

Municipal Election in Iran, a test of legitimacy for the Regime	1
“The Iranian Judicial system is alien from the culture of attorney and defense lawyer” Louis Joinet: The head of the UN team examining arbitrary detention in Iran	2
The execution of another prisoner of consciousness in Iran	2
“The world community has well realized that there is no possibility of fundamental reform in Iran under the reign of Islamic Republic” A Interview with Secretary-general, Abdullah Hassanzadeh	3
“No doubts, the ultimate freedom of an oppressed nations depends directly on all kinds of sacrifices that the individual members of that nations make” Mustafa Hijri’s speech on the Kurdish Freedom-fighters Day	5
The Execution of Democratic Activists Continues... By: Wurya Hussieni	7
The Kurdistan Republic of 1946 “The Kurdistan Republic of 1946 has been one of the most important symbols of Kurdish nationalism...” Dr. Hussien Taheri	9
<u>Press Review:</u> Iran’s Distant ‘Second Revolution’ - Stephen C. Fairbanks Iran’s revolution has failed - The International Herald Tribune	12
A report of Secretary-general’s tour of Europe, The 8th Party Plenum, Severe economic conditions burry people under avalanche, The Participation of a PDKI delegation at NDP Convention	14
Open letter: Stop Iran from suppressing the Kurds and interfering in Kurdish affairs	15



Meeting of the Socialist International Council, Rome, 20-21 January 2003



RESOLUTION ON THE IRANIAN KURDS

The Council of the Socialist International, meeting in Rome on 20-21 January 2003,
Taking note of the developments that have taken place during these last years in Iran,

- ◆ **Encourages** all forces in favour of democracy and human rights to continue on the road towards change and reform;
 - ◆ **Strongly condemns** the grave violations of human rights and democratic freedoms committed by the enemies of reform in that country, including the closing down of several newspapers, the arrest of journalists, intellectuals and students who favour change, and the death penalties and execution of Kurdish militants;
 - ◆ **Denounces** the repression against the Kurds in Iran and underlines the need to find a peaceful solution to the Kurdish problem in Iran;
 - ◆ **Reasserts** its support for the legitimate rights of the Kurds in Iran and its solidarity with the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (PDKI), a member of the Socialist International which remains faithful to democratic values and to a peaceful solution to Kurdish problem in Iran.
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Municipal election in Iran, a test of legitimacy for the regime



Iran staged its second-ever municipal-council elections on 28 February. Campaigning for the elections began on 20 February and continued until midnight on 26 February, where candidates competed for some 168,000 positions in cities, villages, and townships.

Between 35 million eligible voters (according to the Plan and Budget Organization) and 39 million eligible voters (according to the State Registration Office and IRNA) were eligible to vote in the previous municipal elections in 1999. The voting age at that time was 16. The voting age was subsequently lowered to 15, and more than 44.5 million Iranians -- everyone born before 8 June 1986 -- were eligible to vote in the May 2001 presidential election. This time every Iranian born before 28 February 1988 was eligible to vote. As of

July 2002, the population was estimated to be 66,622,704, and 68.4 percent of the population was estimated to be 15 or older. This meant that there were approximately 45.6 million eligible voters. In 1999 council elections, about 64 percent of the eligible voters turned out to vote. Many inside and abroad dissidents and political parties supported the elections as a way to empower the electorate and other elected bodies; however, the inability and lack of progress by the so-called reformist President, and the parliament has disillusioned the general public

that any reform is impossible within the current establishment.

The opener atmosphere in capital that resulted in large turnout in previous three elections proved extremely fruitless; however, outside the capital, pressure has remained in effect so the voters have tried to use this election as their only resort to bring change to the way their daily affairs are governed, and exhaust all possibilities. The voter turnout outside the capital was broader. Still, according to official figures, voter turnout was less than 50 percent.

However, according to BBC News "the turnout in



Tehran was low, only around 25 percent, indicating disillusionment with politics and the slow pace of change in the country." Others have estimated that the turnout in the city may have been as little as 15 percent. This is the result of public frustration over the pace of reform, and according to BBC "this poll was seen as a kind of referendum on the popularity of the president and his programme of peaceful and legal reform."

Electorate in the Kurdish areas expressed very little enthusiasm registering, to the extent that the number of people

running for office, this time, did not even reach 20 percent of the 1st local elections. The strong disillusionment with the system resulted in the low turnout rate, below the national average. In many townships and villages because not enough candidates volunteered to register, the regime started to threaten people; so as if they did not register, they would be barred from government services and posts.

The voters have, this time, tried first to penalize those whom they had elected in the previous elections, and prove the illegitimacy of this regime by staying away from the polls. It should be noted that the boycott of many political parties this time had also tremendous effect on public opinion. Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan in a communiqué called upon the people of Kurdistan to refrain from voting; "We hope that not only in Kurdistan but in the rest of Iran, those who value their dignity and enjoy

public respect do not register for the second so-called council elections, so as not to become an instrument of legitimacy for the dictatorship of juriscouncil...We hope that the day will come that the people of Iran freely elect, and the peoples' representatives embody the people's will." Many officials from both camps called the turnout a 'national tragedy'. Hopefully, the result will force the regime to accept a national referendum to vote on the kind of government structure that the people would like to establish.



Louis Joinet: In Iran, there exists freedom of expression; However, those who speak out, get in trouble.

Louis Joinet, the head of the UN arbitrary detention examining team briefed reporters in a press conference following his team's return from two weeks of investigations and visits of Iran's prisons. Louis Joinet stated: His team in this mission, have met many government officials, and also visited several imprisoned politicians (among them several detained lawyers) in Evin prison, meeting overall 100 prisoners. Aside from the notorious Evin prison, they also visited several other prisons. Mr. Joinet said that the prisoners, especially political prisoners, are faced with serious impediments; they are held in solitary confinements that are, in fact, prisons within prison. Mr. Joinet stated that in Iran people are jailed without any grounds. He also commented, "The Iranian judicial

system is alien from the culture of attorney and defense lawyer."



On the existence of freedom of expression in Iran, Louis Joinet said: "In Iran the problem is not the lack of freedom of expression, rather troubles arise when political opinions are actually expressed." Louis Joinet referred to a few examples of violating the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which Iran is a signatory. He also stated that in their meeting with the prisoners and detainees,

they have concluded that there are absurdity between the sentences and the offenses.

In regards to the practicality of defense attorney in Iran's judicial system, Louis Joinet said: "The freedom to choose defense attorney for political prisoners is much more restrained. Most of the lawyers who come forward to defend jailed political, also end up in jail preparing their final defense arguments. We have realized that the lawyers defending the detainees, because they have criticized the ill-treatment of their client or criticized the judicial system, have been questioned. Most judges prevent lawyers from being present at the hearings, even in preliminary hearings."

Louis Joinet questioned the existence of the cleric and military courts in Iran, and said that the logic of their existence is unclear.

The execution of another prisoner of conscience by the regime in Iran

Habibullah Tanhaeyan, 41 years old, married with three children, from the city of Sanandaj was detained on 11 December 2002 by the regime's intelligence elements in the city of Sanandaj. He had been taken into custody several times before and held for several months on each occasion by the regime in Iran accused of having ties with Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan. His detainment this time - after four days of interrogation and torture - resulted in his execution on 15 December 2002 convicted of similar accusations. The deceased

body of this brave activist, bearing the signs of excessive torture, was returned to his family four days after his execution.

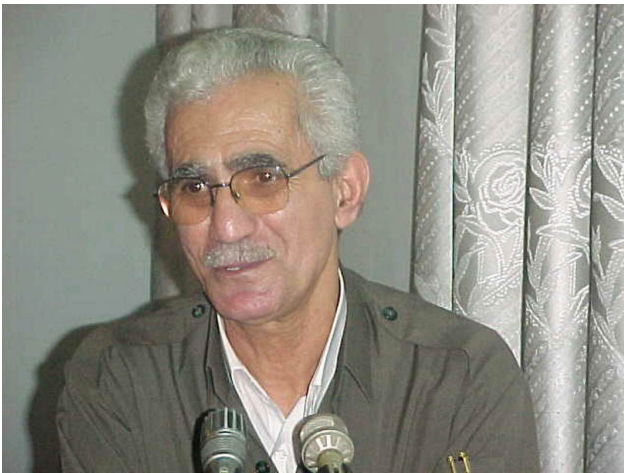
Such a murderous crime of the regime is carried out when a European Union delegation was in the midst of dialogue with the regime in Iran over human rights violations, as well as respect for the rights of the Kurds.

Along with expressing deep abhorrence to the freedom restraining and suppressing policies of the regime, PDKI conveys its sincere condolences to the family of forgone Habibullah,

all the people of Sanandaj and the surroundings. We hope that the blood of this triumphant martyr, and others alike, have not been exhausted in attaining peace and freedom, and their legacy have not been washed out; rather, thousands of city youth eager for freedom continue their path and seek justice for all the crimes committed by this regime.

**Democratic Party of Iranian
Kurdistan
24 December 2002**

An Interview with Secretary-general



"The world community has well realized that there is no possibility of fundamental reform in Iran under the reign of Islamic Republic."

"Iranian students have proved that they have taken further steps towards their revolutionary tendency, and the rulers of this regime cannot retreat them any further."

"We must accept this reality that government [western] officials confront the issue of our struggle and other nations alike more cautiously."

This is a portion of Secretary-general's interview with the Party's official paper, 'KURDISTAN' following his return to Kurdistan from Europe.

Q: In your recent trip, you had met a number of government officials and policy-makers. What was the framework of your discussions, and what was their perception of the current Iranian circumstances and Kurdish people.

A: The context of the discussions are usually similar, meaning, when we talk to the people abroad, whether those with official responsibility in various government levels, such as the officials in foreign ministries, those who are policy-makers, or whether the member of assemblies or party leaders, the main purpose is to expose the condition of Kurdish struggle and the freedom-seeking struggle of all

Iranians, the condition of the country and the government, especially the violation of human rights. We also attempt to attract their attention to the just struggle that the Kurdish people and other nationalities of Iran carry forward; however, to the point that it concerns the position of Westerners, what we have observed can be an instance; whether we meet several parties and organizations can be considered as examples. When we sit with officials at foreign offices we might, more or less, conclude that the policies of these offices of the governments might be of the same nature. The context of the discussions differs in relation to the various government representatives and other non-governmental institutions. We must accept this reality that government [western] officials confront the

issue of our struggle and other nations alike more cautiously. It is quite understandable because of their relations with these governments. Those who are parliamentarians, journalists or representatives of a political party who are not part of a government can more freely and explicitly express their opinions. Most importantly, all and each considering their status, and to the extent that their positions allow them, support both the Kurdish struggle and the nation-wide struggle for freedom and democracy; furthermore, they are concerned about the country's human rights conditions; however, an issue that was new for me at this trip, was the fact that the majority of the people that we have met were aware of the situation in Iran better than ever. The uncertainty that they had in their division of reformists



I can confidently state that our relations with these legal, social and political centres and specialists are in a favourable state as usual.



ts was all over this time. They had all admitted this, and believed that we as Iranians or as the Kurds of Iran have better understood the reality of our country and the ruling establishment; mainly, because they have often been briefed by the President or other officials; they have trusted them enough to open an account fro them, unaware of the fact that the President in a country such as current Iran can not be a decision-maker, rather, most of the shots are called by those who have no clear accountability. Now, they have realized that in Iran under the ruling of the current clerics, there are no possibilities of fundamental change. One might openly spell out these truth, while others refrain from expressing them overtly; however, such a feeling can be easily seen in those who have realized that by bringing change in Iran, both the government and the ruling system must change, quite contrary to the belief that apparently this system is able to create change and bring fundamental reform, something impractical.

and pragmatis

Q: While you were away, several of PDKI activists were executed in the regime's prisons. What was the response of humanitarian organizations in this regard?

A: Surprisingly, exactly the day that our members were executed, we were scheduled to meet the UNCHR headquarters in Geneva. Unaware of their executions, we had the list of these prisoners, and informed the UNCHR officials that the lives of these prisoners are in danger because they have been sentenced to death, so we asked them to take necessary measures to revoke the verdicts. We also asked them to take necessary measures for the remaining prisoners who have been abducted by the regime for more than 5 years, so at least their whereabouts are known. Following our departure, we were informed of the barbarity, so we contacted them again to notify them of the executions; we told them that it is time that something needs to be done to save the lives of other prisoners...I must state that aside from Iranian organizations, other human rights defenders also condemned the executions, particularly, Dr. *Abdulkarim*

We as Iranians or as the Kurds of Iran have better understood the reality of our country and the ruling establishment

Lahiji

[the

head of the League of Human Rights Defense in Iran) published a statement and made a press conference in solidarity. However, the position of international community was not sufficient enough to be responsive to such crimes. Several other members were also sentenced to death after the barbaric executions that I hope their verdicts will be revoked. In my opinion, the international reaction to the killings was far less than expected. It could be because the world community has faced more controversial issues, especially the U.S. and Iraq conflict which has shifted much of the focus.

Q: At what level is Party's relationship with other countries and humanitarian organizations?

A: I can confidently state that our relations with these legal, social and political centres and specialists are in a favourable state as usual. We have been greeted warmly by all those whom we have met...Overall, I can say that the relations that we have are satisfactory; however, there is always room for further improvement.

"The armed struggle, despite costing many lives, has been the most effective means of reviving the Kurdish identity in Iran..."



Speech made by Mustafa Hijri, member of PDKI's politburo on the 'Peshmarga Day', Kurdish Freedom-fighters Day

Honourable Leadership Council!
Cadres and courageous Kurdish Freedom Fighters, the PISHMARA force!

Dear Sisters and Brothers!
Ladies and Gentlemen!

26 of Sarmavaz, (December 17) the "PISHMARG Day" is a good occasion to commemorate and honour "PISHMARGA", those who sacrifice their lives to free the Kurdish nation.

No doubts, the ultimate freedom of an oppressed nation depends directly on all kinds of sacrifices that the individual members of that nation make. It means that the children of the nation make sacrifices based on their different life style, degree of understanding, and above all, the level of patriotic affection and understanding of their rights within a given society; thus, it is a duty that members of nations struggle for freedom.

Once a nation is liberated and freedom is totally embraced by that nation, there are always special members of society who stand out more than others whom ultimately are remembered for their outstanding sacrifices that they have made. The Kurdish nation, despite having a long history of sacrifice, is among those nations still under oppression. The brave people who started joining PISHMERGA force from and during the Republic of Kurdistan in 1945, and since then have been

sacrificing their lives courageously are among the most honoured and well-respected members of Kurdish society. "PISHMERGA" to Kurds in itself represents the highest level of sacrifice, untainted and liberator. This sage of purity has been achieved by a long history of struggle against their oppressors. During the long struggle against oppression many PISHMERGAS have lost their lives; they sacrificed their lives without any expectation because of their love for Kurdistan and freedom. PISHMERGAS are sacrificing their lives to pave the way for the future generation, and so the future Kurdish nation can live in peace, freedom and prosperity. This sense of sacrifice is now seen in the daily lifestyle and culture of every Kurd.

Ordinary Kurds, sympathizing with and valuing PISHMERGA, have sung many patriotic songs and poems, named their children after martyrs and publicly, even though forbidden, have acknowledged their efforts. Consequently, to honour and recognize PISHMERGA, PDKI has named 26 of SARMAVEZ, the PISHMERGA Day. On Sarmavez 26, 1945, the people of the city of Mahabad crushed the last military base of the monarchial central government of Iran; therefore, on this day, the Kurdish people, for the first time, enjoyed freedom and self-rule...

Dear Comrades,

Now that the Kurdish struggle, particularly the armed struggle in other parts of the region is enjoying success, the name of PISHMERGA brings with itself hope to every Kurdish heart for a bright political future. Having said that, it is also alleged that the armed struggle, particularly of the PDKI, has brought adversity to the Kurds in Iran. It is also said that if PISHMERGA forces particularly those of PDKI, had not resisted the Iranian forces militarily, the destruction of Kurdish region in Iran, oppression and despotic behavior by the subsequent Iranian regimes would not had followed. The Islamic Republic of Iran, therefore would have rebuilt the Kurdish region. The Kurds, particularly intellectuals, would have enjoyed more freedom and life in general would have been better for the ordinary Kurds.

First of all, the Islamic regime of Iran has used these kinds of propaganda to wrongly represent itself like a regime with just values and fair principles. The regime to justify its destruction in Kurdistan has wrongly blamed the Kurdish armed resistance.

However, to the dismay of Iranian regime, the Kurdish people in Iran have a clear understanding of the regime and the Kurds know that the Islamic Regime of Iran is against their basic rights. This kind of propaganda by the Islamic regime has backfired and many



more patriots have joined the PISHMERGA force more than ever to fight the regime's oppression.

We should remind ourselves that, although, the armed struggle of PISHMERGAS against the Islamic Republic of Iran has cost us many lives, however, it has been the most effective means of reviving the Kurdish identity in Iran. The loss of a PISHMERGA, the destruction of a village by the regime ruling Iran and the pain of such a struggle have worked as an awakening call for the Kurds in Iran. This has caused the Kurds in Iran to search and be more inquisitive about their national identity. The Kurds in Iran now ask themselves; Why the clerics ruling Iran kill Kurds? Why the Kurdish farms being burned? Why Kurdish intellectuals face arrest? Why Kurdish Villages get destroyed? Why the Kurdish region is kept in a total calamity? Why Kurds are prevented from running their affairs? The Kurds know that all of these occur because of who they are.

Patriotic feelings are growing within the Kurds; they have a sense of belonging to a nation, and more importantly the military resistance against the regime has actually caused the Kurdish people to renew their sense of identity for the first time in many years.

The Islamic regime started the oppression of minority rights from its reign to power, and crushed the uprising movements of Baluch, Turkmen and Arab minorities and their armed resistance simultaneously. The question remains whether the minorities, which have had no military resistance against the central government of Iran, enjoy more rights than the Kurds that still have not given up their armed struggle against the central Islamic

regime of Iran? Is their region more developed than Kurdistan? Are there more employment opportunity, factories and economic prosperity in their region compared to Kurdistan? Of course, the answer is no to all these questions.

On the other hand, thanks to the Kurdish armed resistance against the Islamic regime, there is a political maturity among the Kurds in Iran that is absent among other minorities in Iran. The Kurds also recognize and struggle for their rights more than others, and have a stronger sense of nation-building; the Kurdish political parties are more advanced and



Kurds are now certain to play a role in the future of Iran.

Those who look at the political system in Iran superficially, allege that since the reduction of the Kurdish armed presence against the Islamic regime, the government has allowed more freedom of press and cultural activities, and as the results, intellectual expression has flourished. One should realize that if there is a "change" in Iran, it is not because that the regime has democratized or it has started to respect the minorities' rights, rather, this insufficient "change" is the product and the results of the political and bloody armed resistance that the Kurds have taken part in for years. The Kurds in Iran have not laid down their arms, and if the Islamic regime has

assured that the Kurds will do that one day, it will start to take back all the apparent "changes" that exists now. The Kurds do know that the Islamic regime with this perceived "change" is quietly attempting to control Kurdish youths and intellectuals and prevent Kurdish public from raising their voices.

Let's look at more examples;

The TODEH party believed that the Islamic regime was anti-imperialism; therefore, it took all the necessary measures, including military campaign against the organizations, which opposed the regime, to ensure that the Islamic regime succeeds. At last, it was eventually eliminated from the political scene in Iran.

In order to further explain the attitude of the Islamic regime toward its citizens, a more deliberate scrutiny at portions of its record for the past 23 years is necessary: Daryosh Feroher, his wife and tens of other writers and intellectuals were abducted, imprisoned and killed. Shahpor Bekhteiari, Ferydon Ferrokhsad and many more were assassinated while living abroad. One should ask, whether all these outspoken Iranians promote military resistance against the regime? Moreover, people like Abdullah Nori, Yosef Ashkeveri, Saeed Hejarian and tens of other Religious-Nationalists, not only opposed any armed action against the government, in contrary, at one time, they fought militarily for the regime to stand still. They were all sentenced with extensive prison terms. Ayatollah Montazeri, who was the closest comrade of the founder of Islamic regime, Ayatollah Khomeini, has been under house arrest for years.

Furthermore, the Kurdish freedom fighters do not fight the regime in cities of Tehran, Ghezveen and Ghom; instead, they



resist the regime's forces that come from those cities to occupy Kurdistan. The military resistance, therefore, has been imposed on the Kurds and Kurdish freedom fighters.

PDKI has been committed to a peaceful solution right from the beginning, and it has paid a big price for it; the Secretary-general of PDKI, Dr. Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou was assassinated in Vienna in 1989 while "negotiating" with the regime. The history of military resistance in Kurdistan does disclose the fact that there is a direct relation between the armed struggle and Kurdish nationalism; the region with the longest history of military resistance has the highest degree of Kurdish nationalism.

Now that the Islamic regime has subjugated the Kurds by every means, at these sensitive

circumstances Kurds must not restrict their resisting avenues, and should not overlook one method, including the military one over the others. The Kurds must now engage further in cultural, diplomatic, political, organizational, artistic, scientific and many more methods of resisting and above all they must prepared themselves for one of the most effective method of resistance, the armed struggle.

Those that allege that Kurdish misery is the result of Kurdish military struggle against the Islamic regime have not recognized the true face of the Islamic regime. The Kurdish intellectuals must now lead Kurds to a full recognition of their rights, and they must promote all kinds of struggle against the Islamic regime including the military one as well, if necessary.

The Islamic regime is not like democratic western governments elected by its people that work for the best interest of its citizens, rather, only the rights of the most powerful are respected; therefore, to take back their rights, the Kurds must also establish a powerful entity and generate methods aimed at supporting and enhancing their cause. Certainly, this should include the build up of a strong and effective military force.

PDKI respects all those who have fought against the Islamic regime of Iran. We respect and admire especially the Kurdish freedom fighters, PISHMERGAS.

Once again, happy PISHMERGA Day to you and to the PISHMERGA families and all the Kurdish people.

The Execution of Democratic Activists Continues...



By: Wurya Hussieni

The year 2002 for the people of Kurdistan was the augmentation of the same old oppression that most of it has been legitimized because of the governmental system ruling over our people; most importantly, the year 2002 was the year of the imprisonment of political activists, and the year of execution and elimination of Kurdish freedom-activists and intellectuals. The execution of the imprisoned activists was in effect till the last remaining days of 2002. *Habibullah Tanhaeyan's* body was returned to his family on 12 October 2002. In 6, 7 and 14 of October, *Salah Godarzi*, *Hamza Ghaderi* and *Khalid Shawghi* were executed in the regime's prisons respectively, accused of collaborating with PDKI. *Mansure maroufi*, another PDKI activist was gunned down in the centre of *Bokan*

city (Iranian Kurdistan) by the intelligence forces in 15 November 2002. Just within the last year, a large numbers of civilians from the borderous urban and rural areas have become victims of regime's barbaric policies of terror. The sum of these and many more atrocities committed by the regime in Kurdistan deserve some deliberation that will be laid out from several angles.

The executions that were carried out in these period, first and foremost, confronts us with the existence of the regime's philosophy and thinking that justifies and invests in these executions. After more than two decades of this regime's ruling, and considering its records, it has become clear for every intact mind that regime's doctrine is based on eradicating

dissidents consisting of every kind of outsider voice, and even 'legalizing' it; the regime's constitution is derived from this philosophy that is full of injustice, and neglecting national, cultural and religious differences. Apart from this 'doctrine', Khomeini, the founder of the establishment, had had a crucial role in the delivery of the execution verdicts of the opponents on many occasions. Proof, the mass executions of political prisoners in the summer of 1988 would be enough. Khomeini in a verdict for the execution of political prisoners writes: 'Those in the prisoners of the country who insist on their opposition are infidels and must be hanged.' Realistically, this 'doctrine' is considered as one of the scariest 'doctrine' of this era that is a continuation of the middle-



age mentality. Furthermore, *Khatami* (the current so-called reformist President) also stated two years ago that any attempt to change the constitution is considered as treason, unaware of the fact that the preservation of the current statues and their implementation in Iranian society connote disrespect to the dignity of every Iranian, and a legal justification to the killings and executions of the people of this country.

The other aspect is the position and reaction of the world community, especially some international humanitarian organizations, and some individuals and groups within the country against the execution of these Kurdish activists. It should be unambiguously admitted that the latest executions did not follow much criticism from international community especially the European Union. Of course, the European understanding of Iran in 2002 was fundamentally fallow; leaving Iran out from the list of the United Nations Commission for Human Rights as a regime that must be continuously monitored and scrutinized was the principal blunder. Still, the European states without considering the rising number of execution in Iran, have been striving to present a contemporary image of this regime to preserve their commercial interests. It has proved that the European countries, before being concerned about the violation of human rights in Iran, are worried about the loss of Iranian market. In general, leaving Iran out of the list of the countries that must be monitored by the Commission is the result of agreements of a number of countries with the government in Iran, not the improvement of human rights conditions and abandoning terrorism sponsorship. Because, in this period, aside from the execution

of Kurdish activists, dozens of Kurdish merchants, under the disguise of 'smugglers' have been murdered, and at national level the detainment of journalists, attacks on students, and etc... continues.

In fact, if criticism is directed at countries and organizations defending human rights on their indifference towards the executions, it is not an offense if the indifferences of the defenders of 'civil society' and those so-called reformers are also pointed out. It is more than five years that they have been jiggling around with terms such as democracy, civil society and so on and so forth...and also consider themselves as public representatives; however, in regards to the execution of Kurdish citizens, they have chosen to remain silent. In fact, remaining silent in the face of executions of political prisoners for what ever reason and under whatever circumstances is based on neglecting Kurdish aspirations that these activists were executed for. We must understand that the execution and terror of any Kurdish activist is not just about the physical extermination of individuals, rather, it is an attempt for the elimination of the forerunners of struggle, and extinguishing the brave voices of those activists that struggle for rights and freedom of Kurds for more than half a century. For instance, 'Kurdish deputies' in the Iranian Islamic Council Assembly (*Majlis*) who have not been heedless of condemning Israeli policies in Palestine, Turkish in Kurdistan and the U.S. in Afghanistan, must regard this reality that they are the product of a society that the wills of its population is ignored and violated daily, and the activists of Kurdish national movement are eliminated. As the result, neglecting this important matter is neglecting the rights and aspirations of a people.

No doubts, the execution of the Kurdish activists has neither

been the regime's first attempt, nor will it remain the last attack on the progressive movement of Kurdistan; furthermore, these executions are regime's explicit confession to the prospect of advancing national-general movement in Kurdistan that has been effective against the regime for more than two decades, a 'bitter' fact, which has also been generally denied by the officials. Still, this new wave of executions, contrary to all the bluffs of *Yahya Rahim-Safavi* (Commander-in-chief of the Islamic Republic Revolutionary Corps or *Pasdaran*) is a sign of popularity and activeness of Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan; a party whose members are in regime's prisons, also a sign of Party's devotion to the process of freedom-seeking struggle in Iran and Kurdistan.

Regardless, we should not forget that these executions are conducted in times that resistance and abhorrence of the people of Kurdistan is becoming routine that examples of this was the opposition of the fed-up people of the cities of *Piranshar*, *Mahabad* and *Kermashan* against the regime's policies in the region. Kurdish students along with the nation-wide student movement enjoy an important role, and today on the world stage Kurdish cry, in general, has strong support; consequently, the execution of Kurdish activists in prisons that are intended to frighten the disillusioned People of Kurdistan has confronted the regime with various obstacles, far more than overwhelming the populace struggle.

Once again, along with condemning the execution of democratic activists, we renew our pledges that we continue to remain the pioneers of the demands of the people of Kurdistan, and the fulfiller of the will of those honourable martyrs.

The Kurdistan Republic of 1946

By Dr Hussein Tahiri



The Kurdistan Republic of 1946¹ has been one of the most important symbols of Kurdish nationalism. It was formed at a time that the Kurds had been suppressed in all parts of Kurdistan. The formation of such a republic symbolized the revival of Kurdish nationalism. It was especially important for the role the Kurdish intellectuals played in the formation of the republic.

Before World War II, the Kurds in all parts of Kurdistan were living under oppression. Isma'íl Agha Shikak, Simko, was killed in 1930 by the Iranian government. The Sheikh Mahmud's revolt in Iraqi Kurdistan was defeated by 1932, and the last Kurdish revolt in Turkey was suppressed by the end of 1938. After the defeat of these revolts, a dark stage of Kurdish history began. The ruling states, mainly Turkey, Iraq and Iran decided not to allow the Kurdish leaders to conduct any other revolt. On 8 July 1937, Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Afghanistan signed a pact, with encouragement from the British, to contain communism, and prevent its influence in the Middle East. It was more a non-aggression pact by Iran, Iraq and Turkey to contain Kurdish insurgencies as the signatory states agreed to avoid interfering in the internal affairs of each other, cooperate and consult each other on security matters and respect their existing borders.² It meant these states were to avoid supporting Kurdish insurgencies in other parts of Kurdistan and cooperate to contain Kurdish revolts. The Kurds were well contained until the World War II.

World War II was a hope for Kurdish intellectuals in Iran to realize their long dream of a Kurdish state. The Allies, Russia, the British and United States occupied Iran in 1941.

The authority of central government in Iran over Kurdistan was undermined. The Kurdish intellectuals in Mahabad used this occasion to establish their organization. In 1946, they declared the formation of a Kurdish republic in the town of Mahabad. However, this republic lasted only for eleven months; the Iranian forces defeated it in the same year.

Iran was drawn into World War II, despite the fact that Reza Shah declared its neutrality. Before World War II, Iran had established economic relations with Germany, and during the war some of the Iranian officials sympathized with Germany. Iran was also an important route to transport arms and logistics to the Soviet Union. The Allies' suspicion that Iranian leaders might be sympathetic to the Germans was a good pretext to invade Iran. Therefore, in the summer of 1941, when Germany attacked the Soviet Union, the Allies occupied Iran.³

The Iranian territory was partitioned between the Allies. On 25 August 1941, the British attacked from the south and the Soviet Union from the north. Iran was divided into three zones: the southern provinces were controlled by the British and the United States, the central provinces e.g. Teheran and Mashhad remained neutral, and some of the Northern provinces were controlled by the Soviet Union. Kurdistan too was partitioned into three zones: Saqqiz southwards was under the British influence, the north of Kurdistan was under the control of the Soviet Union, and Mahabad and a few surrounding towns remained as a buffer zone between the British and the Soviets. But the Soviets still had some influence over this buffer zone.⁴

The power vacuum in the Kurdish buffer zone gave the Kurdish intellectuals in the town of Mahabad an opportunity to form a Kurdish organization. By the beginning of the World War II, there was a tiny group of urban Kurdish intellectuals in the Mahabad town. This group included students, junior civil servants, teachers, and traders. Unlike the previous

Kurdish intellectuals they did not come from noble families, they rose from among ordinary Kurdish population. They formed the middle class strata of Kurdish society who could embrace ethnic nationalism.⁵ On 16 September 1942, it was this group of Kurdish intellectuals who gathered in *Amin al-Islam* Garden in Mahabad to form the nucleus of *Komalayi Jiyannaveyi Kurd* (J.K), the Committee for the Resurrection of Kurdistan.⁶ The J.K. was a secret committee and aimed at autonomy for the Iranian Kurdistan. The J.K. was a purely nationalist organization. The only condition for its membership was to be a Kurd. Its aims were as follow:

1. The J.K. refuted armed struggle to gain self-determination. Its members, looking at the Kurdish history, believed that armed struggle had by then only brought destruction and despair to the Kurds.
2. It emphasized education as a very important element which would enable the Kurds to gain freedom and their rights. It committed itself to elevating the education level in Kurdistan.
3. It said that Islam was the religion of the majority of the Kurds for over a thousand years. The J.K had a special regard for it. The members of the J.K. were to swear on the Quran when they joined it. The followers of other faiths were to swear on whatever was holy for them.
4. Four groups could become members of the J.K, but they would never become its leaders. They were aghas, sheikhs, priests, and sayyids. The reason for their exclusion from leadership was that they had a special respect among the Kurds so they could easily become dictators.⁷

The J.K. had to change its structure as its membership increased. A small and secret organization like J.K. could not keep up with the pace of developments in the Mahabad region. The secrecy of the J.K. had severely



limited its activities. The nationalist sentiments among the Kurdish intellectuals had heightened. The authority of the Iranian government had diminished in Mahabad. In May 1943, the Kurds of Mahabad attacked the police station, killed seven policemen and occupied it. The last vestige of the Iranian authority was destroyed.⁸ The Kurdish intellectuals and tribal leaders, encouraged by the Soviet Union, felt they needed a larger organization which could be expanded to other areas and become a base for their future plans.

The Kurdistan Democratic Party was formed on 16 August 1945.⁹ The Kurdistan Democratic Party, PDKI, formed its first congress on 22 October 1945. It published a manifesto which consisted 22 articles. The manifesto had provisions for use of Kurdish language, a provisional Council in Kurdistan, local Kurdish officials, education and economic developments. In regard to the status of a future Kurdish entity, Chapter 2, Article 4, stated that the aim of the PDKI was to form an autonomous Kurdish state within the territorial integrity of Iran. That autonomous state was to consist of all the provinces where the Kurds had historically lived.¹⁰

The Kurdish leaders announced the formation of a Kurdish state. The Kurdish leaders, hopeful of the Soviet support, decided to form an autonomous Kurdish state. On 22 January 1946, the Republic of Kurdistan was proclaimed at the *Chwar Chira* Square, and Qazi Muhammad was elected as the president.¹¹ On 11 February 1946, Qazi Muhammad formed his cabinet of 14 ministers with *Haji Baba Sheikh* as the Prime Minister.¹²

The Kurds from other parts of Kurdistan joined the Republic of Kurdistan. From the start of the J.K. there were contacts between the Kurds of Iran and Iraq. Before J.K. was formed, its founders asked the *Heva* Party in Iraq to help them to form an organization as they did not have enough experience. A member of the *Heva* attended the first meeting in which the J.K. was founded.¹³ On 11

October 1945, Mulla Mustafa Barzani who had been attacked by the Iraqi forces and the British air force had no choice but to cross to the Iranian Kurdistan. His brother, Sheikh Ahmad, and 1,000 of Barzani forces, (according to one account 3,000) with their families accompanied him. They joined the Kurdish Republic of 1946 and formed its military backbone.¹⁴ Also, Kurdish representatives from Turkey and Syria



visited the republic.¹⁵

The Kurdish Republic of 1946 acted quickly in implementing some reforms. For the first time the Kurdish language became official in schools; Kurdish books, newspapers and magazines were printed; the officials were recruited within Kurds; women participated in political, cultural and social events, and the Kurdish theatre began. The Kurdish Republic established relations with the Soviet Union and the Azerbaijan Republic.¹⁶ A Kurdish army was formed which consisted of 70 officers, 40 non-commissioned officers and 1200 soldiers. The Soviet Union sent some arms and military logistics to the Kurdish army. A captain, Salahaddin Kazimov, was sent to train the Kurdish army alongside the Kurdish officers who had come from Iraq.¹⁷ Apparently, everything was going according to the desires of the Kurdish leaders, but it soon became apparent the Republic's power base was shaky.

The Soviet Union was forced to leave Iran and the future of the Kurdish Republic remained in doubt. The United States' forces left Iran on 31 December 1945 and the British followed on 2 March 1946, but the Soviet refused to do so. The Iranian government under the Prime Minister *Qavam* began a series of diplomatic pressure on the

Soviet Union. *Qavam* appealed to the United Nations, the United States and the British to put pressure on the Soviet Union to leave the Iranian territory. The Soviet would not leave until it got some oil concessions. The *Qavam* government promised the Soviets some concessions, but maintained that the agreement had to be ratified by the Iranian Parliament. The government could not call the election as long as the foreign powers were present in Iran.¹⁸ Thus, the Soviet troops left Iran in May 1946.

The Kurdish Republic was abandoned to the mercy of the Iranian government. As there was more affinity between the Soviet Azerbaijan and the Iranian Azerbaijan, the Soviets put pressure on Iran to recognize the local government in Azerbaijan. The Kurdish government was not communist; the Kurds had retained their traditional way of

life. There was no point for the Soviet Union to put pressure on Iran to recognize the Kurdish rights. If the Republic of Azerbaijan was defeated, an ideological ally and a communist government which was under the influence of the Soviet Union was to be defeated. In the Kurdish case, Kurdish ethnicity was to be defeated. The Kurds were under the influence of the Soviet Union, but had not changed their views in favour of communism and there was no indication they were going to do so. Therefore, the Soviets had nothing to gain by backing the Kurds. They needed the Kurds to put pressure on the Iranian government to give some concessions and they received the promise for such concessions. The Kurds were of no further use for the Soviet Union.

The Kurdish Republic was in a disadvantaged position vis-a-vis the Iranian government compared to the Azerbaijan Republic. On 23 April 1946, the Azerbaijan and Kurdish republics signed an agreement. They agreed to jointly resist the military incursions of the Iranian forces, increase the cooperation between the two republics and solve their territorial disagreements in future. Furthermore, they agreed neither of the party should negotiate with the government without the



consent of the other.²⁰ Thus, when the Azerbaijan representatives negotiated with the *Qavam* government, *Sadr Qazi* occasionally represented Kurdish Republic. There was very little for the Kurds in those negotiations. *Qavam* insisted the Kurds were a part of the Azerbaijan Republic and were to deal with the Azeri officials not the Iranian government. The Kurdish question became more complex; they were an ethnic group in Iran and a minority within the Azerbaijan Republic.²¹ *Qavam* with his policy, regarding the Kurds as a part of the Azerbaijan Republic, wanted to play the Kurds and Azeris against each other. The Kurds could not agree with such terms. They decided to conduct direct negotiations with the government. The government initially was reluctant to give the Kurds any concessions, but as the military might of the Kurds put pressure on the government forces in the Saqqiz front, the government gave in. The Kurdish representative and *Qavam* agreed on the following points:

1. The Kurdish language was to be used in education
2. There was to be political freedom for the Kurdish organisations in particular and for democratic organizations in general.
3. Persian forces were to withdraw from all the areas the Kurds lived.
4. Kurdish publications were to be allowed.
5. An autonomous status for the Kurds was to be recognized.²²

The terms and conditions agreed by the Iranian government with the Kurdish and Azerbaijani governments were short tactics devised by *Qavam* to get the Soviets out of Iran and leave the Soviets with no pretexts.

The Kurdish Republic was defeated by the end of 1946, and ended the dream of many Kurdish nationalists. When the Soviet departed, the Iranian forces prepared a major attack on the Azerbaijan and Kurdistan republics. They tried the Kurdish forces in the Saqqiz fronts, but each time the Kurdish forces prevailed and forced the Iranian forces to retreat. Then they decided to attack the Azerbaijan Republic which would be easier to handle. By defeating the Azerbaijan forces they could destroy the morale of the Kurds. A force of 20,000 attacked the Azerbaijan Republic. The Azerbaijan leaders did not resist the Iranian attack so on 13 December 1946, the Iranian troops entered Tabriz, the capital of the Azerbaijan Republic.²³ As the Iranian forces had faced several setbacks previously in the Saqqiz front, this time they attacked from Miandoab. Despite the defeat of the Azerbaijan Republic, the Kurdish leaders decided to resist, but on 15 December the economic representative of the Soviet left Mahabad. His departure gave the Kurds the impression that the Soviet Union was no longer going to protect them. Thus, Kurdish leaders decided not to resist and gave themselves up. On 16 December 1946, Qazi

Muhammad went to Miandoab to facilitate the surrender of the Kurdish Republic. On 17 December 1946, Mahabad was officially handed over to the Iranian forces without any resistance.²⁴

Some of the Kurdish leaders were arrested and executed, and the traces of the Republic were destroyed. Before the arrival of the Iranian troops some Kurdish leaders escaped to Iraq. Mulla Mustafa Barzani left Mahabad and retreated to the Iran-Iraq borders, and then sought asylum in the Soviet Union. Qazi Muhammad and some other Kurdish leaders remained in Mahabad. A few days after the capture of Mahabad, Qazi Muhammad and some other Kurdish leaders were arrested. They were tried in a marshal court and condemned to death. On 30 March 1947, at 6:00 am Qazi Muhammad, his cousin Seif Qazi, and his brother Sadr Qazi were hanged in *Chwar Chira* Square, in the same place where the Republic was proclaimed, for what the Iranian government termed treason.²⁵ The Iranian government was not satisfied with the defeat of the republic and execution of some of its leaders. It tried to eradicate the signs of the Kurdish Republic. Kurdish publishing press was closed and Kurdish publications were banned; Kurdish books were burnt, and teaching in Kurdish language was prohibited;²⁶ Hence, the final episode of the Kurdish Republic came to end.

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Notes:

1. The Kurdish Republic of 1946 is also known as the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad because it was established in the town of Mahabad and its authority did not go beyond Mahabad and a few surrounding towns. Nevertheless, the Kurdish Republic of 1946 aimed at self-determination for all the Kurds of Iran. Therefore, the Kurdish Republic of 1946 is more appropriate.
2. Philip Robins, 'The Overlord State: Turkish Policy and the Kurdish Issue', in *International Affairs*, Vol.69, No.4,1993, p.671.
3. Louise L'Estrange Fawcett, *Iran and the Cold War: The Azerbaijan Crisis of 1946*, Cambridge University Press,1992, p.1.
4. Borhanedin Yassin, 'A History of the Republic of Kurdistan', in *The International Journal of Kurdish Studies*, Vol.11, Nos.1-2,1997, p.128.
5. David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, London, I.B. Tauris,1996, p.237.
6. Sayyid Muhammad Samadi, JK Cibû, Ci Dewist ve Ci be Ser Hat (What was JK, What It Wanted and What Happened to It?, Mahabad,1981, p.11.
7. *Ibid.*, pp.12-13.
8. Chris Kutschera, *Kurd le Sedey Nozde u Bistom da*

(Kurdish History in the 19th and 20th Centuries, p. 264(Kurdish translation by Muhammad Riyani).

9. Jalil Gadani, *Pencah Sal Xebat: Kurteyê li Mijoyî Hizbî Dimokrati Kurdistanî Iran* [Fifty Years Struggle: A Short History of the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran, Iraqi Kurdistan, The Ministry of Education's Publication, [1987], p. 21(Kurdish).
10. *Ibid.*, p.28.
11. John Bulloch and Harvey Morris, *No Friends but the Mountains: The Tragic History of the Kurds*, London, Viking,1992, p.106.
12. Dana/Muhammad Biha'addin Mella Sahib, Qazi Muhemmed u Kumari Mahabad [Qazi Muhammad and the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad, Suleimaniyeh, Raperin Publications,1970, p. 29(Kurdish).
13. Sayyid Muhammad Samadi, *op.cit.*, p.15.
14. Archie Roosevelt Jnr., 'The Kurdish Republic of Mahabad', in Gerard Chaliand (ed.) *People Without a Country: The Kurds and Kurdistan*, London, Zed Press,1978, p.141.
15. A. Ghassemlo, 'Kurdistan in Iran', in Gerard Chaliand (ed.) *People Without a Country: The Kurds and Kurdistan*, London, Zed Press,1980, p.120.
16. Abdurrahman Qasemlo, *Kurdistan and Kurds*, APEC-Forlag,1996, p. 95(translated into Persian by

Taha Atiqi).

17. Chris Kutschera, *op.cit.*, p.271.
18. Amir Taheri, *The Spirit of Allah: Khomeini and the Islamic Revolution*, Maryland (USA), Adler Publishers Inc.1986, pp.129-132.
19. The government formed in Iranian Azerbaijan was a communist government, and there also was racial and linguistic affinities between the Soviet and Iranian Azeris.
20. Archie Roosevelt Jnr., 'The Kurdish Republic of Mahabad', in Gerard Chaliand (ed.) *op.cit.*, p.143.
21. Nader Entessar, *Kurdish Ethnonationalism*, Boulder and London, Lynne Rienner Publishers,1992, p.16.
22. Dana/Muhammad Biha'addin Mella Sahib, *op.cit.*, p.45.
23. Chris Kutschera, *op.cit.*, p.284.
24. Edgar O'balance, *The Kurdish Struggle 1920 -94*, London, MacMillan Press Ltd.,1996, p.32.
25. Peyam, 'An Important Historical Document', *Peyam Newspaper*, Issue: 6 March 1998, pp.1, 2(Kurdish).
26. Archie Roosevelt Jnr., 'The Kurdish Republic of Mahabad', in Gerard Chaliand (ed.), *op.cit.*, p.149.

IRAN'S DISTANT 'SECOND REVOLUTION'

By Stephen C. Fairbanks

Iranian officials this week once again are vainly trying to rekindle revolutionary fervor as the country marks the 24th anniversary of the Islamic revolution. They are mobilizing crowds of conscripts, low-level bureaucrats, and other cheerleaders to commemorate the "Ten Days of Dawn," the days of revolutionary transition that began with Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's 1 February 1979 return to Iran. But many Iranians are simmering with discontent, and the conservative clerics wielding the reins of power have lost the legitimacy they once derived from public support. The revolution's moral, social, and economic promises remain undelivered by a corrupt and dysfunctional government. But if the revolution has failed, there are no prospects on the horizon for its overturn. Many outside Iran expected otherwise when university students across the country last November and December protested the death penalty against outspoken liberal professor Hashem Aghajari. At the same time, the power struggle between the regime's major factions was intensifying and perennial hopes for a "second revolution" soared, at least among Western journalists and a few Washington officials. Some Iranian expatriates used satellite television to urge their fellow

countrymen to join the students, but few did so other than those who went to make sure that their children did not get arrested. Political apathy once again dominates Iran's mood. The public's enthusiasm for new political upheaval appears to be no greater than its long-faded zeal for the Islamic revolution. One reason the student activists failed to attract wider support is that Aghajari's death sentence was simply not an issue that affects most people's lives. It was dreadful to be sure, even if it has not been carried out, but most people have gotten used to the harsh judgments and penalties (although rarely death sentences) imposed by the conservative courts against Islamic modernists and reform-minded activists.

Similarly, few Iranians consider that the relentless economic stresses of life in the Islamic Republic warrant mounting an open challenge to the regime. The steep housing prices and pervasive corruption, the high rates of unemployment and inflation, and other chronic problems wrought by governmental economic mismanagement could breed widespread discontent, but Iranians are used to gradually worsening daily living conditions. They have not been hit by the sort of sudden economic catastrophe, such as a steep drop in oil prices, that would be much more likely to breed serious unrest.

As for the so-called student movement, expectations in the West that it poses a serious threat to the regime are clearly too high. Compared to their counterparts in the United States, Iranian university students are keenly interested in politics, but those willing to put their academic

futures on the line by joining in demonstrations are relatively few. Western journalists covering the demonstrations of late last year reported fewer than 5,000 participants at the largest rallies. That does not amount to much in a total university population exceeding 1 million.

There is no nationwide coordinating mechanism that would make the students an effective force. The main student organization on most campuses, the Office for Strengthening Unity, may enable students to air views on some controversial issues, but ultimately it functions to support the ruling order. It secures official permits for student demonstrations in apparent return for ensuring that the students do not get out of hand. The student protests against Aghajari's death sentence were tolerated, but chants of "Death to Khamenei" are not, and the student-organization leaders try to prevent such occurrences.

Without independent institutions, civil society cannot be established, and no viable opposition can develop. Institutions in such civil sectors as education, religion, labor, law, and women's rights, like the students' Office for Strengthening Unity, are connected to the government, either through direct funding or by intimidation. There is at present no means for workers to generate a general strike, nor is it yet possible for the more modernist, dissident clerics to become an organized threat when their seminaries in Qom are government-connected.

The government, although driven by factional conflict, is not on the brink of collapse. The two main political trends remain in a deadlock that keeps the



conservatives in power and the reformists perpetually frustrated. The conservatives have no popular legitimacy and no hopes of winning elections in the manner that President Khatami and the reformist parliamentarians have, but they hold all the coercive reins of power and are constantly able to thwart reform efforts.

In a political maneuver meant to give an appearance of fighting back, President Khatami last year proposed two bills that would strengthen him vis-à-vis the conservative judiciary and curtail the Guardians Council's role in vetting election candidates. The council is certain to reject the bills if they ever emerge from parliament. It is doubtful that

Khatami, who rarely speaks about the two bills now, feels seriously enough about them to resign in



the event of their rejection, as some reformists say he should. Khatami has not carried out his own, earlier threats to resign during his troubled presidency. Above all he wants to avoid fomenting domestic chaos. In his view, according to reformists

disillusioned with him, order is more important than freedom.

Disillusionment with Khatami is now widespread, and at present the outlook for political reform is grim. Some conservatives talk of closing remaining reformist newspapers and of disbanding major reformist parties such as the Islamic Iran Participation Party, one of whose leaders, Abbas Abdi, was sentenced to eight years in prison this week. A U.S.-led war with Iraq could make the situation worse if, as reformists fear, conservatives adduce domestic security needs in order to further crush Iran's democratic impulse.

Iran's revolution has failed

Wednesday, February 5, 2003 - The International Herald Tribune

Few Iranians celebrated the 24th anniversary on Saturday of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's return to Iran. It is easy to understand why. A movement that once brought millions into the streets demanding freedom from the shah's dictatorship has gone on to oppress its young, disillusion its middle-aged veterans and silence even grand ayatollahs who question its course.

Two recent events illustrate the growing isolation of the clerical conservatives who retain real power in Iran despite the repeated electoral victories of reformers. On Sunday, Tehran newspapers reported that a leading reform strategist had been sentenced to seven years in prison for publishing a poll showing that three in four Iranians favor talks with Washington. That same reformer, Abbas Abdi, was one of

the students who led the takeover of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran in 1979, holding diplomats hostage for more than a year.

And last week Grand Ayatollah Hossein Ali Montazeri was freed after five years of house arrest for questioning the course taken by Iran since the revolution. Montazeri, 80, was once Khomeini's closest associate and designated successor. Abdi and Montazeri are personally responsible for some of the harsh cruelty of the Islamic Republic's early years. Since then each has come to recognize the damage that clerical dictatorship has done to Iran's people and its place in the world. Abdi has courageously fought for reform for more than a decade and has been imprisoned before. Montazeri has been speaking out fearlessly since the late 1980s and resumed doing so as soon as he was released. No

such evolution has occurred among the ruling clerical establishment, and none is in sight.

The biggest threat to continued clerical dictatorship comes from young Iranians. Most of Iran's 65 million people were born after the revolution, and more than 70 percent are under 30. For them the rule of the mullahs has meant stunted job and housing prospects, furtive social lives and universities under siege from religious courts and paramilitary thugs. These young people will eventually shape Iran's future. For now, they have lodged their hopes in the presidency of Mohammed Khatami and its long-thwarted promises of reform. The mullahs believe that by jailing people like Abbas Abdi they can delay needed changes indefinitely. They are wrong.

A report of Secretary-general's tour of Europe

The Secretary-general, Abdullah Hassanzadeh was in Europe this fall for a series of meetings with Party members and friends abroad, European governments, political parties and humanitarian organization. Secretary-general participated in three major memorials for the 10th anniversary of Dr. Sadegh Sharafkandi's assassination that were held in Berlin, Paris and Stockholm. There were also numerous ceremonies and meetings that were held by Party committees for the Secretary-general in Finland, Norway, Sweden, France, Switzerland, Austria, Germany and Britain that resulted in large turnout of compatriots eager to discuss and hear issues concerning our Party, nation, country and the region. Also present at the trip, Mustafa Moloudi, member of Politburo of the Party. Here are Secretary-general's visits and meetings in brief:

On 29 October 2002, Secretary-general along with a delegation consisting of Finish Party chapter paid a visit to the Middle East and North African division of Finish foreign Ministry and met with foreign affairs delegation led by Ms. Lina Relota.

The 8th Party Plenum

The 8th Plenum of Central Committee of PDKI was conducted on 19 January 2003 with the participation of the majority of leadership members that lasted for 5 days. In the 1st part of the sessions, the agenda of Plenum that was presented by Politburo was discussed. Following the report, the Secretary-general in his political analysis briefed the participants on the general circumstances of Iran and the Kurds, and the changes that have occurred between the two plenums.

In the analysis, poverty, unemployment of the people on one side, and negligence and incompatibility of the officials on the other to deal with these issues that has

On Monday 4 November 2002, a PDKI delegation led by Secretary-general paid a visit to Swedish Parliament. They were greeted by a number of parliamentarians in charge of international affairs. The following day, 5 November the delegation accompanied by Mustafa Moloudi, were invited to visit the office of Swedish Social Democratic Party. They were greeted by Koni Frederickson, member of Party's leadership council and the head of Kurdish Working Group in Socialist International and Ms. Anta Lind in charge of international affairs of the Party.

Secretary-general on Thursday, 12 November paid a visit to the Norwegian Parliament in response to the request of Parliamentary Commission for foreign affairs. He was greeted by Torbun Yagland the head of the Commission. Following the visit, the delegation met Karlstin Karlson, advisor to foreign affairs and the head of Middle East Division of Foreign Affairs at the Ministry.

resulted in burglary, corruption and other social problems, were laid out. Student movement and regime's isolation from main stream society were also discussed. The need for a united front of progressive forces of Iran was also a major topic of Plenum that the Party should play a leading role.

Plenum touched on the regional issues that along with being prepared for any new developments, hoped that the disputes and issues in the region are solved peacefully.

Severe economic conditions burry people under avalanche

The Kurdish areas in Iran are mountainous with plenty of snow and cold winters. Kurdish merchants to make daily living, cross the 'illegal' borders into neighbouring Iraqi Kurdistan and Turkey, but the authorities do not legalize the trade nor do they allow them to freely work. As the result people will have to choose rough mountains for their trade, which has been tragic for them. In Sardasht region, nine people were buried under an avalanch killing 5 of them. In Mahabad three people were killed under

avalanche. In Piranshar, 90 merchants, choosing a rough path avoiding their visibility, were buried under an avalanche that resulted in the freezing to death of four and the rest were in critical condition. The AP reporting an avalanche in central Iran stated that in other parts of Iran "local authorities have failed to put sufficient safety measures in place along the avalanche-prone road, where many people have been killed over the years."

The Participation of a PDKI delegation at NDP Convention in Canada

The 21st federal Convention of New Democratic Party of Canada (NDP) was conducted on 24 to 26 of January 2003 in Toronto, Canada. In this Convention along with discussing many domestic and international issues, a new leader was elected. An invited PDKI delegation led by

Sharif Behruz, Director of Public Relation in Ontario, Canada accompanied by Sirus Almasi in charge of Party affairs in Toronto participated at Convention. NDP is a member of Socialist International, which PDKI is also a member.

Open letter: Stop Iran from suppressing the Kurds and interfering in Kurdish affairs

To the secretary General of the UN, the President of the USA, all the Kurdistan political parties, the European parliament, the public opinion

On 8th October 2002, the Iranian authorities executed Hamza Qader, a Kurdish political prisoner from the Kurdish town of Sardasht, who had been in the Uromiyeh prison since 1997.

Killing political prisoners is not acceptable in any civilized country; furthermore it is a breach of international conventions.

We are deeply concerned about the policy of the Iranian government toward the Kurds in Eastern and Southern Kurdistan.

The Kurds are one of the ancient peoples of the Middle East who have been able to maintain their cultural heritage and a distinctive character for centuries, despite the attempts by the ruling states to destroy Kurdish culture and assimilate them. In Turkey, Kurdish culture and identity has been banned for decades. In Syria ethnic cleansing began in the early 1960s. The Iraqi governments have attempted to eliminate the Kurds through genocide and ethnic cleansing.

The policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran towards the Kurds has been very similar to the policies of other states, however, more subtle. The Islamic regime of Iran has suppressed the Kurds as rigorously as the other states. It has destroyed hundreds of Kurdish villages and tortured, executed and imprisoned thousands of Kurds. The Kurds of Eastern Kurdistan do not have their basic human rights and the Iranian government has no intention of

recognizing the basic human rights of the Kurds in Eastern Kurdistan.

Education in Kurdish is prohibited. Iranian authorities implement systematic destruction of the Kurdish language and culture. Recently, the Iranian government distributed a memorandum ordering the school staff not to speak Kurdish inside the schools.

Formation of political and non-political organizations is prohibited and organizations restricted to those approved by the regime.

Imposing an alien culture of covering up has oppressed Kurdish women. Kurdish female costumes are very colorful and are seen as against Islamic Law, as interpreted by the regime. Prohibiting this is a violation of their basic rights. Women also face more serious persecution. Women are discouraged to take part in any level of the society. Those women charged with having sex outside marriage are murdered through public stoning.



Kurdish identity has been denied through the concept of "Islamic Umma". It is for the Kurds to be recognized as a separate nation with their own identity who are entitled to self-determination.

Under the Shiite Iran, the Kurdish nation has been persecuted religiously, as most Kurds are Sunni Muslims, nationally, as Kurds have been deprived of their most basic rights, but also internationally, as they have been prohibited to establish links with other nations outside Iran.

During recent years, the Islamic regime in Iran has tried to eliminate the Kurdish struggle and resistance by distributing drugs in Kurdistan and encouraging Kurdish youth to



take drugs through its secret services. Drugs in Kurdish areas have been widespread and the government has not done anything to solve the problem. Unlike other parts of Iran, where the punishment for drugs is very severe, in Kurdish areas the people in possession of drugs for personal use are released with a minimal fine.

The Islamic Republic has been involved in the assassination of hundreds of Kurdish and Iranian dissidents, within and outside Iran, including the two leaders of the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran (PDKI), Dr A. R. Ghassemlou and Dr Sadegh Sharafkandi.

The Islamic Republic also murdered thousands of Kurds during the armed conflict of the early years of the Islamic Republic.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has not stopped there; it has continued to interfere in Kurdish affairs in South Kurdistan. It started by a direct incursion at the bases of the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran and continued by supporting Islamic groups in South Kurdistan.

The Iranian government has assisted the formation of different extremist Islamic political parties to antagonize the Kurdish government in South Kurdistan. It has recently been assisting Ansar Al-Islam, an extremist Islamic organization that has terrorized Kurds for several years. Ansar Al-Islam has been using Iranian territory as a base to conduct its incursions into South Kurdistan.

The Kurdish nation deserves peace and they should be able to determine their own fate without interference from other countries. We appeal to you and other governments and non-governmental organizations to put an end to the policies that aim at destroying the Kurds, their culture and heritage.

Our demands:

We appeal to the international community to protect and support the Kurds. We also demand that the Iranian government must:

- Stop distributing drugs in Eastern Kurdistan and act to solve this problem before it gets out of control.**

- Demolish the Islamic concept of "Umma", which treats Iran as one entity.**
- Recognize the Kurds as a nation and a separate people and grant their basic human rights.**
- Identify East Kurdistan geographically as a separate entity of Iran.**
- Allow the devolution of power and facilitate the election of a Kurdistan Regional government, not based on religion.**
- Rebuild destructed villages and towns and compensate the inhabitants.**
- Establish education on all levels in the Kurdish language.**
- Establish universities in Kurdistan, with the focus on Kurds, their history, art, culture and country.**
- Free the media, including satellite broadcasting and Internet, allowing private sector to control the media.**
- Allow the formation of political and non-political groups in Kurdistan.**
- Abolish stoning and give women their fundamental rights.**
- Admit the assassination of Kurdish opposition members and provide the details of their assassination, punish the criminals and compensate their families.**
- Stop interfering in Kurdish affairs in South Kurdistan.**
- Stop supporting fundamentalist Islamic groups in South Kurdistan.**
- Stop supporting terrorist groups.**
- Invalidate the agreements imposed on the Kurdistan Regional Government, in particular the Tehran Accord of 1997, that gives the right to control the Sharazur and Hawraman regions to the Islamic fundamentalists.**
- Make traveling abroad easy for the Kurdish people of South Kurdistan.**

With best regards,
Signatories

To support the petition or to see the signatories: please email: km@ikurd.com - 20/10/2002 or visit www.KurdishMedia.com

Please send your name, your profession and your country of residency - with thanks

More Political Executions in Iran

The Islamic regime of Iran executed Mohammad Golabi(m), in the prison of Saghez, Kurdistan province in 2 March 2003. Association of Iranian Political Prisoners (in Exile) in its communique stated that Mohammad Golabi was arrested on 26 July 1999, accused of being politically active in connection with Komala organization. He was reportedly ill-treated and tortured severely while in detention. It has been reported that his death sentence was not upheld by Supreme Court when he was executed. "Godini, public prosecutor of the city, tortured Mohammad personally and threatened to kill him by putting a gun on his temple several times.

Mohammad complained against him to the public prosecutor of the province. "Godin" threatened to execute him if he does not back up from his complain. Mohammad was married and had 4 children.

The organizations also reported that Sassan Al-Kanan(m), aged 35, was also executed in the prison of Sanandaj, the capital of Kurdistan province in 19 February 2003. In 5 January 2003, Branch 1 of the Islamic "Revolutionary" Court in Sanandaj sentenced Sassan to death on various charges, including "acting against state security" and "supporting Komala Organization". Sassan denied all the charges during interrogation and hearing. The sentence upheld by Supreme Court on 10 February 2003. Sassan was not given a chance to appeal and his lawyer was not informed about the process of the sentence confirmation. The execution of Sassan carried out while a group of UN Human rights inspectors are visiting Iran and the mother of Sassan was in Tehran trying to meet with them for the sake of his son.

AFP also confirmed that "Iran has executed two members of an outlawed leftist Kurdish rebel group" according to a justice official. AFP also adds that Iran has expressed concern about renewed unrest among its six-million-strong Kurdish minority if any US-led invasion of neighbouring Iraq leads to greater autonomy for its Kurdish community.

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"The persistence of oppressive and self-interested states for the continuance and existence of execution has to do with the fact that it can be used as an instrument of terror, oppression and strangulation...regardless of ethical and humanitarian principles and standards in rejecting executions, abolishing death penalty is essential for the attainment of freedom of consciousness, religion and expression in bringing social and political democracy." Abdul-Karim Lahiji - The League for the Defense of Human Rights in Iran