

Chronology of Events in Iran, October 2002*

October 1

Student group calls for release of political prisoners, including students. (Islamic Republic News Agency / IRNA)

The Office to Foster Unity (OFU), the main student group, has called on Iranian courts to order the release of all political prisoners, especially the students, at the start of the new academic year. The OFU Tehran Council welcomed the release of three students in 2002, saying they wanted judiciary officials to free the remaining political activists. "We are starting the new academic year while three students were freed from jail last summer. But, several other students, thinkers and university professors are still held in jail," the group said in a statement. Most of the students are held for convictions related to the July 1999 unrest at the Tehran University campus. Among the prisoners is Ali Afshari, the former head of the OFU, who is held since April 30, 2000, for his participation in a Berlin conference, denounced as anti-revolutionary in the Islamic Republic as well as other charges. Another student activist, Ahmad Batebi, is held for his involvement in the unrest. A court initially sentenced him to death, but commuted the punishment later to jail.

Workers stage protest gathering in Rasht. (Iranian newspaper *Resalat*)

A number of the workers of two factories in Gilan staged a gathering in front of the office of Gilan Province governor-general to protest against the non-payment of their salary. Workers of the two factories of Gilan China Factory and Spark Machine Tool of Rasht gathered in front of the office of Gilan Province governor-general and demanded a solution for their financial problems because their salary has not been paid in the past three months.

October 2

People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran activist face imminent execution. (Amnesty International)

Said Masouri faces imminent execution, after his death sentence was reportedly upheld by the Supreme Court in September 2002. Said Masouri, allegedly an activist and supporter of the the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI) lived in Norway since 1988. He was allegedly sent to Iran in early 2001 in order to carry out a "military mission" for the PMOI. Before he was able to undertake his mission,

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however, he was arrested, either in the city of Dezful or the nearby city of Andimeshk. Said Masouri was reportedly ill-treated and possibly tortured while in detention, and was allegedly threatened with summary execution if he refused to make a televised confession. Amnesty International received information stating that Said Masouri "had been under torture for a long time and has lost a lot of weight [and that] his family did not recognize him". He is currently being held in Wing 209 of Evin Prison in Tehran. In June 2002, Branch 6 of the Revolutionary Court, located in Evin prison in Tehran, sentenced him to death on various charges, including "acting against state security", "membership of a proscribed organization" and other security provisions. He was not allowed to choose his own lawyer and was allocated one by the court.

Iranian polling institute closed over survey on U.S. ties. (Reuters)

Iran's judiciary closed down a polling institute and summoned its director to court after it released a survey showing that most Iranians supported talks with the United States. The poll, which has also put the head of the official news agency IRNA in a difficult position for publishing it, drew sharp criticism from Iran's conservative media. The National Institute for Research Studies and Opinion Polls survey, published by IRNA on September 22, showed three-quarters of Iranians were in favour of opening talks with the United States. Iran's parliament urged the judiciary to halt action against IRNA's chief, Abdollah Nasser, and the head of the polling body, Behrouz Geranpayeh. Geranpayeh said the poll was commissioned by Iran's parliament. MP Ahmad Burqani said parliament's presiding board had sent a letter to judiciary chief Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi-Shahrudi demanding a halt to any prosecutions. IRNA's head appeared in court on September 30 to answer charges related to publishing the poll. Nasser and Geranpayeh are being charged with "publishing lies to excite public opinion".

October 3

Iranian court orders arrest of actress over public kiss. (Agence France-Presse / AFP)

A court has ordered the arrest of a prominent Iranian actress on charges of "acts against public virtue" after she kissed a young director during a local film festival. 47-year-old star Gowhar Kheirandish was ordered to appear in court in the central city of Yazd following the summoning of the other party in the film festival's award ceremony kiss, Ali Zamani. Yazd was rocked by protests after the show of affection there last week. Ali Zamani, who was a student of the actress' late husband, has already been charged and freed on 20 million rials (2,500 dollars) bail. Mohammad Ali Pakdel, a Yazd culture ministry official, had been arrested, photographed and fingerprinted and then freed on bail for helping the two to flee the city. The charges followed a call by Hojatolislam Mohasen Talebpour, the local representative of Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, for legal action to be taken. The 'Haqiqat' (Truth) film festival, which featured 32 films focused on religious issues, ran from September 25-27.

Meanwhile, the conservative *Jomhuri-e-Eslami* newspaper carried reports on a similar scandal bubbling away in the northwestern town of Ardebil, in which a young girl

kissed the local mayor during the inauguration of a park. The paper said the kiss-on-the-cheek incident had enraged the "pious" population of the town, and said such "obscene" incidents were aimed at "propogating a bad culture" in the Islamic republic.

Iran's militia attacks Iranian pop group. (AFP)

An Iranian pop group performing in the central city of Esfahan has been attacked by a hardline militia and driven out of town. The popular Tehran-based band, 'Aryan', was forced to cut short a performance in the historic city after police said they "were unable to guarantee their security. "They had permission from the ministry of culture, and we support any program authorised by the ministry", an Isfahan police official said. He said: "They were attacked several times ... but the security forces finally managed to help them leave the city."

Arsonists blamed for fire at Iran cinema. (Reuters)

Iranian cinema officials blamed unknown arsonists for burning down a movie theatre in central Iran which was screening a controversial film about life inside a women's prison. The Jasmine cinema, in the central city of Isfahan, was screening "The Women's Prison" when it was gutted by fire on September 27. The Culture Ministry had approved the film for screening after it was held up by censors for two years. "If a group has some criticism about a film, it should be expressed through legal channels," Manouchehr Mohammadi, head of Khaneh Cinema, an umbrella body of state-approved guilds and associations, said. Conservative media have strongly criticised the film, which they said portrayed an exaggerated image of prison conditions for female inmates. The film, shot inside Tehran's Qasr prison, focuses on the influx of women convicted of crimes such as prostitution into prisons following the 1979 Islamic revolution.

October 5

Women begin detective work in Tehran. (Iranian radio Voice of the Islamic Republic)

The head of Greater Tehran's Criminal Investigation Department said that a specialized women's unit of the Criminal Investigation Department begun its work. General Taqizadeh said the unit would help to maintain security and carry out criminal investigation when they concerned women.

October 6

Worker protests in Abadan and Ahwaz. (Organization of Fadaïian – Minority website)*

In protest to unfulfilled demands, hundreds of petrochemical workers in Abadan went on a strike for the last five days. According to Abadan's petrochemical's public relations department, the reasons for workers protest includes delays in home loans from Ministry of Oil and the problem of supplemental insurance, but the statement did not mention other demands. However, before the strike, about 450 temporary

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

contracts workers had demanded permanent employment. The head manager of Khoozestan's office of labor and social administration claims that even with workers campaign, there has been no interruption in its activities. After Abadan's petrochemical workers strike, the executive president of Abadan petrochemical accompanied with the governor and other government officials gathered at the refinery to negotiate with representative of workers and end the demonstration.

Workers of Ahwaz pipe factory once again converged in front of Khoozestan governor's office and protested against lack of action on the promises made to them by the governor. Two weeks ago the governor had promised workers that workers' wages and benefits be paid in one week and factory's operational situation be resolved. But again nothing has been done to fulfill those promises. The Ahwaz pipe factory is owned by the Bank of Sanaat va Maadan.

Kurdish activist assassinated. (Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran/ KDPI)*

A KDPI activist, Mansur Maroufi, was gunned down in the streets of Bokeran by the Islamic Republic forces. Mansur Maroufi was born in the city of Bokeran from a worker family in 1976. After finishing his secondary studies, he joined the KDPI ranks in 1998.

October 8

Behshar's Cheet Sazi workers protesting. (Organization of Fada'iian – Minority website)**

About 1800 workers employed by Behshar's Cheet Sazi factory are in suspense and their salaries and benefits have not been paid. During this time they have converged in front of government centers, protested and resorted to demonstrations. In continuation of this campaign workers met at the factory again and demanded response for the manager. Under workers pressure he showed up. But he did not give in to any of the demands of the workers. Workers then captured him at the negotiation table so that everyone would hear about their cause.

Kurdish activists executed. (KDPI)***

In the morning of 8 October 2002, a group of Kurdish political prisoners, after withstanding many years of interrogation, torture and imprisonment, were sent to the death: Hamza Ghaderi, 21 years old married, from Sardasht with a young girl child; Jalal Zevayie, 27 years old, married, also from Sardasht; Khalid Showghi [reportedly deported from Turkey], aged 50, from a village in Ghassemlou Valley, a suburb of Urumieh; and Jalil Zewe-ee from Sardasht region, their offence being members of the KDPI. The bodies of the executed were given back to their relatives at 11:00 pm, and they were forced to bury them immediately. Any funerals for the dead were also prohibited.

Student Movement Coordination Committee for Democracy in Iran (SMCCDI) report of the same news on October 9: A tense situation is reported in the city of

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Mahabad following the spread of a news about the execution of one of its political dissidents, Mehr-Hamzeh Ghaderi. Ghaderi was executed by the Islamic Republic in Oroumiah prison and his body was given back to his family by the authorities. The authorities preferred to carry this execution in this city rather than in Mahabad, fearing unrest.*

SMCCDI report of the same news on October 10: A report released by the "Radio Voice of Iran" informed about another execution which took place in the city of Oroomiah. The name of the victim was given as "Khaled Shoghi" who was hanged in prison.

Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) Iran Report on the same news: KDPI Secretary-General Khosrow Abdullahi said that... currently 110 Kurds are imprisoned and 12 of them are awaiting execution of their death sentences.

Hamedan students boycott classes. (SMCCDI)**

It was reported that several students of the Hamedan Boo-Ali University refused to attend their classes, and declared an unlimited strike till the fulfillment of their legitimate requests. The students marched toward the official buildings which forced the head of the university to show up and to try to calm the students who used the occasion to shout slogans against the regime and its processes within the Iranian universities. The students, upset by the mysterious death of one of their active colleagues, rejected the justifications made by the head of the university and gave an ultimatum to the officials to bring to light the conditions of this death and to end the existing policies of discrimination and repression. Last week, the body of an unnamed Hamedan student was found by the authorities who declared that this student, known for having been socially active, was killed due to "absorption" of "sleeping pills".

Workers block Ahwaz streets. (SMCCDI)***

Hundreds of workers reportedly came into the streets of the city of Ahwaz, requesting better conditions. The workers, supported by tens of local residents, blocked the streets of downtown Ahwaz by shouting slogans, such as, "Ma Gorosne-im" (We're Hungry) and "Dolat e bi kefayat, estefa, estefa" (Incompetent government, resignation, resignation). The Special Forces intervened to break the demonstration at around noon and after the workers tried to walk toward the governmental buildings. Several workers were reportedly arrested.

Two illegal parties raided near Tehran, 88 arrested and sentenced. (AFP)

Iranian police raided two illegal parties near Tehran, with the 88 young people arrested punished by jail terms, fines and flogging. 56 people were detained at a party in Shahrak-e-Qods, a residential area west of Tehran, while a further 32 were arrested in nearby Ekbatan. Those detained -- all aged between 18 and 21 years-old -- were celebrating their entrance into university and were caught while dancing. The 88 were sentenced to unspecified prison terms, flogging and fines ranging from between 5,000,000 and 10,000,000 rials (650 and 1250 dollars).

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October 12

Liberal Iranian cleric jailed. (BBC)

A religious court in Iran sentenced a prominent liberal cleric to seven years in prison. The main charge against Hassan Youssefi Eshkavari was his rejection of the compulsory veiling of women. Eshkavari made his remarks at a conference in Berlin in 2000 about the future of reforms in Iran. Eshkavari argued that the strict Islamic dress code for women should be optional. He had originally been given a death sentence on charges of apostasy in a secret trial, but this was overturned by an appeals court in May 2001.

Student Parliament held in Tehran. (Iranian newspaper *Aftab-e Yazd*)

The second session of the Students Parliament began work at the Majlis building following a speech by Majlis Speaker Mehdi Karrubi. During the session members of the Student Parliament voted against a single article of the internal regulations of their parliament on the grounds that they were not informed beforehand of the article which had been proposed by the Ministry of Education. The session was held with the objective of passing the internal regulations of the Student Parliament and discussing problems faced by students.

Several “militiamen” killed in ambush. (SMCCDI)*

According to official reports, seven “militiamen” were killed during an ambush near the town of Sardasht in Kurdistan province. The official report mentions the assailants as “an armed group” without giving any more detail except the name of the troops killed during the action.

October 13

Military personnel warned not to join political groups. (*Aftab-e Yazd*)

The head of the Ideological-Political Organization of the Law Enforcement Force of the Islamic Republic, Mohammad Ali Rahmani, announced that “military personnel don't have the right to take a political posture in support or against the country's political parties or factions. And the representatives of the Guardian Jurisconsult in the armed forces have a duty, on the basis of the law, to prevent such a tendency.”

Kurdish activist executed. (KDPI)*

Another member of the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI) was reportedly executed in the morning. Saleh Godarzi, aged 39, was executed by Iran in the prison of Sanandaj. Saleh, a resident of a village in the suburb of Kamyaran, joined the KDPI in the wake of the Islamic Republic. He had to leave the ranks of the KDPI, giving himself up to the local authorities so that he could resume his normal life. He was arrested and tortured. After having been freed from prison, he was constantly harassed by local security agents and officials. In 1999, while he was working in Teheran, he was once again arrested and sent back to prison. After a while, he was returned to Sanandaj prison, where he was condemned to death.

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Iranian cleric calls for arresting dog owners. (Iranian newspaper 'Etemad' and IPR Strategic Information Database)

A conservative Iranian prayer leader denounced the "moral depravity" of dog ownership and called upon the judiciary to arrest all dogs and their owners. Hojatoleslam Hasani said, "I demand the judiciary arrest all dogs with long, medium or short legs together with their long-legged owners, otherwise I will arrest them myself" at a Friday prayer sermon in Urumieh. "The abominable people in this country think that liberty means loose morals, for example men and women walk in the streets hand in hand", he added. Dog ownership recently has been on the rise and more women are seen in public walking their dogs, especially in northern Tehran. Back in June, the police banned the sale of dogs and stipulated penalties for dog walking in public, which is seen by conservatives as a sign of the "corrupting influence of decadent Western culture".

Two more executions reported in Esfahan. (SMCCDI)*

Two more executions were reported from the central city of Esfahan. These new executions bring to a total of three the number of those executed in this city in the last seven days. The names of the victims have been reported as "Mohamad Arbab" and "Mohamad-Reza Saeedi" known for having been held for political activities intending to overthrow the Islamic Republic. Their bodies were returned to their families with no further explanation, such as, when their trial took place.

[On October 14], several demonstrators who were protesting about the execution of "Mohamad-Reza Saeedi" were reportedly arrested. The demonstration took place following the burial ceremony of the victim who was reportedly executed in the Dastguerd Law Enforcement Headquarters.

October 15

Iranian convicts have fingers amputated in public. (AFP)

Two Iranians, convicted of a spree of some 30 robberies, have each had four fingers publicly chopped off in Hamedan. The two convicts were identified only as Majid and Hamid- Reza. It was reported that the amputations were carried out after their victims refused clemency and the Supreme Court upheld the sentences.

Wife of dissident student beaten over husband's interview with Radio Israel. (SMCCDI)**

Leyla Majedi, wife of the dissident student Activist Mehrdad Majedi, has been seriously wounded by several militiamen who attacked her after her exiled husband made an interview, last week, with the Persian service of Voice of Israel. The three perpetrators affiliated to Tehran Bassidj forces attacked the young artist and singer in a Tehran street by shouting "death to Zionist". In addition, the victim and the Majedi family have been placed under constant watch since then. Mehrdad Majedi was a student of the Hamadan University's Medical School, who escaped earlier this month by using his medical leave which was granted to him for the treatment of his ear cut

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by a militiaman during his interrogation. The dissident student declared in the said radio interview his readiness to go back to Iran and to face a public and open trial in the presence of a jury and defence team.

Imprisoned student activist, Manouchehr Mohamadi, on vacation leave. (SMCCDI)*

Manouchehr Mohamadi, one of the imprisoned student activists, has been granted of a 5 days leave. Mohamadi, who suffers of poor physical conditions following his mistreatment, was captured during the bloody crackdown on July 9, 1999 student uprising and was held since then. His brother, Akbar Mohamadi, has been kept in jail despite having been granted the same leave. The brothers, initially condemned to death, witnessed their sentences commuted.

Man convicted of rape publicly hanged in Iran. (Iranian newspaper *Jomhuri-ye Eslami*)

A young man charged with theft and rape was hanged in public at dawn in the scene of his crime, the Sepidar district of Ahvaz. The 23-year-old man named Ali Tabe-Ma'tuqi and his accomplice, 26-year-old Farid Jahangiri, used to kidnap women by car. They would then rape their victims and steal their belongings. The second convict, Farid Jahangiri, will be hanged at dawn on October 16.

Iran women seek the same "blood money" as men. (AFP)

Iranian women began talks with Islamic clerics to demand that "blood money" compensation for a murdered woman should equal that of a man. "We have sent letters to high-ranking clerics...to have their opinions on equal blood money for a Muslim man and a Muslim woman," said woman parliamentarian Akram Mosavarimanesh. Iran's judiciary set the amount that a killer can pay to his victim's family to avoid execution at a flat 150 million rials (\$18,750) for a murdered man, and half of that for a woman. "By participation in society women have changed the economic conditions of their families. Most of them are responsible for covering family expenses," said Fatameh Rakei, head of the parliament's committee on women's issues. One cleric empowered to issue religious decrees, Ayatollah Youssef Sanei, last year openly supported the concept of equal blood money.

October 16

Clashes reported in several western Iranian cities. (SMCCDI)**

Sporadic clashes are reportedly rocking several western Iranian cities, such as, Saghez, Bane, Mahabad, Sannandaj and Marivan. These clashes took place following the protest action against the last wave of executions. Several official buildings and security forces patrol cars have been damaged during the demonstrations.

Head of polling institute arrested for survey on relations with US. (IRNA)

The head of the National Society of Public Opinion Studies [affiliated to the Culture and Islamic Guidance Ministry] has been arrested on the orders of the Judge presiding

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over Branch 1410 of Tehran's Civil Servants Court. Behruz Gheranpayeh was arrested in connection with a recent poll [on whether Iran should normalize relations with the United States]. The source said Gheranpayeh had been granted a 2bn-dollar bail [about 250,000 dollars], and ordered to appear before the court on Saturday. He added that the bail may be raised to 5bn rials.

Publisher to appear in court again after posting bail. (Iranian newspaper *Iran Daily*)

A leading conservative publisher posted a 20m-toman (20,000 dollars) bail and is expected to reappear in court in the coming weeks. Morteza Nabavi, managing editor of the right-wing daily *Resalat* appeared in Branch 1408 of the Tehran Civil Court to hear charges filed against him by 11 mostly government and affiliated organizations. Office of vice-president for legal affairs, the ministries of oil and education, IRNA, Islamic Participation Front, Civil Registration Organization, a judge in Abadan are among the complainants.

October 19

Detained Iranian dissident's students, concerned over his health, stage strike. (AFP)

Students of detained Iranian reformist writer Hashem Aghajari began a three-day boycott of classes at Tehran University to protest his imprisonment and treatment in prison. Aghajari is reportedly not being given treatment for an infection in his leg, which was amputated at the knee after he was wounded in the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war. Last month his party, a member of the pro-reform coalition government of President Mohammad Khatami, voiced fears for his life, after a report that he had been attacked by cellmates.

October 20

Khamene'i pardons, commutes sentences of 742 convicts. (Iranian Students News Agency / ISNA)

On the eve of auspicious birthday of the "Lord of the Era" [Ayatollah Khomeini], Ayatollah Khamene'i has agreed with a proposal of Judiciary Head Ayatollah Seyyed Mahmud Hashemi-Shahrudi to pardon or commute sentences against 742 people convicted by public courts, revolution courts and military tribunals...

October 21

Wife of jailed journalist summoned to court for publishing lies. (ISNA)

Fatemeh Kamali-Ahmad-Sara'i, managing editor of the weekly *Jame'e-ye Now* [and the wife of imprisoned pro-reform journalist and writer, Emadoddin Baqi], has been summoned to court following a complaint by the prosecutor-general. She was told that the offences included "spreading propaganda against the system of the Islamic Republic of Iran, propagating obscenities and unlawful material, publishing indecent and mendacious material and insulting religious sanctities and beliefs".

Another student activist granted prison leave. (SMCCDI)*

Akbar Mohamadi, a student activist who was initially condemned to death, has been granted vacation leave. Manouchehr Mohamadi, Akbar's brother, who was granted the same vacation time has been notified about an extension of his leave, for medical purposes.

Clashes during the Shia celebration reported. (SMCCDI)**

Sporadic clashes have been reported from several areas of the poor suburbs of Tehran and cities such as Esfahan and Qom. The clashes took place at the occasion of one of main Shia rituals celebrating the birth of the Mehdi. In Tehran, the clashes have been reported in the Rey and Eslam-Shahr districts as groups of young tried to turn the official ceremonies into protest actions by shouting religious slogans with political content. The security forces intervened to break the formation of the gatherings by beating and arresting several protesters. Slogans, such as, "Had e jenayat ta kodja, mehdi Bia, mehdi Bia" (Until what time so much crimes, Mehdi come, Mehdi come) were shouted in response to the attack of the security forces.

In Esfahan, the clashes have been reported in the Darvaze Shiraz and Tchahar Bagh areas where militiamen and plainclothes men beat and arrested several protesters.

In Mashad, several protesters, including a cleric, have been reportedly beaten and arrested by the plainclothesmen as they tried to turn the celebration into protest action. It was reported that three clerics were making political speeches when the security forces arrested them and their audience near the eastern corner of the mausoleum of Imam Reza.

October 23

243 arrested and sentenced in swoop on "corruption networks" in Khorasan province. (AFP)

Police in northeast Iran arrested 243 members of "corruption networks", with a court sentencing an undisclosed number of the detainees to death. Police said they arrested five different 'gangs' involved in kidnapping, prostitution and murder after six-month surveillance operation, and some of the detainees were already sentenced to death.

October 24

Minister denies Komala assassinated Revolutionary Guard officer in Kurdistan province. (AFP)

Iran's Interior Minister said that Kurdistan province was the "safest in the country", just days after a rebel group in the area was blamed for killing a Revolutionary Guard officer. The killing last week of Saleh Sharifi in Iranian Kurdistan was blamed on the separatist Kurdish group Komala, which has been largely inactive since 1986 after being crushed by security forces. The Minister Abdolvahed Musavi-Lari denied the group had returned to militant activities, saying "there is no tension in Kurdistan".

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Musavi-Lari did not comment on the murder, though government spokesman Abdollah Ramezanzadeh, the province's former governor, said on October 23 that an investigation was underway.

October 26

Man to be hanged for killing daughter. (Reuters)

An Iranian court, in a rare departure from traditional practice that spares the life of fathers who kill their children, sentenced to death a man who cut off his daughter's head. Under the strict Islamic law applied in Iran, normally only the father or grandfather of the victim has the right to demand the death sentence. But Ayatollah Hashemi-Sharoudi had issued a directive earlier this month telling judges to send such criminals to the gallows for "promoting corruption on earth". The father killed his seven-year-old daughter to prevent bringing shame on the family after suspecting that she had been raped by her uncle. A subsequent medical examination found that she had not been raped.

October 27

Two convicted murderers hanged in public in Tehran. (Arabic news site Al-Bawaba News)

Two Iranian men convicted of murder were hanged in public in the capital of Tehran, one of them in a park known as a place for dining out or hiking, according to witnesses. 23-year-old Hashem Anwarniah was strung up by a crane in north Tehran's Jamshideh park, the site of where he gunned down a police officer, Malek Hossein Amiri, in the course of a shoot-out some two months ago. In the meantime, in Javideh district in the southern part of the city, Farhad Rahmanpour, 32, was hanged for the murder and robbery of his aunt and her two children.

Three Iranian Jews pardoned. (BBC)

Three Iranian Jews jailed in Iran after being convicted of spying for Israel have been pardoned. The men, who were serving jail terms of between eight and nine years, were granted an early release by Iran's supreme ruler Ayatollah Khamenei. They were among a group of 10 Iranian Jews imprisoned after a closed-door trial in July, 2000, sparking international condemnation. The prisoners - Javid Beit Yaqub, 42, Faramarz Kashi, 32, and Shahrokh Paknahad, 24 - were freed to mark the occasion of the birthday of Imam Mahdi, a Shia saint.

Prisoners under 18 to be separated from older prisoners. (Iranian newspaper *The Tehran Times*)

Director of Iran's Prisons Organization, Seyed Morteza Bakhtiyari, said that in order to better manage prisoners and to put more emphasis on their rehabilitation, prisoners under the age of 18 will be separated from other prisoners, and will be incarcerated in special rehabilitation centers. "All of our country's provinces have benefited from rehabilitation centers, and by the end of the current year 12 rehabilitation centers are going to be established in cities such as Khorramabad." He stressed that convicted

minors must be sentenced according to laws specifically designed for their special conditions and age. Bakhtiyari mentioned religious belief as the main solution in preventing crime in the society generally, and among the youth and young adults, in particular. "There is no way to effectively confront crime, but by strengthening faith and through personal behavior control by the individual's internal forces and motivations."

Detention centre for unregistered detainees to be turned into a museum. (Iranian newspaper *Entekhab*)

The Information Ministry invited parliamentary reporters to visit Towhid Detention Centre, better known as Prison 59. According to parliamentary correspondents, this detention centre used to be an unlisted prison which was not controlled by the Prisons' Organizations. Therefore, it was shut down after the efforts of Majlis deputies and Information Minister Ali Yunesi. The prison is said to be converted into an Information Ministry museum.

October 29

Man arrested in Iran after trying to hijack domestic flight. (Al-Bawaba News)

Police authorities in the Islamic Republic of Iran arrested one man after he tried to hijack a domestic flight from Kerman to the capital Tehran. Reports on state television said the man, identified as Ali Akbar Safarvadeh Kermani, aged 42, threatened cabin crewmembers and attempted to force his way into the cockpit before being eventually overpowered by security guards. The early morning flight, operated by Mahan Air, was carrying a total of 160 passengers, including several parliament members.

October 30

Four people, including three Afghans, executed publicly. (Reuters)

Three Afghans convicted of murder, armed robbery, "seducing children" and creating public disorder were hanged publicly in the city of Qom. Rostam Attarian, Bahador Amini and Seyed Gol Hosseini were hanged in the holy city's main square. Nader Sepah, who was convicted of armed robbery, "immoral acts" and clashing with security forces was hanged earlier in the day in public in Khorramabad.

October 31

Iran shuts down second polling institute, arrests two researchers. (AFP)

Iranian authorities has shut down a second polling institute and arrested two of its researchers. The judiciary ordered the closure of Avenir, the institute of studies and opinion surveys, without giving a reason. The institute is run by reformists Abbas Abdi and Alireza Alavitabar, both of whom are known to support more action by reformists to confront Iran's conservatives who control key institutions in the regime. Abdi even advised President Mohammed Khatami a few months ago to resign if he could not push through his reform agenda because of opposition from conservatives.

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