it is clear they have little in common with the ageing mullahs who are trying to control their lives. Behind closed doors, then, young Iranians are simply getting on with it, especially in the big cities. Across Tehran, underground rock bands are thriving, just waiting for the day they can come out into the open. And every month thousands more Iranians are



going online. Today there are 1.75 million Iranians with access to the Internet, and in five years that figure is expected to be five million. While the Internet is a window on the world, it is also Iran's leap into free speech. Recently newspapers which the government has

closed have continued to publish online. Close to the centre of Tehran is an office which helps co-ordinate the burgeoning non-governmental sector. Activists say there are now 30,000 NGOs in Iran, dedicated to everything from women's rights to the environment.

And opinion polls consistently show that the vast majority of Iranians want reform - and they want it now. One reformist academic believes the longer hardliners block reforms and fail to ease the social restrictions of the Islamic state, the more problems they are storing up for the future.

He warns that unless change is allowed to develop peacefully, it will still take place 'but the process could be different'. Asked whether that meant there could be violence, he replied: 'There might be such a possibility.'

In the meantime, overt signs that the social

revolution is proceeding apace are everywhere. Across Tehran, ever more girls taunt the hardliners by wearing their obligatory headscarves way back over their head, to reveal as much forbidden hair as possible. Compulsory 'manteau' gowns are getting shorter - and tighter.

One area where the authorities have already lost control is television. Increasingly uninterested by the staple fare of prayers, domestic dramas and news about the Palestinian uprising - which obligingly plugs the gap that might otherwise be filled with real news about Iran - millions are tuned into satellite television, which is, of course, strictly illegal.

Walk the streets and you see nothing, but climb a high building and the evidence is stunning. Mushroom-like clusters of satellite dishes have sprouted across Tehran. If Iranians were simply watching BBC, CNN or MTV that would be bad enough, but what really worries the authorities is that many are tuning in to exile stations broadcasting from the United States.



With reforms blocked and an economy under strain, the frustration is palpable. A few weeks ago the remains of 570 Iranians who died during the Iran-Iraq war were returned amid much fanfare. The government arranged well-organized shows of grief, some of which was undoubtedly genuine. But, as the coffins were trundled around Tehran on the backs of lorries, many residents were unimpressed.

Even the powerful merchants of Tehran's bazaar, long regarded as a staunch bastion of the Islamic revolution, are showing signs of exasperation. Like other Iranians, many are too scared to speak, but one man told me how people here were enraged by a decision to let ideology ride roughshod over business.

Slowly but surely something has to give. Reformists threaten to abandon parliament, but no one knows what this would mean. "The time is ripe," an analyst observed. Iran is lurching into the unknown.

Dawn/The Guardian News Service

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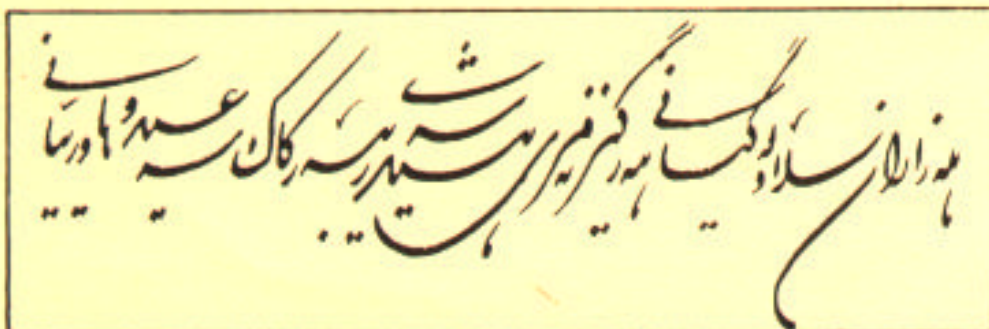
PDKI Denmark: www.pdki.net, PDKI Martyrs: www.shehid.com, Radio Kurdistan: www.kurdistansradio.com



September 17, 2002

10th anniversary of Dr. Sharafkandi's assassination

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