

Chronology of Events in Iran, October 2003*

October 1

Iran sentences two persons to death for subversion. (Iranian newspaper *Iran Daily*)

Iranian courts have sentenced two men to death for, in at least one of the cases, having contacts with outlawed political organisations, the Paris-based International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) said in a statement. Said Masouri, 38, had his June 2002 death sentence confirmed recently by an appeals court which heard that he had contacts with the People's Mujahedeen (PMOI), an exiled opposition group. The FIDH said it had not been able to confirm the charges against the second man, Gholamhossein Kalbi, but noted that he was in the prison of Evin, on the same death row as Masouri.

Four people in Mashhad have been summoned to the Revolutionary Courts. (Alliance of Iranian Students website)*

Four students of the Ferdowsi University in Mashhad have been summoned to the Revolutionary Courts. They were summoned to a reconsideration committee by the disciplinary committee of Ferdowsi University; in addition these individuals were fined 25 million tomans (30,157 US Dollars) by the direct order of Abdol Reza Bagheri, the head of the university. The names of the students are as follows: Mohammad Mehdi Bokharaee, a fourth year electrical engineering major; Majid Amiri, a fourth year computer engineering major; Amir Pakzad; and Hassan Khajoe, a theology major. They have been freed following their interrogations.

October 2

Student union condemns attack on its member at a Tehran university. (Iranian newspaper *Aftab-e Yazd*)

The Office for Fostering Unity has issued a statement in which it has condemned the harassment of a member of the Islamic Association of Students at Tehran's Teacher Training University. The Office for Fostering Unity condemned the attack against Abbas Shokuhmand and called on the chancellor of the Teacher Training University to deal with the perpetrators.

* *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*

* Editor's note: This report has not been confirmed by major information sources.

Two Iranians hanged for serial rape, "honour killing". (Agence France Presse / AFP)

Two Iranian men have been publicly hanged in two Iranian cities for the separate crimes of serial rape and "honour killing". In the first hanging, Farzad Jalali was executed last month for the rape or illicit sex with some 250 women and girls in Khoramabad. The man had dialled telephone numbers at random, and when coming across a woman tried to lure her into a lengthy phone conversation. He recorded the conversation, and would then threaten to give the cassette to the woman's family unless she agreed to have sex. When some refused, he reportedly promised to give the cassette back but then raped them anyway and filmed the crime. Head of Lorestan province judiciary Allahiar Malek-Shahi said the man also raped a number of adolescent girls whom he preyed on as they went to school. He was also condemned to 174 lashes for his crimes.

In the second hanging, a 19-year-old identified only as Alireza was executed in Marvdasht. He was convicted of stabbing to death a young man from the same neighbourhood who had ignored warnings not to chat up his sister.

Qom Prosecutor highlights successful anti-decadence campaign. (Iranian Students News Agency / ISNA)

A plan codenamed "Enlightenment Project 2" has been put into operation in Qom. The aim of the plan is to combat those who perpetrate acts of cultural depravity in the city of Qom. Prosecutor-General of Public and Revolutionary Courts in Qom Seyyed Khalil Akbar ol-Sadat, having described the "Enlightenment Project 1" as successful, added: "The enlightenment project is implemented in Qom in various stages with the aim of fighting those who perpetrate acts of cultural depravity and those who trade vulgar CDs that negate Islamic values". He said: "The plan took a period of 100 days during which 1,000 centres which distributed vulgar CDs were identified. As a result, the perpetrators whose movements had been monitored without their knowledge were confronted".

October 3

Fear of imminent amputation (Amnesty International website)

Amnesty International expressed its concerns over the lives of Reza Nazaarit and Mohammad Safaavi, who were reportedly sentenced to amputation, while maintaining concern over the fate of Mehdi Boyeri and Hoseyn Amiri who were released after being sentenced to the same punishment. The human rights organisation stated that Mehdi Boyeri and Hoseyn Amiri were reportedly released on bail. Amnesty International has no information on when they are due to appear in court. It is not known if they are still under sentence of cross-amputation or any other form of punishment.

According to Amnesty International, Reza Nazaarit and Mohammad Safaavi are reportedly still at risk of imminent cross amputation. The four men were arrested in Shiraz on 23 June 2002. Reza Nazaarit and Mohammad Safaavi were reportedly held in solitary confinement for 45 days prior to their trial. On 9 August 2002, a Revolutionary Court in Shiraz sentenced the four men to the amputation of the right

hand and left foot on charges of "armed uprising against the Islamic regime" and theft. Reza Nazaarit and Mohammad Safaavi appealed against their sentence, but it was upheld by the Supreme Court on 8 March 2003. They are being detained in Shiraz prison until their sentence is carried out, which could be at any time. The Supreme Leader of Iran, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, is the only authority able to commute their sentence at this stage.

Amnesty International has recorded six amputations since the beginning of 2003.

October 4

Policewomen get back on the case in Iran. (Reuters)

Iranian policewomen are back on the beat for the first time since the 1979 Islamic revolution after graduating from police training college. Two hundred and fifteen graduates, wearing the all-enveloping black chador garment and carrying either ceremonial swords or firearms, trooped in front of President Mohammad Khatami before taking up their duties. It was reported that the graduates have polished their judo and fencing skills and will be able to serve alongside men in police stations and border posts. It was also reported they will have a role to play in crime scene investigation.

Iranian woman notified of death sentence over killing policeman. (AFP)

An Iranian woman sentenced to death six months ago for killing a police officer whom she said tried to rape her has just received notice of her punishment. Afsaneh Noruzi, 32, was notified of her sentence September 28 while imprisoned in the southern port of Bandar-Abbas, where she signed and fingerprinted her death order. The court sentenced Noruzi to capital punishment on March 15 for stabbing to death a high-ranking officer on the Gulf island of Kish in 1997. She had testified in her defense that the police man tried to rape her in his office. Her condemnation was confirmed by the Supreme Court. During the trial, Noruzi's attorney invoked an Islamic criminal law article that permits an individual to react proportionately in defense of one's "life, honor, chastity, property or liberty," in the absence of authorities.

October 5

Union against jail sentence for Iranian journalist. (Iran News website)

Female Journalists Trade Union has released a statement about the conviction of Iranian journalist Fariba Davudi-Mohajer and has criticized the court order against her. The statement called on Judiciary officials to revise the order with a new attitude. Davudi-Mohajer has been sentenced to two years in jail after the suspension of a three year imprisonment sentence.

Teachers demonstrate in Tehran. (Mehr News Agency and Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty RFE/RL Iran Report)

A group of teachers gathered outside an Education and Training Ministry building in Tehran and called for greater attention to their salaries and pensions, as well as a

greater focus on education in the fourth five-year plan, which will start in 2005. Mahmud Beheshti-Langerudi, head of the Teachers' Trade Union, said, "Officials have tried to console teachers with promises and assurances...but no practical step has been taken to resolve the many problems of this hard-working segment of the population."

Alliance of Iranian Students report of the same news:* In a communique published by the Society of Fighting Mentors, it was called upon teachers to unite in a nationwide boycott for October 5, 2003. The Society of Fighting Mentors also called upon students and toilers to join forces in this nationwide boycott and demonstration.

October 6

Iran journalist freed from jail, another ends prison term. (Dow Jones International News)

An Iranian journalist on a hunger strike was freed from prison after it was feared he may die, his wife said. Mohsen Sazegara left Evin prison several days after reformists warned that the judiciary would be held responsible if he died in detention. Sazegara was detained on June 15 on charges of provoking student-led street protests against the ruling Islamic establishment. He has not faced trial yet.

Another outspoken writer, Ahmad Zeidabadi, was also freed after serving a 13-month jail term for insulting Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. A Press Court in 2002 also banned him from talking to the media for five years. 36-year-old Zeidabadi is best known for his political analyses and strong comments in several reformist newspapers that have been banned. He criticized Iran's religious leaders, saying they are unresponsive and act as if they were above the law.

October 8

Iranian dissident gets five more years jail. (Reuters)

Iran's judiciary added five years to the jail sentence of dissident journalist Abbas Abdi for possession of secret documents. Abdi received a four-and-a-half year jail term in April after publishing a survey which said three-quarters of Iranians favoured a resumption of talks with Washington. Judges said Abdi and another man had been guilty of "collaboration with foreign governments" and "propaganda against the Islamic Republic".

October 12

Reformist criticizes partisan use of Basij bases for electoral purposes. (Iranian Labour News Agency / ILNA)

The leader of the Participation Front in Qom Province, referring to the recent activities of some Basij bases under the Ali Bin-Talib project, has said: "The Basij [volunteer force affiliated to the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps] belongs to the

* Editor's note: This report has not been confirmed by major news sources.

people and uses public funds; no group has the right to use them to publicize its own interests in the Majlis elections [due to be held on 20 February 2004]”. He said that Basij bases were used to campaign for the Developers [Persian: *Abadgaran*] group in the second town and village council elections [in February 2003]. He said: At the present time, a group of conservatives in power are trying to exploit Basij bases for political purposes and the judiciary and the Guardian Council are not prepared to confront this phenomenon.

October 13

Backers of jailed Iranian reformer stage protest. (Dow Jones International News)

The family and supporters of a jailed reformist leader gathered outside U.N. offices to demand his release. About 10 people, led by the daughter of Abbas Abdi, staged a sit-in to try to increase pressure on the ruling clerics to free the former militant who took part in the siege of the U.S. Embassy during the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Iranian newspaper *Hambastegi* report on the same news on October 15: Abbas Abdi’s family reported that they had been threatened because of their sit-in outside the UN building in Tehran.

Iran court to free on bail intelligence agent accused of killing Kazemi. (AFP)

An Iranian court has agreed to free on bail the only man accused of involvement in the death of Iranian-Canadian journalist Zahra Kazemi, trial judge Rassul Ghanimifar said. Bail for intelligence agent Mohammad Reza Aghdam Ahmadi was fixed at 300 million rials (35,700 dollars), Ghanimifar said, adding that it had not yet been paid. The trial of Ahmadi, one of those who questioned Kazemi while she was under arrest for taking illegal photographs outside Tehran’s main Evin prison, began on October 7. Kazemi died in hospital on July 10 from a brain haemorrhage after a blow to the head received in custody between June 23 and 27. The Ministry has accused the judiciary of covering up evidence, including a letter written by Kazemi saying she was beaten and thrown to the ground during her first day in the custody of prosecutors. The judiciary says it is up to 42-year-old Ahmadi to prove his innocence of the charge of "participation in a quasi-intentional murder".

October 16

Iran sentences gang to death for religious murders. (Reuters)

A court in southeastern Iran has upheld the death sentence for a gang of six men who confessed to killing five people in the name of Islamic morality. The men, aged between 18 and 22, last year killed some of their victims by tying them up and throwing them into a swimming pool or by stoning them to death to "eliminate vice on the earth". Earlier this year, a trial held behind closed doors sentenced the six to death. But the case was sent to another court after they objected to the sentence, saying the killings were religiously motivated. The second court said “there was no evidence that the victims were in any way corrupt” and approved the first ruling. The killers earlier confessed to murdering the five people. They said they committed the murders to “fight against moral corruption and promote virtue”.

October 20

Iranian reformists fast to protest human rights breaches. (Dow Jones International News)

Hundreds of reformist Iranian lawmakers, students and political activists began a day-long fast to protest the establishment's crackdown on freedoms. "We are refusing to eat and drink today to protest lack of legitimate freedoms and violation of the basic human rights of political prisoners," leading reformist lawmaker Ali Shakourirad said. Shakourirad is among more than 110 fasting reformist lawmakers from Iran's 290-seat parliament. Some protesters will meet after sunset at the headquarters of the Islamic Iran Participation Front, Iran's largest reformist political party, to break their fast. Others will attend fast-breaking meetings in provincial capitals. Mahdi Habibi, a reformist student leader who heads the Office for Fostering Unity, Iran's biggest reformist student group, said university students joined the protest. The Freedom Movement of Iran, also supported the fasting decision.

Five Iranian men hanged for drug smuggling, murder. (AFP)

Five men convicted of drug smuggling and murder have been hanged publicly in the southern Iranian city of Bam. Kerman province judiciary identified the five as Mohammad, Navab, Omid, Norouz and Vali. They said a revolutionary court had also convicted them of acting against national security and intimidation. No further information was given.

October 21

Forty Iranians arrested for entering Iraq illegally. (AFP)

Iraqi police stated that they arrested 40 Iranians in al-Izhaqui (in the northern region of Dhuluyia) because they were not holding legal papers. "They said they were here to visit holy Shiite sites in Iraq," the police chief Owaid said, adding that those arrested will be returned to Iran "by bus." "Iraqi police have handed over the 40 people arrested to the coalition forces based in Dhuluyia," he said. Iranians were unable to carry out pilgrimages to Iraq before the US-led war in March. At the end of September, Iran officially reopened its border to pilgrims in an attempt to control an illegal influx across to Iraq. Pilgrims need to pay 120 to 180 dollars to travel to Iraq. But in a country where the average income is less than 200 dollars per month, Iranians will travel across the border illegally, and risk their lives. More than 200 pilgrims have been found dead, killed by land mines along the border, which were left over from the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war, while others died from the heat or accidents.

October 25

Three hanged in Iran for various crimes, one man's fingers amputated. (AFP)

An unidentified man aged 29 was publicly executed in a square in Zahedan, in Sistan-e-Baluchistan province. Another man was hanged in the southwestern city of Shiraz for murdering a police officer during an armed robbery in 2002. Another man identified only as Majid was executed in prison as the last member of a nine-man

gang, all sentenced to death for abducting and raping 80 women and girls in the city of Mashhad. The other members of the gang were hanged on May 13 in the same city.

Sadam Asakareh's had four fingers cut off in public opposite the main mosque in Ahwaz for repeated acts of theft.

Jailed student given additional sentence of 30 lashes. (ILNA)

A member of the Students' United Front has reported the implementation of the sentence of 30 lashes and a 30,000 toman fine for Manuchehr Mohammadi in prison. He was charged of insulting and protesting judicial officials who had gone to Evin for an inspection. Manuchehr Mohammadi had been arrested in the course of 18 Tir 1378 [student unrest in July 1999] and is in Evin Prison.

October 27

Law Enforcement officers killed three persons in Sardasht. (Iranian newspaper *Yas-i No*)

In mid-October, law-enforcement officers shot at a crowd in Sardasht, and killed three people, reported on 27 October. Hasel Daseh, the parliamentary representative from Sardasht, said the corpses were buried shortly after the incident, before sunrise, and without the presence of their families. Daseh described such occurrences as frequent.

October 30

Wife of jailed activist allowed visit after 63 days. (ILNA)

Narges Mohammadi, the wife of Taqi Rahmani a jailed national-religious activist, said that she was able to visit her husband after 63 days. Pointing out that visits are held in the presence of three prison officials, Taqi Rahmani's wife said Rahmani was in solitary confinement from 24/3/82 until 5/8/82 [14 June 2003 to 27 October 2003] but he was not questioned and doesn't know what is the status of his dossier.

October 31

Father of jailed student appeals for visits. (ILNA)

Akbar Mohammadi, a social-services student at Tehran University, who has been at the Taleqani Hospital in Tehran for the past three days will undergo surgery on November 1 for lung infection. Akbar Mohammadi's father has confirmed this news and expressed concern about the health of his son. He said: "My son is not allowed any visitors. In view of the current circumstances I appeal to officials to allow me or his mother to visit him." Brothers Akbar and Manuchehr Mohammadi, who are both students, have been in prison since the 18 Tir 1378 [8 July 1999 university unrest].

*UNHCR Ankara
Country of Origin Information Team
Revised April 2004*