

Chronology of Events in Iran, April 2005*

April 1

Doctor claims photojournalist raped, tortured in Iran. (Australian Broadcasting Corporation)

An Iranian doctor who claims he treated Canadian photo-journalist Zahra Kazemi after she had been interrogated by Iranian secret service agents says she was raped and tortured before dying from her injuries. Zahra Kazemi was a Canadian photojournalist arrested in July, 2003, by Iranian Intelligence agents. She had been photographing the infamous Evin prison in Tehran. While in custody she died of a brain haemorrhage after her skull had been crushed. Shahram Azam was a doctor in the Iranian military who says he treated Ms Kazemi. She had bruises all over her body, her nose was broken, fingers were broken, and fingernails were missing.

Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) report of the same new on April 2: A hospital source ruled out claims of Shahram A'zam -- posing himself in the faked label of physician at Tehran's Baqiatollah Hospital -- on Iranian photojournalist Zahra Kazemi as were printed at the Canadian press.

April 2

Centre for Defence of Human Rights meets political prisoners and families. (Iranian Labour News Agency / ILNA)

Members of the Centre for the Defence of Human Rights have met a number of political prisoners and their families during the New Year holidays, Mohammad Seyfzadeh, a member of the centre said. He reported that he Centre for the Defence of Human Rights met Naser Zarafshan, Abbas Amir Entezam and the family of Mojtaba Sami'inezhad.

66 asylum seekers sent back from Canada to Iran. (Canadian newspaper Toronto Star)

Canada sent 66 failed refugee claimants back to Iran in 2004, where human rights activists say they face an uncertain fate in a regime well-known for its abuses and torture. "We would urge that all Iranian refugee cases need to be looked at very carefully," Alex Neve, secretary-general for Amnesty International Canada, said. Iran is now among the top 10 sources of new immigrants to Canada - 6,000 Iranian citizens were accepted as permanent residents in 2004. The deportations won't stop despite Azam's revelations this week, said Alex Swann, spokesperson for Deputy Prime Minister Anne McLellan, who oversees the Canada Border Services Agency. "There has been no decision to lift all deportations to Iran," Swann said. "We would

* Disclaimer: Reports contained in this document are selected from publicly available resources and edited by country experts. The information provided here is not, and does not purport to be, either exhaustive with regard to conditions in the country of origin surveyed, or conclusive as to the merits of any particular claim. Further information may be obtained from BO Ankara.

look at relevant information at that time, including information submitted by individuals. Decisions would be made on a case-by-case basis though."

April 3

The rate for blood money increased. Agence France Presse / AFP)

The price of human life has gone up in Iran, with the officially fixed rate for blood money -- cash paid out in the case of violent death -- rising to 250 million rials (around 28,000 dollars). The figure is set by the judiciary on an annual basis and coincides with the start of the Iranian new year beginning March 21. However the diyeh for a woman is still half that for a man, although women's rights activists have been campaigning for equal value in the eyes of the law. Iran's recognised religious minorities -- Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians -- were in 2003 awarded equal blood money status, having previously been worth half a Muslim.

TV network's activities in Iran said to have evoked "overt and covert protests". (Iranian Fars News Agency)

The permit given by the Culture and Islamic Guidance Ministry to the Persian-language Mohajer network expired in the last week of Esfand 1383 [month ending on 20 March 2005], but the network is still continuing its work. The Mohajer television network or MTV faced a flood of overt and covert protests from the country's cultural institutions and officials, and they considered the production of programmes inside the country by the network and its broadcasting from outside the country as a way of circumventing the constitution, which has prohibited the granting of permits for private TV channels.

Iraqi border guards reopen frontier post with Iran. (IRNA)

Iraqi border guards reopened a main crossing border with Iran, which they had shut down a week ago. Iraqi border guards closed the Shalamcheh frontier post, situated close to the southern Iraqi city of Basra, on the eve of Arbaeen, which marks the end of mourning by Shi'is for the martyrdom of Imam Hussein in the seventh century. The official cautioned Iranians against visiting Iraq, citing security concerns. Iraqi border guards had also consolidated their positions at the crossing border ahead of the mourning occasion, reportedly without coordination with Iranian officials and any explanation.

April 4

Iran's police chief resigns to prepare presidential bid. (AFP)

Iran's high-profile and popular national police chief, Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, has quit his post amid widespread expectations he intends to stand in the presidential election. Qalibaf handed in his resignation to supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Iran's presidential election is due to take place on June 17, and prospective candidates must register between May 10 and 17. A former head of the air force wing of Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards and frontline veteran of the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war, 43-year-old Qalibaf still regularly moonlights as an Airbus pilot for national carrier Iran Air. Qalibaf -- who is widely seen as a pragmatic conservative -- was appointed chief of police after student unrest in 1999.

Iranian activist summoned to court in connection with reformist web site. (ILNA)

Ali Reza Alavitabar, political activist, has been summoned to Branch 1083 of Tehran Province's penal court. The Voice and Vision [radio and TV] Organization and the prosecutor had complained against Alavitabar to the court for government employees [which also deals with press cases] on the charge of the publication of untrue material and the dissemination of falsehoods on the *Emrooz* web site. A bill of indictment was issued in the case and it was referred to court. He was acquitted regarding the Voice and Vision's complaint, but the prosecutor's complaint remained. Hoseynian, the head of Branch 1083 of Tehran Province's penal court, having studied the case, has summoned Alavitabar in order to ask him some questions.

Court finds former Tehran mayor innocent. (ILNA)

A court has found Mohammad Malekmadani, the former mayor of Tehran, innocent of charges made against him. When Malekmadani was the mayor of Tehran some time ago, the newspaper *Hamshahri* which is managed by the Tehran Municipality was published without a managing director; and subsequently the public prosecutor took the case to the Court for Government Staff, following which a summons was made and the case referred to penal court 1083 of Tehran Province. The penal court investigated the case lodged by a representative of the public prosecutor but found Malekmadani innocent of charges made against him and ordered the case dropped.

Revolution court to investigate case of student activist in June. (ILNA)

Branch 15 of Tehran Revolution Court will meet on 24 Khordad [14 June] to investigate accusations made against Khosrow Tarkashvand, a Tehran University student. His lawyer, Mohammad Ali Dadkhah, who announced the above, also said his client has been accused of acting against national security.

April 6

Iranian publication's director to answer charge of "propaganda against system". (ILNA)

Keyvan Samimi, managing director of *Nameh*, a political monthly, is to appear on Monday 22 Farvardin [11 April] before the court for [offences committed by] media and government employees to present his defence in connection with the charges of propaganda against the system and insulting some [state] bodies.

Iran bans parliamentary reporter. (BBC)

The parliament in Iran has barred an investigative journalist from its premises after revealing MPs' huge pay and bonuses. Iran's independent press association accused the chamber of censorship. The journalist, Massih Ali-Nejad, works for an Iranian news agency, ILNA, and a reformist paper, *Hambastaghi*. Massih Ali-Nejad published a series of articles revealing how the MPs had actually increased their pay and received big sums of money from conservative-controlled organisations.

Head of Iranian journalists union banned from leaving the country. (Iranian Students News Agency / ISNA)

The secretary of the Association of Iranian Journalists has reported that the head of the association has been banned from leaving the country. Mas'ud Hushmand added: "Rajab'ali Mazru'i, who was heading for Denmark to attend the press association

conference, was banned from leaving the country. No reason has been given so far for him being banned from leaving the country.”

Probe blames Iran police for Japan game crush deaths. (AFP)

Iranian security forces have been blamed for the deaths of seven people in a post-match crush following last month's World Cup qualifier with Japan, the judiciary reportedly stated. "The lack of unified management in the security forces, positioning a helicopter in front of the main 60-metre wide gate... and diverting the spectators to a secondary seven-metre wide gate... are the main reasons for the incident," spokesman Jamal Karimi Rad said. Allowing 20,000 more spectators than the capacity 100,000 into Tehran's Azadi stadium also contributed to the deaths of seven people as fans tried to leave the stadium on March 25, said Karimi Rad.

Carpet factory workers march in protest to closure of company. (ILNA)

Workers at Alborz carpet company have held a gathering at the factory in protest to the closure of the company. Alborz carpet company, which produced factory-made carpets, closed down late in the year ending 21 March 2005. In this protest to the closure of the company, the workers marched around the factory grounds but were dispersed after intervention by the Law Enforcement Force.

Prominent pro-reform journalist summoned on 32 charges. (ILNA)

Mehdi Rahmadian, the managing-director of *Sharq* newspaper reported to branch six of the Prosecutor's Office for Government Staff to explain things regarding the 32 complaints lodged against him. The managing-director of *Sharq* has been accused of publishing lies in order to agitate public opinion. Twenty of the complaints have been made by the public prosecutor and 12 others by private plaintiff.

Iraqi president election leads to clashes in Iran's Kurdish towns. (Iranian Baztab web site)

Following the announcement of the election of Jalal Talebani as the president of Iraq, hundreds of young people in Mahabad and Piranshahr took to the streets. In conjunction with the young people's rejoicing and dancing in the streets, some people used fire crackers and incendiary devices, displayed Kurdish flags and clashed with [law enforcement] officers. During the clash, 15 officers were injured and tranquility returned to the towns late at night when 40 protesters were arrested.

Iranian opposition news site IranFocus report on April 9: The city of Mahabad was placed under de facto martial law after three days of social unrest and numerous clashes between residents and agents of Iran's State Security Forces, leaving one 13-year-old boy dead. The 13-year-old boy was killed when an SSF agent hit him on the head with a truncheon, according to eye-witnesses. Clashes between anti-government protesters and security forces in Mahabad erupted on [April 7] evening, but reached their peak on [April 8] night. Thousands of residents took to the streets to chant slogans against the ruling authorities, witnesses reported. SSF agents attacked the crowd but protesters, who were mainly youths, took part in hit-and-run clashes which spread to several districts of the city. Government buildings and patrol cars were attacked after news spread of the death of the teenage boy. A number of SSF agents were beaten up by demonstrators. Dozens of protesters were arrested during the unrest or in the house-to-house searches that security forces undertook in several neighbourhoods after midnight. No information is available on their fate.

Clashes in Marivan occurred [April 8], as young people in the city's Edareh Bargh Street challenged a SSF officer for accosting a girl. Local people took part in the ensuing fight and chanted anti-regime slogans and smashed the windscreens of several patrol cars. A number of people there were reportedly arrested.

Iranian Labour News Agency (ILNA) report of the same news on April 11: After it was announced that Jalal Talabani had been chosen as the president of Iraq, a group of people numbering about 100 embarked on rioting in the town of Piranshahr. Abbas Hasankhani, governor of Sardasht, said: "The people of Piranshahr were engaged in jubilation and expressions of joy on the fringes of the town and were not causing any disturbance. From 21:00 [local time] onwards, a group of people, who numbered about 100, embarked on rioting. They threw stones and damaged people's property and caused a disturbance. After this, Law Enforcement Force [LEF] personnel went into action, on the decision of the [local] security council and they wanted to resolve things peacefully. But the said individuals clashed with the LEF too. In these circumstances, the LEF resorted to force. It arrested about 20 people, 10 of which were released; the other 10 are free on surety until their cases are dealt with." He said that noone currently remained in detention.

April 7

Karnameh monthly banned. (Iranian news site Iran News Daily and ISNA)

The head of the Domestic Press Department at the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Saeed Taqipour, confirmed that the Press Supervisory Board has ordered that the Monthly *Karnameh* to be temporarily shutdown, charged with 'publication of immoral articles'.

April 9

Supreme Court upheld the death penalty for MKO prisoner. (IranFocus)

Iran's Supreme Court has upheld the death sentence against a longtime political prisoner in Iran, making his execution imminent. Hojjat Zamani, 29 years old, has been imprisoned in the notorious Evin Prison in Tehran since the year 2000 for being a member of the main Iranian opposition group, the People's Mojahedin Organisation of Iran [PMOI, a.k.a. MKO]. Zamani reportedly endured severe torture in Evin Prison, later escaping and fleeing to Turkey. He was arrested however and turned over to agents of Iran's Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS). Zamani was sent back to Iran where Amnesty International reported he was once again subjected to torture. Zamani along with two other Mojahedin political prisoners, Jaafar Aghdami and Valiollah Feiz-Mahdavi, wrote a letter to the United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan on January 24, calling on him to set up a special fact-finding mission to "investigate the plight of families of political prisoners, particularly those whose loved ones were tortured or executed in mullahs' prisons in the 1980s". A prison official only identified as Sheikhan reportedly threatened Zamani by saying that he would face imminent execution unless he recanted his letter and collaborated with the regime, after the smuggled letter was distributed to human rights activists outside Iran. Zamani's two brothers, Fallah and Khazal, were executed by the Iranian regime an earlier date.

Workers at Iran's nuclear plant protest against job cuts. (ILNA)

Despite promises by the director-general in charge of political and security affairs at Bushehr Province Governor-General's Office about an investigation into the condition

of workers at Bushehr Nuclear Plant, these workers continue to face problems. In this connection, the protesting plant workers held a meeting at the Bushehr House of Labour, Issa Mohammad Kamali, the executive-secretary of the Bushehr House of Labour said. He said the workers' held the protest meeting because the plant managers sacked 25 workers without any reason. The executive secretary of the Bushehr House of Labour said the plant managers have given the sacked workers the opportunity to work at the affiliated service companies of the plant for a two-month period, and that there was a possibility that 28 more workers would be sacked in the near future.

Film magazine reporter sentenced to three-year prison term in Iran. (ISNA)

The court of appeal has upheld a verdict against Amir Ezati, the correspondent of the *Donya-ye Film* magazine, for acting against the country's national interest, his lawyer announced. He said Ezati has been sentenced to three years of prison and the payment of a 10m-rial [approximately 1,100 dollar] fine. His lawyer, Dadkhah said: Ezati is free on a 50m rial bail, and we will appeal to the board of judgement.

Kurdistan human rights organization becomes active. (ILNA)

The Kurdistan Organization for the Defence of Human Rights has been established with the aim providing unconditional support for every aspect of human rights and basic freedoms, as stated in the human rights charter, and defending the basic rights and freedoms of the people of Iran's Kurdistan. Ejlal Qavami, a member of the central council of the Kurdistan Organization for the Defence of Human Rights, said: "The Kurdistan Organization for the Defence of Human Rights is an independent and non-political institution which will spread its activities in the Kurdish regions of Iran." At the first meeting of the organization, Mohammad Sadiq Kabudvand, was appointed as the secretary of the organization for a one-year period.

April 10

Court summons journalists for insulting senior state figures in Iran. (ILNA)

Farid Modarresi, journalist and weblogger, has been summoned to branch 115 of the general penal court of Qom, accused of insulting the president and the head of the Expediency Council, his lawyer, Seyyed Ali Narimani, announced. The summons is reportedly issued in connection with the webloggers dossier, and on the basis of an order by the prosecutor-general that the dossier should be separated to two sections, one investigated by Revolution Courts, the other by general courts. Narimani said his client was accused, by the public prosecutor, of insulting the president and the head of the Expediency Council, in an article on his weblog.

Cemetery dispute leads to riot in Shiraz. (Iranian opposition news site Iran Focus)

More than 1,000 residents of an Iranian village in the suburbs of the city of Shiraz took part in anti-government demonstrations, setting fires to tyres and blockading roads in the area. Residents in Darivan put rocks in the main route 35 kilometres from Shiraz to the town of Kharameh, blocking all traffic for more than five hours. Protests erupted after authorities refused to cancel their plan to construct a cemetery on farmers' lands. Residents said that they had previously consulted authorities in Shiraz about the cemetery construction, but their efforts were to no avail. A statement was issued throughout the area days before the protest which called on local residents to

attend the event. Despite the presence of security forces at the scene, protesters chanted a number of anti-government slogans.

April 11

Iran's former SAVAK employees ask for overdue salaries. (Iranian Baztab web site)

About 300 former employees of SAVAK [the State Organization for Intelligence and Security of the Shah's regime] gathered outside the Ministry of Information. The former employees asked the ministry to pay their overdue salaries. After a two-hour gathering, they held talks with the ministry officials and then dispersed.

Iran Revolutionary Guards Officers nabbed for child prostitution. (IranFocus)

A number of government officials and security officers were arrested during raids on at least five houses used as brothels in and around the town of Neka (northern Iran). The raids, conducted during the past two weeks, uncovered several organised child prostitution rings running the brothels. Many runaway girls, some as young as 13, were being forced into prostitution by these gangs. A number of officers from Iran's State Security Forces (SSF) and commanders in the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps were also arrested in the brothels. The girls have also been arrested pending judicial sentencing.

April 12

Iran liberalises laws on abortion. (BBC)

The Iranian parliament has voted to liberalise the country's abortion laws. Under the law, a pregnancy can be terminated in the first four months if the foetus is mentally or physically handicapped. Both parents must give their consent and three doctors to confirm that the foetus is damaged. The law was approved by just over half of the parliament, and still has to be approved by the Guardian Council. Previously, abortion was only allowed if the mother's life was proven to be in danger. None of the 13 women in the Iranian parliament took part in the debate. The conditions for allowing abortion still remain very stringent. Both parents must agree and they need three doctors, as well as the coroner's office, to confirm the foetus is damaged or the mother's life at risk. Under this new bill, even if a woman is pregnant as a result of rape she still doesn't have the right to an abortion. Under the existing law, an illegal abortionist and the mother in question can be sentenced to between three to 10 years in jail. But according to the local media that hasn't stopped tens of thousands of Iranian women undertaking expensive and sometimes dangerous backstreet abortions.

Iranian cleric says struggle against Jews to expedite Twelfth Imam advent. (Iranian Fars News Agency)

Ayatollah Nuri-Hamedani said that Muslims must engage the Jews in a deadly fight and bring them to their knees in order to prepare the ground for the appearance of the Lord of the Age [Twelfth Shi'i Imam]. Talking about "crimes committed and plots hatched by the Jews against Islam and Muslims", Ayatollah Nuri-Hamedani, a source of emulation, said: "American policies are determined by the Jews and they have their finger on the pulse of world politics... Today, the policies of the Jews are threatening us and the people should be informed about them."

Press Supervisory Board issues licence for nine Iranian publications. (ILNA)

In its 15th session held in the office of the minister of culture and Islamic guidance on Monday 12 April, The Press Supervisory Board approved the publication of two dailies, three weeklies, two monthlies and two quarterlies: Daily *Kargozaran* - Islamic Iran Executives of Construction Part and Seyyed Morteza Sajjadian as its licence holder and managing editor respectively; daily *Qalam-e Ruz* - Omidvar Reza'i Mirqa'ed as its licence holder and managing editor; weekly *Negin-e Garus* - Mahmud Ali Mohammad as its licence holder and managing editor; weekly *Farhang-e Shahreza* - Hamid Reza Bahrami as its license holder and managing editor; weekly *Avay-e Tork* - Qorbanali Soltani as its license holder and managing editor; monthly *Neyestan* - Seyyed Mehdi Shoja'i as its licence holder and managing editor; monthly *Payam-e Mehrdasht* - Mohammad Hedayati-Abarqu'i and Sa'dollah Nikubakht as its licence holder and managing editor respectively; quarterly *Edalat-e Ara* - Ara Institution for Legal Research and Mohammad Yar-Arshadi as its license holder and managing editor respectively; and quarterly *Hivay-e Hiv* - Ali Ma'dandar as its license holder and managing editor.

Student activists suspended from university. (Iran News Daily and Fars News Agency)

The Appeal Disciplinary Committee at the University of Science and Technology suspended 12 university students from their academic studies due to their participation in unrests in 2004.

Three students to stand trial. (Iran News Daily and Iranian newspaper *Hambastegi*)

Three student activists Khaleqi, Aslani and Seyed Asgari, are to be tried at the 3rd Circuit of the Revolutionary Court on May 4, 2005. According to the attorney for these students, Mohammad Sharif, his clients have been released on bail, waiting to stand trial.

April 13

Iran parliament rebukes state TV for anti-Semitism. (Reuters)

The speaker of Iran's parliament rebuked state television for airing serials that insulted the country's ancient but dwindling Jewish community. Gholamali Haddadadel was responding to complaints from Jewish lawmaker Moris Motamed, who argued that anti-Semitism in television serials was spurring emigration. "I caution (the state media) to respect the rights of religious minorities in the programmes they produce," he added. Motamed, the only Jew to have a seat in Iran's 290-seat parliament, told Reuters drama serials such as "Plot", "The Great Escape" and "Blue Eyes" had misrepresented the Jews and their customs. "Insulting Jews and attributing false things to them in TV serials ... has not only hurt the feelings of the Jewish community but has also, it can be said with conviction, led to the emigration of a considerable percentage of the Jewish community," Motamed told the parliament.

Iran to amputate prisoner's arm and leg for theft. (IranFocus and Iranian newspaper *Hambastegi*)

A young man in Iran is to have his right hand and left leg amputated today for theft. The young man identified only as Mohammad B. is currently being held in Karoon prison in the south-western town of Ahwaz. *Hambastegi* daily reported that

Mohammad's right hand and left leg will be amputated in the early hours of the day.

April 14

Baha'i International Community dismayed at lack of human rights resolution on Iran. (Baha'i International Community)

The Baha'i International Community expressed its dismay and disappointment at the failure of the UN Commission on Human Rights to consider a resolution on human rights in Iran. "In view of the sharp increase of human rights violations against the Baha'i community of Iran, it is nothing less than shocking that the Commission on Human Rights has for the third year in a row failed to renew international monitoring of the situation," said Bani Dugal, Principal Representative of the Baha'i International Community to the United Nations. "Over the past year, two important Baha'i holy places have been destroyed, Baha'i students have been denied access to higher education, and, most recently, Baha'is in Yazd and Tehran have been swept up in a new wave of assaults, harassment and detentions. All of this has come as part of a continuing pattern of religious persecution instigated and condoned by the Iranian government, which has in years past faced the clear condemnation of the international community for its actions," said Ms. Dugal. "And now, over the past few months, we have had the impression of a shifting back in time, some 20 years or more, as we have witnessed a resumption of violent attacks on the Baha'i community in Iran," said Ms. Ala'i. "The most serious outbreak occurred in Yazd, where several Baha'is were assaulted in their homes and beaten, a Baha'i's shop was set on fire and burned, and others were harassed and threatened, following a series of arrests and short-term detentions. The Baha'i cemetery in Yazd was wantonly destroyed, with cars driven over the graves, tombstones smashed and the remains of the interred left exposed." Ms. Ala'i also said that in March, in Tehran, Iranian intelligence agents entered the homes of several Baha'is and spent hours ransacking their houses before carting away their possessions and taking them into custody. "Five Baha'is have been imprisoned just this past month," said Ms. Ala'i. "Two were finally released on bail, but family and community members have not been able to locate those in detention. Two others, who had previously been briefly detained for nothing more than distributing copies of a courteous letter to President Khatami, have now received the maximum sentence for this so-called offence. Six more Baha'i families recently had their homes and land confiscated, depriving them of their only means of livelihood."

April 15

Ethnic clashes erupt in Ahvaz. (AFP)

Fierce fighting has flared between ethnic Arabs and Iranian security forces in a province bordering Iraq. Iran's official IRNA news agency said clashes erupted on April 15 in the Arab-majority oil-rich province of Kuzestahn over reported plans to change the ethnic make-up of the area.

Associated Press (AP) report of the same news: More than 250 people were arrested in southwestern Iran after demonstrations against an alleged plan to decrease the proportion of Arabs in the area became violent, a political activist said. Mohammad Navaseri said Arab residents of Ahvaz, the capital of Khuzestan province, gathered in the morning of April 15, chanting slogans against alleged government plans to move more non-Arabs in the city. He said they set fire to banks and police stations in Ahvaz before more than 250 of them were arrested. A copy of a

letter allegedly signed by former vice president Mohammad Ali Abtahi outlines a plan for changing the population composition in Ahvaz through relocating non-Arabs to the city to make them the majority population. The letter was widely circulated in Ahvaz and other cities in Khuzestan. Abtahi has denied writing such a letter, saying it was "illogical." Journalists in Ahvaz also confirmed that demonstrations had turned violent. "Demonstrations in several districts in Ahvaz turned violent when police tried to disperse the angry crowd," said Hadi Yunesi, editor of *Fajr-e-Khuzestan* daily, which is based in Ahvaz. Activist Navaseri said protests in the mainly Arab districts of Dayereh, Khashayar and Kian continued late into the night and authorities responded by cutting off water and power. "These districts have been encircled by security forces and no one can get into or leave them," he said.

Qatari Al-Jazeera satellite TV report of the same news: It was reported that a demonstration organized by the Democratic Popular Movement for the Arab People of Ahvaz [*Al-harakah al-dimuqratiyah al-sha'biyah li al-sha'b al-arabi al-ahwazi*] was staged in Ahvaz to commemorate the 80th anniversary of what the movement calls the Iranian occupation of Ahvaz. The movement says that the Iranian authorities are replacing Arab residents with other Iranians to change the demographic situation. The movement also demands the establishment of an independent state in Ahvaz.

Iranian Students News Agency (ISNA) update on April 16: The command of the Law Enforcement Force in Khuzestan Province stated that, "In the past few days 137 people have been arrested for causing unrest in Ahvaz, and eight people have been injured. One person was shot during the unrest but not by our personnel." Stating that the last gathering took place in the Alavi neighbourhood of Ahvaz at 11:30 today, Asad Masjedi said that the Law Enforcement Force dispersed the crowd. The deputy commander of the Law Enforcement Force in Khuzestan Province denied that a state of emergency has been announced in the city. The Law Enforcement Force, the Basij [para-militaries] and the Guards reportedly went to the areas of unrest in the past few days, and have things under control.

Iranian Fars News Agency update on April 16: It was reported that two people were killed in the unrest of April 15-16, and the number of people injured in the incidents has been put at 17. About 250 people were arrested in the course of the unrest. According to the reports, some areas in the environs of Ahvaz, such as Susangerd and Hamidiyeh, have also witnessed scattered unrest. The situation in Ahvaz is currently being reported as being relatively calm and it is being said that some scattered gatherings are continuing in the city. An official in Khuzestan Province said that several Iraqis were among the arrested people. An official report quoted: "Separatist clashes are taking place in Khuzestan in circumstances in which America and Britain and elements from international Zionism - since the beginning of the occupation of Iraq - have been reorganizing groups affiliated to themselves and to the Ba'hist Iraqi regime, who served foreigners for years in Khuzestan Province, along with setting up some local radios in central Iraq, in order to pursue their evil aims, at the top of which are the aims of smuggling large amounts of arms from Iraq to Khuzestan, as well as bringing in alcoholic beverages, fanning unrest and sowing dissension using pseudo-intellectuals." According to this report, mysterious moves have also started in some local publications in a creeping way over the past two years. The report adds: "Publicizing corrupt Arab singers and actors and exaggerating the terrorist attacks in Iraq and aggrandizing people like Saddam, along with interacting

with and speaking to foreign radios, especially the BBC's Persian-language radio, is among these groups activities.”

Associated Press (AP) update on April 18: Iran's intelligence chief accused unspecified government opponents of provoking recent unrest in the largely Arab city of Ahvaz, saying authorities have detained the instigators. IRNA quoted Ali Yunesi as saying 200 "primary" opposition-linked leaders of the violent demonstrations in Ahvaz were rounded up. Those arrests apparently came after the arrests of scores of protesters, reportedly 250 people, during the unrest. Yunesi said those arrested during the protests were merely innocent youths lured by the opposition. He did not elaborate; it wasn't clear how many original detainees were still in custody.

AFP update on April 19: Iranian authorities have ordered the release of over 300 people arrested during deadly clashes between security forces and ethnic Arabs in Khuzestan province last week, the Defence Minister said. "An order has been given to release all the people arrested in the course of the recent troubles," the student news agency ISNA quoted Admiral Ali Shamkhani, himself an Arab from Khuzestan, as saying. He said that 310 people had been arrested and "three or four" killed during the unrest which broke out on April 15. Previous official figures had spoken of three dead and 200 people arrested.

ISNA update on April 19: The Interior Ministry's Spokesman Jahanbakhsh Khanjani reported the current state of Khuzestan Provincial cities as serene and contained, but referred to two mortalities as the result of Mahshahr's night-time unrests. He added that with the containment of Mahshahr's clashes, calm has been restored in all Khuzestan Provincial cities.

Amnesty International report on April 19: Amnesty International has received unconfirmed information that at least 31 persons have been killed in the disturbances. Ahvazi sources claim that up to 500 people have been injured. There are also reports that the city of Ahvaz has been sealed by the security forces. There have also been reports of excessive use of force, unlawful killing and possibly of extra-judicial executions of protesters following circulation of reports that up to seven police or security officials had been killed by demonstrators and that the security forces are now operating a 'shoot-to-kill' policy.

British Ahwazi Friendship Society update on April 20: The Iranian security forces are carrying out house-to-house operations, arresting at least 1,300 Ahwazi Arab community, tribal and religious leaders and members of their families. Around 800 prisoners are being held in Karoon jail in Ahwaz City with the rest transferred to Esfahan province, following civil unrest in Khuzestan province at the weekend. The death toll from the crack-down on Ahwazis has risen to 48 confirmed deaths, including women and children. Some reports are claiming more than 60 deaths. The methods used by Iranian forces attracted criticism from within the establishment. Some 158 lawmakers have signed a petition to President Mohammad Khatami about the unrest, according to the Iranian Students News Agency (ISNA). Their letter called on the government to quickly release any innocent detainees, urged restraint by security forces and compensation for any private property damage. In what appears to be retaliatory attacks by Ahwazi militants, oil installations have been sabotaged, although the extent of the damage is not known. A motorcade carrying Iran's Defence Minister Ali Shamkhani and other senior officials visiting Khuzestan on a fact-finding mission was allegedly attacked by armed men and forced to leave the area. A train carrying arms on the Tehran-Mohammara line is also reported to have been destroyed

by Ahwazi militants. The group behind the attacks is not known, although it appears to be in contact with the London-based Al-Ahwaz Arab People Democratic Popular Front (ADPF), a leftist Ahwazi separatist group. The ADPF has not claimed responsibility, but refers to the militants as "brave challengers".

AFP update on April 20: Iranian authorities have freed 200 demonstrators after deadly clashes between security forces and ethnic Arabs in Khuzestan province but 144 others are still being held, state television reported. "About 200 arrested in the recent troubles in Ahvaz have been released," said the town's prosecutor Amir Khani, quoted on the television. "The families of the others can pay bail for their release." He said the judicial authorities would "deal firmly with the instigators of the troubles, who number 10". Five people were killed in the clashes which broke out April 15 in the Arab-majority Khuzestan province, according to a new toll announced by interior ministry spokesman Jahanbakhsh Khanjani. Interior Minister Abdolvahed Mussavi-Lari said "counter-revolutionary groups and (Internet) sites which try to provoke ethnic tensions" were to blame. The unrest continued until April 18 morning. The Tehran bureau of the Arabic satellite channel Al-Jazeera was temporarily shut by the Iranian authorities on April 18 for allegedly inciting the violence with its coverage of events.

Iranian news agency IRNA update on April 21: Judiciary officials released 155 people arrested following ethnic troubles in this southwestern Iranian city, the city's prosecutor said. He said a total of 333 people had been detained in the unrest. "Given that some of the families of the detainees have come up to pay bail and place surety, we think more of the accused will be released in the next 48 hours," Iraj Amirkhani said, adding most of the detainees aged below 20 years. "All of these people have been arrested at the scene of the troubles for destroying public property," he added.

Iranian Fars News Agency update on April 23: The Ahvaz prosecutor has said that a five-member team, who were the provocative and principal elements in the recent Ahvaz unrest, have been arrested. Amirkhani said that all of the detainees have previous criminal records, including jail terms or setting some Ahvaz banks on fire. He said the group intended to set a number of other banks and petrol stations on fire, but failed to do so because its members were arrested. He stated: "So far, some 349 cases have been lodged for primary investigations, which are carried out under the supervision of deputy prosecutors and me. Some 330 people were arrested. However, the primary investigations showed that 155 people did not have a significant role and were only arrested because they were present on the scene of the incident. Because there were no allegations against them, they were released." Asked about the death toll of the incident, he said: "There are no precise figures on the number of those who were killed or injured."

Ahvaz Human Rights Organisation update on April 24: More than 130 have been killed, 806 injured and 1,700 arrested following a week of unrest in Iran's Arab-dominated province of Khuzestan, said the Ahwaz Human Rights Organisation (AHRO) today. The AHRO, which has been co-operating with Amnesty International's own inquiries, gathered the information through telephone interviews, e-mails and faxes with its contacts in Khuzestan. Kuwait's *Al-Watan* newspaper reported that water, electricity and power supplies were still cut from Kut-Abdullah and other parts of the province. Violence continued into its ninth day today [April 24], with eye-witness reports of clashes between Iranian security forces and Ahwazi demonstrators in Khafjeh (Sosangerd), leaving seven dead and dozens injured. Six

were also killed in Shush. On [April 21-22], five people were killed in Maashur (Mahshahr) and two were killed in Fallahieh (Shadegan). Large demonstrations by Ahwazi Arabs also took place [on April 24] in Mohammarah (Khorramshahr). Soldiers sealed off the area and arrested hundreds of protestors. Snipers have been deployed on roof-tops by Revolutionary Guards in Ahwaz City, where sporadic protests have been broken up by soldiers firing into the air. Gunfire was heard through April 22 night in the city's Lashkar-Abad district. Meanwhile, a liquefied natural gas plant in north of Ahwaz City was set alight and was still reported to be on fire. The regime claimed it released on Friday 135 detainees arrested in the past week, but their families claim they still have no contact with them. The government has demanded cash bonds of US\$1,800 - more than twice the average annual salary of Ahwazi Arabs - to release detainees on bail. Ethnic Arab lawyers, doctors, teachers, engineers, nurses and university students are still being held in custody.

Ahwaz Human Rights Organisation report on April 25: The Iranian regime is claiming that only five people died during more than a week of unrest in Ahwaz. BAFS [the British Ahwazi Friendship Society] can confirm at least 130 dead. This is a list of Ahazi Arabs who were killed by the security forces and whose families have given their consent for us to display their names: Razi Aboud Alhasoun-Abayat (Aldayara); Mahdi Abd alhosain (Aldayara); Hadi Abd Alnabi (Sabhani); Ali Nadir Khasragi (Aldayara); Ahmad Ban Ali; Araf Hasan-Jalali (Aldayara); Hasan Abas-Jalali (Aldayara); Mahdi Abas-Afrawi (Aldayara); Dagar Mola Radhi-Alshoomos (Aldayara); Nasar Hadari (Aldayara); Ahmad Sawari Albonahi (Aldayara); Saied Nawasari; Abd Nawasari; Nasar Dagagla; Nasar Gazlawi; Sadag Nawasari; Nasar Abayat; Adnan Sari; Hatam Abayat; Hosain Hazbawi; Samad Hazbawi; Ali Hazbaee (Kowtabdola); Saied Raihani; Ali Alkaebi (8 years old); Mohamad Hazbawi (Kowtabdola); Abd Alrahman Torfi; Abd Alhosain Mohamad zada; Towfiq Saeadi; Naji Mazraeawi; Jaefar Hazbawi (Kowtabdola); Hosain Nasari; Saeid Aonsari; Nasar Khasragi; Said Khalaf-Mosawi; Mahdi Yazdan Abayawi; Smaeel Mazraea (Kowtabdola); Ali Abayat; Abraham Gazi; Hasan Sawari; Ali Mohamad Farisat (Kowtabdola); Ali Fakhar Saieidawi (Aldayara); Naji Abayat (Aldayara); Alam Khasragi (Malashyah); Raza Abdal Hosain Abidawi (Aldayara); Mahdi Hanon-Haidari (Aldayara); Mousa Shamous (Aldayara); Nahi Abayat (20 years old) (Hamidyah); Ali Sabhani (20 years old) (Hamidyah); Ahmad Alkabi (Alhaee); and Jalil Karim-Alkabi (12 years old) (Zawyah).

Iranian Labour News Agency (ILNA) update on April 24: Deputy head of the Judiciary in Khuzestan Province has said: About 400 individuals involved in disturbance in Khuzestan Province have been arrested so far and 200 of them are in detention. Mohsen Purabdollah, deputy head of the Judiciary in Khuzestan Province and the head of the Judiciary's Crisis Headquarters for the province said: "There are five individuals who were the main culprits, and they have confessed to their crime in connection with the destruction of state and public property. Regarding the main culprits, he said: Investigations continue and we don't expect to see similar incidents particularly now that government and intelligence organizations are involved and people held demonstrations [April 23]. No incident have been reported in the past few days except for several dozens of people holding gatherings."

Azeri activist fired from job. (Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty RFE/RL Iran Report)

Iranian Azeri activist Farzad Samadli was fired from his job with Iranian state television for describing the regime's "Persianization" policies, according to a 15 April statement from the National Federation of Swedish Azerbaijanis (<http://www.azfi.org/Turki/index.html>). This is allegedly because Samadli said, in an 11 April interview with RFE/RL's Azerbaijani Service, that 60 islands in Lake Urumiyeh (Western Azerbaijan Province) have been given new Persian names. The renaming is based on a decision by the Education Ministry.

Fear of imminent execution. (Amnesty International)

Afghan refugee Abbas Hosseini is reportedly scheduled for execution on 1 May for a murder committed when he was 17. Iran is a state party to international treaties that expressly prohibit the use of the death penalty for crimes committed below the age of 18. In July 2003 Abbas Hosseini was reportedly helping a man, a member of the Revolutionary Guard, to move furniture in his house. He says the man made sexual advances to him. Abbas Hosseini then managed to leave the house by promising that he would return with his girlfriend. In a fit of rage he returned to the house in order to "teach the man a lesson". He lured the man outside, supposedly to meet the girlfriend, and stabbed him once with a knife. The man died shortly afterwards as a result of his injuries. Abbas Hosseini was arrested by the police and held in a juvenile detention centre in the city of Mashhad. He reportedly confessed to the murder, claiming that he had done it in a moment of insanity. A medical examination, conducted ten months after his arrest, rejected his claim of insanity at the time of the crime. Six months after his arrest he was transferred to the central prison in Mashhad, and charged with murder. On 3 June 2004 he was sentenced to death by Branch 43 of Mashhad Special Court. The sentence was upheld by the Supreme Court on 28 October. The family of the victim has refused to accept payment of compensation (diyeh) and has insisted the death sentence be carried out. Abbas Hosseini was born in September 1985 to Afghan refugee parents in Mashhad, Iran. He was 17 years old and attending high school when the crime took place.

April 16

Industrial farm workers in south Iran strike to prevent privatization. (ILNA)

A sit-in protest by 4,000 workers at "Kesht va San'at-e Shahid Beheshti va Shahid Raja'i" factories has continued for more than one week, Gholamreza Abu-Talebi, the executive secretary of the House of Labour in the south, said. Talebi said that the workers staged the sit-in in the office of the local Friday prayer leader and the office of the Dezful governor following a decision by the government to transfer the ownership of the "Haft-Tapeh" and "Kesht va San'at-e Shahid Beheshti va Shahid Raja'i" industrial farming factories in Khuzestan Province.

Iranian serial rapist hanged in public, minor reprieved. (AFP)

An Iranian convicted of raping and abducting more than 40 schoolgirls was hanged in public but his accomplice teenage son was reprieved. Mousa Ali Mohammadi, 40, was reportedly hanged in a central square in Isfahan in an execution watched by 5,000 cheering people. His son Rasoul, who is reportedly between 16 and 17, escaped execution because of "ambiguities" about his age, according to local judicial officials.

Both were convicted of raping and stealing gold and jewelry from schoolgirls aged 11 to 17, according to newspaper reports. Human rights organization Amnesty International reported at least 159 people including three minors were executed in Iran in 2004, the highest rate in the world after China.

Student activist summoned to court. (Iran News Daily and Iranian newspaper *Shargh*)

The former secretary of the Islamic Association of Sharif University of Technology, Arash Hashemi, has been summoned to court. He will appear before the 26th Circuit of the Revolutionary Court.

Islamic Association member sentenced to suspended prison-term. (Iran News Daily and Iranian newspaper *Etemad*)

The Islamic Association member of Tarbiat Moalem University, Mohammad Raisi, has been sentenced to a one-year prison-term, suspended for two years. He was convicted for taking part in student unrests in June 2003.

April 18

Web site affiliated to main Iranian reformist party resumes activity. (ILNA)

Sa'id Shari'ati, director of *Rooydad* web site, has reported that the site is active again. *Rooydad* web site can be found at ww.rooydadnews.com.

Adel-Abad prison privatized. (Iran News Daily and Iranian news site *Baztab*)

Adel-Abad Prison in Shiraz has been handed over to the private sector. In case this jail is successfully run by the private sector, all prisons will be privatized.

April 19

8 students handed jail terms for insulting Iranian president. (AFP)

Eight students have been handed suspended prison terms for insulting President Mohammad Khatami and acting against Iran's national security, a leading reformist student union member said. "Four students from Sistan-Baluchistan received suspended prison terms of a year each," said Abdollah Momeni, head of the Office of Consolidating Unity (OCU), said. "Another four students from Tabriz Sahand University received a collective suspended prison term of 99 months and are barred from studying for a year," said Momeni. He did not give details on the charges. "As of a month ago we have been witnessing additional pressure on universities, which creates a very heavy political climate before the presidential election" of June 17, he said. An Iranian newspaper, meanwhile, reported that another OCU member, Saeed Habibi, had been arrested. He was "summoned to court in Zanjan after his speech at the city's university (on December 7) and charged with disturbing public mind, acting against national security, and agitating for regime change," his wife, Parvaneh Vahid-Manesh, said in the reformist daily *Shargh*. "I have not heard anything from him since his last trip to Zanjan" in central Iran, she added.

Tehran police launch campaign to keep women covered up. (AFP)

Tehran police chief Brigadier General Morteza Talaie has announced a new campaign to ensure women keep covered up in public in keeping with the rules of the Islamic republic. "The police will take firm action against those who disturb security and moral order with their behaviour and their clothing," he was quoted as warning. He

said 30 percent of complaints to police involved cases of women not covering up properly, with their hair not kept out of sight by a scarf, and "improper behaviour" by the young.

Teachers' Association member gets suspended three-year prison term. (Iran News Daily and Iranian news site Gooya)

A member of Khorasan's Teachers Association was sentenced to a three-year jail-term suspended for two years, on a charge of 'acting against the national security'.

April 20

Iranian court reportedly summons Kurdish journalists. (ILNA)

Kurdistan's Human Rights Organization, by issuing a statement, has given the names of several journalists, writers and cultural activists summoned by the court: Managing Editor of Weekly *Asu* [Horizon] Hoseyn Ahmadi-Niaz and Editor-in-Chief of Weekly *Payam-e Mardom-e Kordestan* [Kordestan People's Message] Mohammad Seddiq Kabudvand have been asked to present themselves to the Bench One of Sanandaj [provincial capital of Iran's Kordestan Province] Court on 3 Ordibehesht [23 April]. The same court has summoned the editor-in-chief of the periodical *Rasan*, Runya Tolo'i, who is also a member of the Women's Centre for Defence of the Kurds' Human Rights. She is charged with spreading lies and talking to foreign media. She should present herself to the same bench of the court on 4 Ordibehesht. Bench One of Sanandaj has also summoned Abdollah Sohrabi, the editor-in-chief of the weekly *Rozhalat* [East], on charges of creating anxiety among the public and being active to undermine national security. He should present himself to the court on 10 Ordibehesht. The court has also summoned a number of other journalists who should present themselves to the same bench on 4 Ordibehesht. They are: a member of editorial board of the Weekly *Payam-e Mardom-e Kordestan*, Ejlal Qavami, who is charged with campaigning for dissident groups; another member of editorial board of the Weekly *Payam-e Mardom-e Kordestan*, Tunya Kabudun, who is charged with publishing agnostic articles concerning women's issues; aconomic editor of the Weekly *Payam-e Mardom-e Kordestan*, Kaveh Hoseyni, who is charged with publishing lies.

Kazemi's mother summoned to court. (Iran News Daily and Iranian newspaper Shargh)

The attorney for Zahra Kazemi's case, Mohammad-Ali Dadkhah, said Kazemi's mother has been subpoenaed to the 34th Circuit of Tehran Province Court of Appeals in order to provide explanations to the presiding judge. She is to appear before court on Monday, May 16.

Governor-General reports Shahr-e-Kord unrests. (Iran News Daily and ILNA)

According to this reformist news agency, Charmahal va Bakhtiari Governor-General Mahmoud Zamani Qomi, reported the recent unrests in Shahr-e-Kord to President Khatami, the interior and the intelligence ministers. The unrests were provoked at the queries session of the 9th Presidential Elections prospective conservatives' nominee and the former IRIB director Ali Larijani. A student was battered after he asked questions about the Sixth Majlis' investigation into the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting's (IRIB) conduct. Following this incident, the members of Shahr-e-Kord

Medical Sciences University's Islamic Association staged a sit-in in front of the governor-general's office.

Student Publication Banned. (Iran News Daily and ILNA)

With the ruling issued by Zanzan University's Press Supervisory Board, *Heymeh* Student Publication was banned on charges of 'vindicating a referendum on the Constitution, insulting the Constitution and disturbing the public opinion'.

Gay Iranian Kills Himself After UK Asylum Appeal Denied. (Iranian web site Payvand and UK news site Gay.com)

A gay man who feared he would be executed if he were deported to his native Iran killed himself after the British government turned down his second appeal for asylum a coroner's inquest was informed. Hussein Nasser, 26, was terrified of being returned to Iran where homosexuality is illegal and punishable by death. An inquest this week into his death was told that Nasser entered the UK in March 2000 and claimed asylum. He told authorities that he had been persecuted because of his sexuality and had been thrown in jail when it was discovered he was gay. On June 25 2004, just days after learning he would be deported Nasser shot himself between the eyes with an airgun modified to fire .22 caliber bullets.

April 21

Iranian Court clears bloggers. (IRNA)

The court of justice examining lawsuits of several ladies accused of weblogging cleared them of the charge, Judiciary spokesman Jamal Karimi-Rad said. He said that the Disciplinary Court of Judges reached the conclusion that the bloggers had not intention of violating law and cleared them of the charge. The spokesman said that the bloggers had lodged a complaint with the disciplinary Court of Judges pleading not guilty. Karimi-Rad said in the meantime that the prosecutor has provided indictments against four other individuals accused of Internet crimes.

Iranian students under pressure. (Iranian newspaper *Aftab-e Yazd*)

Following a report in the daily *Resalat* that Ali Afshari, Abdollah Mo'meni, Reza Delbari and Mehdi Aminzadeh have left the country, a member of the central council of the Office to Consolidate Unity has given explanations. Mehdi Aminzadeh rejected the report and stated, "Some news agencies and dailies affiliated to a particular faction have spread rumours and are now trying to turn people against the student movement." He said that no member of the central council of the Office to Consolidate Unity intends the leave the country.

Two former members of the Islamic Students Association of Zanzan convicted. (Iranian newspaper *Aftab-e Yazd*)

The secretary of the Zanzan University Islamic Students Association has stated that a court has convicted two former members of the central council of the association, Said Naimi and Ali Asghar Zolqadr. Hoseyn Khayyeri-Nam said their members were summoned by a Zanzan court for organizing a programme called "Criticism of the Record of Officials After Four Years". The court sentenced them to four months imprisonment and three years suspension for insulting officials.

Two arrested over filming Iranian fighter jets. (Iranian news site Baztab)

The report states that the two individuals were arrested while filming the maneuvers with advanced camera equipment. They were filming whilst hidden in a corner of Fath Square in Tehran.

Komala political prisoner facing imminent execution. (IranFocus)

Iran's Supreme Court upheld an execution sentence for a 38-year-old political prisoner from the western Iranian town of Boukan. Esmail Mohammadi was informed of the decision through a letter from the authorities, which indicated that his execution would be carried out within the next few days. Mohammadi, a father of five, has been imprisoned for the past two years in the city of Urumiya (northwest Iran), accused of being a supporter of the Kurdish Komala organisation. Mohammadi was reported tortured while in prison. In 2004, he was handed down an execution sentence by an Islamic court in Urumiya.

April 22

Salmas Music Association head handed prison term. (Iran News Daily and Iranian newspaper *Mardomsalari*)

The Head of the Salmas Music Association Abbas Nikravan has been sentenced to four months in jail on the charge of 'nationalistic activities'.

Student activist recalled to Disciplinary Committee. (Iran News Daily and Iranian newspaper *Shargh*)

The Secretary of the Islamic Association of Shahid Rejai University, Abuzar Pouzesh, has been summoned to the university's Disciplinary Committee for the second time in three months, along with four other members of the Islamic Association.

Nationalist-Religious activist battered. (Iran News Daily and Iranian newspaper *Iran*)

One of the Nationalist-Religious Alliance activists, Parviz Varjavand, was beaten by hardliner vigilantes during the International Conference for the Revival of Culture and Civilization of the Ilkhani Dynasty, held at Tabriz University.

April 23

Explosion claims five lives in Ilam. (Iran News Daily and Iranian newspaper *Mardomsalari*)

Following a blast in front of Zeinab Mosque in Ilam, at least five were killed and 22 were wounded.

April 24

Iranian political prisoners go on hunger strike. (Iran News Daily and Iranian newspaper *Eqbal*)

Eqbal: According to this reformist newspaper, the imprisoned attorney for "Serial Murders" case, Naser Zarafshan, and the student activist, Peyman Piran, have gone on hunger strike, to criticize the appalling medical treatment Zarafshan has received in jail.

Iranian journalist banned from leaving country. (ILNA)

In a letter to President Mohammad Khatami, Shadi Sadr has protested that she had been banned from leaving the country. [Ms. Shadi Sadr is an Iranian journalist who was dismissed from her job at Hamshahri paper for improper dress code.] She said, “I would like to kindly let you know that on 23.11.83 [12 January 05] I was informed at the Passport Office that I have been banned from leaving the country. I therefore wrote a letter to the esteemed Information Minister Mr Yunesi and asked for the reasons of the ban and the person who ordered the decree. I also reminded him that there is no judicial case against me in any judicial centre and Tehran's Prosecutor Mr Mortazavi told me in person that the Tehran Prosecutor's Office had not issued the ban. In that letter I protested against the ban itself and the fact that I was never informed about it, in writing or verbally, and the procedure in which I was not given a change to defend myself. However, today, two months after my knowledge about the ban and despite my constant follow-up attempts, I have not received a convincing response from the Information Ministry.”

Two armed persons arrested in Kermanshah. (Iran News Daily and Iranian news site Baztab)

Two alleged “terrorists” who were noticed during the inspection of a passenger coach in Kermanshah, were arrested. They were equipped with pistols and raw material needed for making three bombs.

Armenian-Azeri clashes in Tehran. (RFE/RL Iran Report)

Armenian-Iranians gathered in Tehran and Isfahan on 24 April to commemorate the killings and mass deportations of hundreds of thousands of Armenians in Ottoman Turkey from 1915-17. A number of people were injured when the Iranian Armenians clashed with Iranian Azeris who were holding a counterdemonstration, Azerbaijan's ANS radio station reported on 26 April.

April 25

Iranian parliament suspends reformist press law. (AFP)

Deputies in Iran's parliament have voted to suspend a law passed by their reformist predecessors that was aimed at giving journalists fairer trials. The law, pushed through by reformers in 2003, stipulated that journalists in court for press-related offences should face a jury made up of press union officials and representatives of other social groups. As an alternative, deputies called for the jury make-up for press-related offences to return to a previous arrangement -- where jurors are named by a variety of regime officials.

Arab journalist arrested. (Ahwaz Studies Centre)

Yossef Azizi-Banitorouf, a prominent Iranian Ahwazi Arab journalist and writer was arrested in Tehran. The arrest by the Iranian security forces occurred immediately after he concluded a press conference in Iran with foreign media on the recent unrest and the Iranian Arab revolt against the Iranian regime. Sheerin Abadi, the Iranian Nobel Peace Prize winner was also present during the press conference. Following his arrest, security forces raided his house and confiscated all his books, computers and his belongings.

AFP report on April 27: A journalist from the southwestern Iranian city of Khuzestan, the scene of recent unrest, has been arrested over his comments on the

violence, the press rights group Reporters without Borders said. RSF said Banitrouf was a leading Arab intellectual in Iran and had defended the protesters and condemned the violence.

Alijani on hunger strike. (Iran News Daily and Iranian newspaper *Hambastegi*)

Mohammad Sharif, the attorney for the Nationalist-Religious Alliance member Reza Alijani, referred to his client's hunger strike and held prison officials responsible for his deteriorating health. "I met Alijani the other day. He was frail. He said he has gone on a hunger strike to highlight his need for medical assistance from a physician", he added.

Five former student activists receive prison terms. (Iran News Daily and Iranian newspaper *Shargh*)

Yazd University's Republican Student Association issued a declaration reporting the recent conviction of five former student activists by the 2nd Circuit of Yazd Province's Revolutionary Court. The activists have all been sentenced to three-month prison terms, suspended for four years.

April 26

Iranian student to be jailed, flogged for demonstrating. (AFP)

An Iranian student detained for taking part in anti-regime demonstrations has been sentenced to 18 months behind bars and 76 lashes, his lawyer said. The lawyer said an Islamic revolutionary court had found Farab Samimi guilty of "propagating against the regime" and "disturbing public order" for taking part in an illegal gathering on July 9, 2003.

April 27

Iran's religious leader commutes sentences of 3631 prisoners. (Iranian Mehr news agency)

Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamene'i agreed to commute the sentences of 3631 prisoners convicted in civil and military courts on the occasion of the birth anniversaries of Prophet Muhammad and Imam J'afar Sadeq. The proposal to commute the sentences of the prisoners was made by Judiciary Chief Ayatollah Hashemi-Shahrudi in a letter to Ayatollah Khamene'i.

Iranian Azeri organization supports Karrubi. (RFE/RL Iran Report)

The Association of Islamic Iran Azeris announced on 27 April that it supports the candidacy of Hojatoleslam Mehdi Karrubi, the Iranian Labor News Agency (ILNA) reported. The association's statement noted the constitutional articles that refer to ethnic rights and said their implementation will bring about an "Iran for all Iranians" and contribute to unity and national solidarity.

Student journalist detained. (Iran News Daily and Iranian newspaper *Shargh*)

According to this reformist daily, the editor-in-chief of the Yaas student newspaper reported on the detention last Saturday of the publication's managing director, Ahmad-Reza Sari-Aslani, adding: "The Student Basij Establishment has also called for the conviction of the publication's authorities."

Student Publication Banned for Six Months. (Iran News Daily and ISNA)

According to this reformist news agency, the Student Publications Supervisory Board of Razi University in Kermanshah has banned the student publication *Obour* for six months. The action follows a complaint filed by the Student Basij Mobilization Establishment against the publication.

April 28

Press Supervisory Committee summons eight student journalists. (Iran News Daily and Iranian newspaper *Shargh*)

Eight managing directors of student publications at Ferdowsi University in Mashhad were summoned to the university's Press Supervisory Committee after the special editions published to coincide with the nationwide Student Publications Festival. The managing directors are charged with 'the publication of sheer lies'.

Students demonstrate against hospital staff. (Iran News Daily and Iranian newspaper *Eqbal*)

A number of Amir Kabir University students staged a demonstration to vent their frustration at the negligence of staff at a particular hospital who refused to treat a sick student, resulting in his unexpected death. The demonstration started at the Sharifi dormitory and led to the premises of the said hospital, although the related authorities refrained from answering the calls of the protestors.

Student activists sit-in on Ministry of Science. (Iran News Daily and Iranian Fars News Agency)

Striking students from Urmia University have staged a sit-in in front of the offices of the Ministry of Science to protest at what they consider to be a cultural downturn in their university and anti-Islamic behavior by its resident Islamic Association.

Suspended sentence for former member of Islamic Association. (Iran News Daily and Iranian news site *Gooya*)

Former member of the Islamic Association of Isfahan University Mohammad Sadeqi has been sentenced to a suspended five-month jail term by the Third Circuit of the Isfahan Revolutionary Court on a charge of 'actions against national security'.

April 30

Gay blackmailer hanged in Bojnourd. (AFP)

An Iranian reportedly convicted of blackmailing his gay partners with videotapes of their sex acts has been hanged. Hadi Safdari was executed in Bojnourd in the eastern province of South Khorasan, the Qods newspaper said citing the local judiciary. In Safdari's case, the death sentence appears to have been handed down for rape, as the blackmail was deemed to have removed any element of consent. Safdari had previously served 18 months in prison for murdering his wife, and was released early after he was forgiven by her family. He also reportedly had a long history of robbery, abduction and other offences. Safdari's accomplice, identified only as M. Sh., was sentenced to lashes and imprisonment, Qods said, without elaborating on his part in the crimes.

Supply teachers stage rally in front of Iranian parliament. (Fars News Agency)

More than 300 supply teachers have staged a rally in front of the Majlis in protest against the non-implementation of two parliamentary bills. The Majlis passed a law in the winter under which the Education Ministry is bound to employ 40,000 supply teachers. The law, despite the approval of the Guardian Council, has not been enforced and supply teachers have staged more than 10 rallies in front of the Majlis asking for the implementation of the law.

Syria detains Arab emigres after unrest in allied Iran. (AFP)

Syrian authorities have detained five emigre Arab activists after a wave of unrest in Iran's sensitive Arab-majority oil province of Khuzestan, two Syrian human rights watchdogs said. The Arab Organization of Human Rights (OADH) and the Syrian Organization for the Defence of Human Rights (OSDH) called on the international community to press Syria not to hand over the five activists from the People's Democratic Front of Ahvaz Arabs to its allies in Iran. Party leader Tahar Ali Mazraa and his four colleagues -- Shaker Khanji, Jamal Abidawi, Mussa Sawari and Issa al-Yassin -- who were all studying in Damascus, were detained on April 25-26, the two watchdogs said. "The detainees had been in Syria for many years and were defending the human rights which Iranian authorities are trampling on in the Ahvaz region (Khuzestan)," the OSDH said.

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