

Chronology of Events in Iran, July 2002*

July 1

Khamenei's aide alleges there are only six students in prison. (Iranian newspaper *Entekhab*)

Hojjat ol-Eslam Mohsen Qomi said in the joint gathering of scholars and professors of Islamic Open University in Shahr-e Rey (Yadegar-e Imam University Complex): "There are only three students in prison in connection with the university campus issue and another three in connection with the Berlin conference and the student publication *Kavir*. As they have expressed regret and repentance and in view of the measures taken, we hope that they would be pardoned and freed by the Judiciary."

Police launched new campaign on youth parties. (Agence France-Presse / AFP)

The Iranian police arrested 30 young girls and boys during a "depraved" birthday party in Shiraz. The police unit arrested the youth recently while they were dancing together at a teenager's birthday party, and the raid came following complaints by neighbours of the popular Shiraz neighbourhood. Five of the youngsters, including two musicians, one singer and a cameraman were sentenced to suspended prison terms as well as 74 whip lashes, the paper said adding that the others were sentenced to 40 whip lashes and a cash fine.

Tehran's police chief Mohammad Mehdi Sadoughi announced that police had launched a new campaign against "depravity" among the nation's youth. "We will fight against loud music in cars, all kinds of harassment, drug users and notably fights between groups of young people" he said. Special police units equipped with new four-wheel-drive vehicles reinforced their presence in numerous northern and eastern quarters of Tehran, Iran's capital of 10 million people. As well as stopping and checking the occupants of cars, they also stepped up raids on parties in north Tehran and well-to-do residential areas, rounding up hundreds of youngsters every week-end.

July 2

Court issues arrest warrant for Aghajari. (AFP)

The Iranian judiciary issued an arrest warrant for reformist writer and journalist Hashem Aghajari, accused of having offended the nation's ruling Shiite clergy. The arrest warrant was issued by a Hamedan court and delivered to the central bureau of the Organisation of the Mujahedeen of the Islamic Revolution (OMIR) to which

* *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.*

Aghajari belongs. The warrant comes one day after press reports said Aghajari, who is close to President Mohammad Khatami, had been summoned by the court in Hamedan, where he delivered a controversial speech which shocked Iran's conservative Muslim clerics. In the speech he demanded a religious reformation of Shiism and said Muslims "should not blindly" follow religious leaders.

Jury finds managing editor of two publications guilty. (Iranian newspaper *Norooz*)

At the end of the trial of the managing editor of *Bamdad-e Now* and *Gozareh* publications the Press Jury found Abolqasem Golbaf guilty, but deserving a sentence commutation. Bench 1408 of the Tehran Public Court, presided over by Judge Saremi and before the members of the [Press] Jury, reviewed the charges against Abolqasem Golbaf and declared the session closed. According to the public relations office of Tehran Province Prosecutor-General's Office, the supervisor of the Martyr Qodduzi Judicial Complex, the Legal-Security Department of the Law Enforcement Force and the public prosecutor were among the plaintiffs against the managing editor of the publications *Bamdad-e Now* and *Gozareh*.

July 3

Kurdish language to be taught at schools in Kurd-inhabited areas. (Iranian newspaper *Norooz*)

A local weekly in Kurdistan has revealed that a committee comprising members of parliament and the cabinet was commissioned to find ways for implementing Article 15 of the Constitution [which covers teaching local languages at schools]. Jalal Jalalizadeh, MP for Sanandaj, said that: "Following an inquiry by members of the parliament representing Kurdish inhabited regions which asked the Minister of Education and the Minister of Science, Research and Technology why article 15 of the constitution was not being implemented, Science Minister [Mostafa] Mo'in reported to the Majlis to present his answer. At this meeting it was agreed to establish a committee with the presence of MPs from the committees of culture, research and national security and representatives from the Ministry of Science and the MPs belonging to the Kurdish faction at the Majlis to discuss the implementation of Article 15 of the constitution. The Minister of Science welcomed the idea of teaching Kurdish and promised to pave the way for the implementation of Article 15 of the Constitution at the cabinet office and the Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution."

July 4

Leader of the Worker Communist Party of Iran died. (Worker Communist Party of Iran web site)

On Thursday 4 July 2002, Mansoor Hekmat (Zhoobin Razani) passed away in exile at 51. He was the founder and leader of the Worker-Communist Party of Iran.

Girl escapes smugglers, exposes prostitution gang. (Iranian Students News Agency / ISNA)

A young girl reportedly escaped kidnappers. Officers of the Vice and Virtue squads came across an 18 year-old girl in the national park, named Pari [Fairy]. She was well dressed but appeared to be very disturbed and agitated. After questioning she said that she was abducted by a woman eight years earlier.

Azeris gather at fort to mark national hero's birthday despite ban. (Azerbaijani newspaper *Yeni Musavat*)*

The Baku representative office of the Congress of World Azerbaijanis reported on a massive flow of people from the [Iranian] towns of Tabriz, Ardabil, Zanjan, Qazvin and other regions to the Fort of Baz to mark the birthday of Babak [a legendary Iranian hero who fought against the Arab caliphate]. Iranian authorities reportedly fined and ordered the buses making for the Fort of Baz to return. Some of the organizers of the event have been arrested.

July 6

Journalist's 11-year sentence upheld by appeals court. (ISNA)

The appeals court upheld the court of first instance's verdict sentencing Siamak Purzand to 11 years in prison. Purzand's lawyer expressed regret about the confirmation of the sentence on his client and, asked whether or not he would resort to any of the other legal possibilities for objecting to the verdict, he replied: "According to Article 268 of the Public and Revolution Courts' regulations, there is another means of objecting to the verdict. In this article, which relates to Article 235 of the same regulations pertaining to the conditions under which the verdicts of Public and Revolution Courts can be rescinded, it has been stated that, whenever an appeal has not been lodged in the designated time or if, for any other reason, the verdict has become definite, and if the sentenced person claims that the verdict goes against the Shari'ah or the law, he can - a month after the passing of the deadline for lodging an appeal or after the verdict becoming definite - ask, via the prosecutor-general, that the verdict be rescinded. The said request would require the written submission of the request and the payment of the costs corresponding to the costs at the appeals court stage." Purzand's lawyer pointed out that, since he was a court-appointed lawyer, he had not drawn up a letter of attorney with Purzand, adding: "According to the law, the sentenced person must himself put the request for the sentence to be rescinded to the prosecutor-general and ask for an extraordinary investigation; even if the case does not involve a court-appointed lawyer, it is the sentenced person's responsibility. Since there are still a few days left for the request to be put to the prosecutor-general, I have arranged to see Purzand [who is being detained at an undisclosed location] to suggest this option to him; of course, even if the verdict is rescinded, the main sentence will be reduced by five or two years."

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

Two brothers hanged in Esfahan. (Student Movement Coordination Center for Democracy in Iran / SMCCDI)*

Two brothers were hanged in the City of Esfahan. The victims were Mehrab and Mahmood Mohammadi aged respectively 35, and 27. They were executed publicly around 06:00 PM (local time) in the Darvazeh Shiraz area of Esfahan under tight security measures. They were reportedly arrested following a gun battle with the regime's forces.

July 7

No rally to be held on anniversary of university unrest. (Islamic Republic News Agency / IRNA)

The Interior Ministry announced: "No group has a permit to hold a rally on 18 Tir [9 July 2002, which marks the anniversary of the 1378 (1999) incidents at Tehran University dormitory.] The Article 10 Committee, which is the legal authority for issuing permits for rallies, has called on groups that wish to hold a rally on 18 Tir not to do so.

Weekly faces charges for publishing picture of the Shah. (AFP)

A provincial weekly in Mashhad faced legal charges for having published the picture of a statue of Reza Shah, founder of the Pahlavi dynasty and father of Iran's last Shah. Staffers of the *Hemat* weekly which belongs to the Mashhad municipality were summoned before a local court.

Some of Iran's suffering wives look to a new solution - husband killing. (Associated Press / AP)

Married at age 13 to a man 18 years her senior, Ferdows was the wife that Iranian society expected her to be: obedient, and silent, despite the beatings and humiliation. But after 30 years of marriage, she arranged to have her husband, Hedayat, killed, authorities say. Ferdows, who has been convicted of murder and sentenced to death, is one of at least 20 Tehran women accused of murdering their husbands since February. Initially, the reports of the slayings were largely unnoticed. That changed as the number rose and Iranians began to see the killings as signs of social stresses.

Court sentences dancer to 10-year suspended jail term. (AP)

A Tehran court sentenced the country's most famous male dancer to a 10-year suspended jail term for promoting corruption among youths by setting up dance classes in the United States. The sentence bans Mohammad Khordadian from leaving Iran for 10 years, giving dance classes for life and attending public celebrations or wedding ceremonies of people who are not close relatives for three years. Khordadian told the court he had done nothing wrong. He was released from Tehran's Evin prison on July 7. The 10-year suspended jail term will be enforced if he is again found guilty by the court.

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

Sunni cleric seriously injured in assassination attempt. (AFP)

An Iranian Sunni cleric was seriously wounded in an assassination attempt in the northwest of the country. Mollah Seyed Mohammad Abubakri, the prayer leader in Rabat, close to the Sardasht region in the northwestern West- Azerbaijan province, was shot at several times by two unknown assailants as he was heading for the mosque for morning prayers. 52 cartridges were found at the scene of the incident. The cleric said he believed the attack had a political nature because he had been threatened by militants belonging to the outlawed Iran Democratic Kurdistan Party (KDPI).

Divorce made easier for wives of addicts in Iran. (Arabic news site Al-Bawaba News)

The Expediency Council decided that the courts would especially recognize cases where the addict husbands cannot drop the habit and family life is disturbed.*

July 8

Aghajari barred from leaving country. (IRNA)

The head of the Hamedan Justice Department reported that Hashem Aghajari, a member of the Organization of the Mojahedin of the Islamic Revolution [reformist group], was now barred from leaving the country. Zekrollah Ahmadi [head of Hamedan Justice Department] said: "In view of the fact that Aghajari did not report to the Hamedan Justice Department on [July 6], a summons was issued for him again but I do not know whether the summons has been delivered to him or not."

Presidential advisor defends death by stoning. (UK newspaper *The Financial Times*)

Zahra Shojaei, Iran's presidential adviser on women's issues, defended the practice of stoning women to death for the crime of adultery, saying the punishment was correct under Islamic sharia law and protects the institution of the family. "The ruling on stoning has been made with the aim of safeguarding the inviolability of the family," Mrs Shojaei said. Officials refuse to reveal how often the punishment has been carried out in Iran but cases are believed to be rare. In 2001, two such executions of women were reported by Iranian newspapers. One had taken part in the production and distribution of a pornographic home-movie, while the second had killed her husband after an affair with a younger man. The lover, being unmarried, was hanged for his role in the murder.

Publication closed down for insisting on "committing violations". (Iranian newspaper *Norooz*)

The Press Supervisory Board announced that: "Since the managing editor of the publication *Mad-e Iran* has disregarded the warnings of the board and the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance and has insisted on committing violations, the publication has been temporarily closed down. The Justice Department has been asked to investigate the case."

* Editor's Note: It is assumed by the COI Team that the decision reported here has been taken to abolish the existing arbitrariness on the implementation of the relevant law.

July 9

Iranian students clash with security forces. (Reuters)

Iranian students clashed with plainclothes security officers around Tehran University during a protest to mark the anniversary of violent student unrest which shook the Islamic Republic in 1999. Sporadic clashes between some of the 4,000 youths and officers broke out in streets and squares around the university, where Islamic vigilantes launched a bloody attack on a student dormitory in 1999, sparking six "days of rage". Some plainclothes men beat protesters and at least one journalist was injured, witnesses said. Some of the students were carried away by the agents in unmarked cars, they added. Security forces fired tear gas to try to disperse the crowds, but this could not be confirmed by witnesses. The gates of Tehran University were guarded by police, plainclothes agents and vigilante volunteers while Revolutionary Guards mounted on pick-ups and armed with batons and machine-guns patrolled the streets nearby, witnesses said. "Unity, unity, political prisoners should be freed," the youths chanted. Earlier, student leaders said they had called off a planned meeting following an Interior Ministry order banning the protest for fear "opportunistic elements" would take advantage of the situation to stoke tension. During the demonstration, some youths urged police to join them in an echo of calls which helped neutralise the Shah's security forces in 1979. Some officers responded and prevented plainclothes agents seizing a young woman dressed in a loose-fitting headscarf. Witnesses said many of the students, hugely outnumbered by security forces, had dispersed by mid-evening.

Agence France-Presse comment on the same news: Islamic militiamen clashed with thousands of young people defying a ban on rallies in the Iranian capital on the anniversary of July 1999 student unrest. The violence broke out as security forces in anti-riot gear tried to disperse between 5,000 and 6,000 students and others who gathered at Tehran University campus and in neighbouring streets. In 16-Azar Street just east of the campus, riot police fired tear- gas rounds to disperse the demonstrators. Police and secret service agents as well as the Bassij militia were out in strength to enforce the ban on all commemorations of the 1999 unrest sparked by a police raid on a student dormitory. Several people were beaten by the militia, before the crowds started to clear. Tension heightened with the arrival of far-right Hezbollah groups who positioned themselves in front of the university facing the crowds. The group, headed by Hassan Bakhshi, the father of four "martyrs" of the Iran-Iraq war, chanted slogans including: "Death to those who oppose the supreme leader's authority. Death to America." In the streets around Enghelab (Revolution) Square in the heart of the city, groups of protestors chanted slogans calling on the police to defend them from the militiamen. In a sign of "popular support" for the demonstration, entire families, parents and even their children came out of their houses to stand by and watch. However, they did not join the crowds. Teenagers said they were following calls broadcast on radio by exiled Iranian opposition groups to turn out on the streets and commemorate the student unrest anniversary and express their dissatisfaction. Later, anti-riot forces dispersed more than 1,000 people, mostly youths, who had gathered in Madar square in residential northern Tehran.

Iranian Students News Agency comment on the same news: The deputy governor-general of Tehran Province in charge of political and security affairs announced:

“There are no particular problems at the moment. Things are calming down in all the areas where there were sporadic clashes. The Law Enforcement Force was mainly complaining about the presence of the plainclothes who engaged in fights in the name of defending the system. Therefore most of the reactions of the opposition elements were then blamed on the plainclothes. Furthermore not only the Law Enforcement Force mainly complained about these but the main confrontations were with the plainclothes. However, these people constituted a group. They said they were somehow affiliated to certain [state] organizations but these organizations said these groups were not affiliated to them. I think if the security and police establishments as well as all the individuals who are responsible for security in Tehran worked harder and took more-serious and better-made decisions then these events would not take place and the problem would be resolved.” Reza'i Babadi was asked if any action will be taken to arrest some of these plainclothes? He said: “In this case a large number of them were arrested. The initial confrontation of the Law Enforcement Force was with these persons. I was on the telephone with the police commander of Greater Tehran and his main complaint was about these persons.”

Agence France-Presse comment on the same news (July 11): Iranian security forces arrested more than 200 people during banned demonstrations in Tehran and the central city of Isfahan. Some 144 young people were arrested in the Tehran protests, which were called by students but attracted other people, including families. The paper quoted an official of the Tehran governor's office saying those arrested were "not students" and were being questioned by the police. More than 94 people had been arrested in Isfahan after an "illegal" march. Shiraz in the south and Sanandaj, capital of the western province of Kordestan, were also the scene of demonstrations.

Heavy clashes reported in Tehran, Esfahan, Ahwaz and Sannandaj. (Student Movement Coordination Center for Democracy in Iran / SMCCDI)*

Heavy clashes were reported in the two cities of Esfahan and Sannandaj despite the mass arrests, carried in the last 2 days, of potential protesters . In Esfahan, thousands of residents gathered in the North Tchahar Bagh and Darvaze Shiraz areas of the town and shouted slogans against the regime and its leaders. Their actions were carried despite attacks of the security forces which resulted in tens of injured and arrested. In Sannandaj, tens of demonstrators were injured as the security forces attacked with clubs and chains the demonstrators gathered in the center of the town. Several demonstrators were seen with broken heads, nose or arms but the crowd continued its protest by arresting members of the Bassidj which were tied up to trees.

Violent clashes and massive arrests of demonstrators took place in the Haft Hose and Narmak areas in Teheran. Youth and demonstrators were attacked by the regime's forces who used of clubs, chains and Tear gas against peaceful demonstrators who defied the regime's official ban of July 9th rally. At least 2 land cruisers of the Militia were burned by Molotov Cocktails thrown from neighbouring roofs which forced the militia to come out of their patrol cars and to shoot in the air in order to open their escape way. But tens of young demonstrators have been reported as injured and arrested. A chase and run has took place in this eastern part of the streets and commandos formed by young residents are shooting slogans in the darkness of the

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

night while their comrades are throwing incendiary products on the regime's forces from the roofs. Heavy clashes have happened in several poor suburbs of Teheran, such as, Islam Shahr and Rey. Several Bassidjis but also demonstrators were seriously wounded.

Sporadic clashes and shooting, by the Islamic Republic's forces, took place in the southern City of Ahwaz (Khozestan Province). Several thousands of local residents defied the rule of the Islamic regime by coming into the streets of the city and by ignoring the injunctions of the regime's forces to avoid any gathering. Slogans against the regime were shouted when its forces opened fire in the air. The crowd broke by escaping into the streets but formed, again, the demonstration in the center of town. Several demonstrators have been injured and tens of other arrested.

July 11

Revolutionary court sentences reformist lawyer. (AFP)

An Iranian court handed a four-month prison sentence to a leading reformist lawyer and barred him from practicing law for five years. Abdolfattah Soltani, who represented dissident liberal politicians and journalists before the courts, was punished for having commented on his cases in public. The Tehran Bar Association said it would examine "without delay" the court's decision. Two other lawyers for the opposition, Nasser Zarafshan and Mohammad-Ali Dadkhah, are also being prosecuted for having commented about their clients' cases. Soltani's past clients include Akhbar Ganji, an investigative journalist, and Ezatollah Sahabi, a top member of the Iranian Freedom Movement (IFM).

July 13

Ban on newspapers for comments on the resignation of Ayatollah Jalaaluddin Taheri. (Reuters)

An Iranian press court has banned a pro-reform newspaper for publishing comments on the resignation of a top liberal cleric who hit out at alleged injustice at the very heart of the Islamic Republic. Soon after Ayatollah Jalaaluddin Taheri quit as Friday prayer leader in the central city of Isfahan this week, the powerful Supreme National Security Council moved to smother the row by banning newspapers from publishing comment on the issue. Publisher Bijan Saf-Sari said the Tehran court had banned his *Azad* daily for violating the order. Reformist publisher Mashallah Shamsolvaezin said conservative newspapers had published condemnation of Taheri's critique of the state of the nation with impunity. Taheri, in his resignation letter, accused those in power of using hardline thugs to enforce their rule.

Football players lashed. (Reuters)

Two members of the Iranian national soccer team received dozens of lashes for "moral corruption". Unnamed players had been identified by videos and photographs found in a raid on an illegal Tehran brothel. One of the players received 170 lashes and the other 70. Six players were given cash fines. The players reportedly confessed their crimes and vowed to lead an honourable life. They said they had been invited to

a party after their elimination from the 1998 World Cup finals in France where they had been "trapped" in the "vice network." The newspaper said the court procedures took 15 months to complete, but did not say when the sentences were carried out.

Managing-editor of the daily arraigned in court. (Iranian newspaper *Aftab-e Yazd*)

Managing-editor of daily *Mardom Salari* was arraigned. Ramazan Haji-Mashhadi, the lawyer for the managing-editor of daily *Mardom Salari* said: "I appeared with my client, Mostafa Kavakebian, the managing-editor of daily *Mardom Salari*, at Bench 1410 of special court for government employees and responded to 16 charges filed against him by the public prosecutor. At the end of the arraignment, the court decided not to increase the previous writ set for 100m rials. A jury trial will be scheduled following the completion of the investigation into the case."

July 14

Floggings ordered after police arrest 45 at "depraved" party. (AFP)

Iranian police arrested 45 people attending a "depraved" party, hauled them into court and saw sentences of flogging imposed. Aged between 16 and 26, they were charged with morals offences, including encouraging "corruption and illegal relationships between unmarried people". They were surprised by police while dancing at a birthday party in north Tehran. Following the four-hour trial, an undisclosed number of the accused were sentenced to flogging. Special police units equipped with new four-wheel-drive vehicles have greatly reinforced their presence in numerous northern and eastern quarters of Tehran.

July 15

Aghajari posts 250,000 dollars bail to remain free. (AFP)

Iran's reformist writer Hashem Aghajari, accused of offending ruling Shiite clergy, posted two billion rials (250,000 dollars) in bail to remain free provisionally. It was reported that the secular journalist posted bail after his second court hearing in the western town of Hamedan following his anti-clerical remarks in June 2002.

July 16

Court upholds jail sentence of murdered dissident couple's lawyer. (AFP)

Tehran's appeal court upheld a five- year jail term handed down by a military court against the family lawyer of Dariush and Parvaneh Foruhar, a dissident couple murdered in 1998 by rogue intelligence ministry agents. In March, Nasser Zarafshan was sentenced to five years in prison and 70 lashes on charges of divulging state secrets and weapons and alcohol offences after being arrested in December 2000. The appeals court approved both the prison term as well as the flogging.

Police fire tear-gas to end worker protest. (Reuters)

Iranian police fired into the air and used tear-gas to disperse thousands of workers demonstrating against changes in the Labour Law. Around 15,000 workers had gathered in front of Tehran's social security department to protest against poor working conditions and low pay and to demand the repeal of changes to the labour law that make sackings easier. Unemployed and unpaid workers have been taking to the streets frequently as President Mohammad Khatami's government struggles to liberalise the heavily state-run economy and encourage domestic and foreign private investment. Unemployment stands at 16 percent, or 3.2 million people. The government needs to create around 700,000 new jobs a year for young Iranians entering the work force just to keep the unemployment rate stable. "Police suddenly started to attack the demonstrators with wooden sticks and some workers and police were wounded," a witness told. Police later fired tear-gas and pistols to disperse the crowd, he said. "Capitalists -- leave the Labour Law alone," the workers had chanted. Some also burned pictures of the head of the social security department and chanted "We are former soldiers, now we are the hungry". The present labour law makes it nearly impossible to fire workers and imposes a wide range of benefits, including mandatory bonuses and generous severance payments. The changes allow companies to give employees temporary contracts, making it easier to dismiss them.

Worker-Communist Party of Iran [WCPI] comment on the same news:* The Islamic Republic of Iran's security forces arrested a number of workers at the 16 July mass workers' demonstration in Tehran. The workers were transported to detention centres. Some of those arrested are still in prison and were subjected to torture and mistreatment. Reports indicate that seven of the imprisoned workers were shackled together. The authorities denied any knowledge of the prisoners' existence and thereby denied any contact between them and their relatives. Following persistent efforts of relatives to contact the workers, however, the judicial authorities requested bail of at least 5 million Tomans (£4,500) to grant them temporary releases. Once the relatives of some of the detained workers produced the bail money, the authorities refused to release them. The names of these workers are: 1. Abbasgali Keypour from Melli Shoe in the city of Semnan; 2. Mohammadali Ghorzeen from Melli Shoe in the city of Semnan; 3. Parvin Taklou from Khoros Neshan Gum in Tehran; 4. Rahmat Mehtabi from Melli Ravandeh Shoe in the city of Kashan; 5. Aliasgar Zand from Maryam Textile in the city of Qom; 6. Mohammad Mirza Rezaie, Bakery worker from the city of Qom; 7. Mohammad Hassan Rassouli from Iran Tormeh (textile) in the city of Qom. A number of workers are still unaccounted for. Rejaie, a woman worker from Khoros Neshan Gum in Tehran, is among them. The authorities denied any knowledge of the whereabouts of the disappeared workers.

July 17

Managing editors of two provincial dailies summoned to court. (IRNA)

A court in Kermanshah city summoned the managing editors of two local dailies. Abdol Mohammad Zahedi of the *Avay-e Kermanshah* and Nushin Mohammada'i of

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

the *Neday-e Jame'i* were summoned to appear in court to answer to certain charges by 22 July. The managing directors are charged with "inciting public opinion" on the basis of a complaint filed by the public prosecutor and two members of Kermanshah's Ansar-e Hezbollah group.

July 18

Provincial paper editor in court. (IRNA)

The managing director of the bi-weekly *Ava-ye Maku* (Voice of Maku), Reza Monsaref, who earlier received a subpoena to appear in court, was released after posting a bail of 20m rials until the next scheduled hearing. Monsaref said that he had been informed by the court that he stands indicted of 16 causes of action. He said MP Mohammad Abbaspur from Maku had filed a complaint against his publication, charging it of spreading rumours, corrupting public opinion, vilifying MPs and sowing discord among the people.

Iran killer, rapist to be thrown off cliff in sack. (Reuters)

An Iranian man, convicted for raping and killing his 16-year-old nephew, will be executed by being thrown off a cliff in a sack. If the unnamed man survives the fall down a rocky precipice, he will be hanged, legal experts said. He has 20 days to appeal the court sentence. The killer was arrested last year in the northwestern city of Mashhad after "seducing" and killing his nephew, who worked as an assistant at the man's carpenter's workshop.

Provincial paper's managing editor summoned to court. (IRNA)

The managing director of *Ferdows* publication based in Mashhad, Khorasan, Mohammad Hoseyn Nazeri, was summoned to court following complaints raised by the provincial police. The head of the provincial police department, General Eskandar Mo'meni, charged Nazeri of provoking the April 2002 unrest in the province and of spreading rumours.

July 19

Clashes in Esfahan. (SMCCDI)*

Another clash rocked Esfahan when members of the local militia attacked hundreds of residents who had gathered in front of Ayatollah Taheri's home. Taheri's personal guard had to intervene in defense of the victims as the militiamen used guns and knives during the attack. At least 4 militiamen and two of the Ayatollah Taheri's guards have been reportedly killed during this clash which has left several injured as well.

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

July 20

Leader of reformist party in Qom summoned to court. (Iranian newspaper *Norooz*)

Hadi Qabel, chairman of the [Islamic Iran] Participation Front, was summoned to the Special Clerical Court in Qom. Qabel said: "I asked for the accusations to be explained to me and demanded that the plaintiff be named. They said that the complaint had been filed by the public prosecutor and that the charges would not be explained because, in this case, a writ of bail should be issued." The member of the Central Committee of [Islamic Iran] Participation [Front] said that, during the session, he answered the questions asked by an interrogator. He said that most of the questions were about his speeches in Esfahan in the month of Muharram. He added that the main topic of those speeches was Ashura [the anniversary of Imam Husayn's death] and human rights. He said: "Whereas the questions had been selected out of context, we agreed that the court should prepare the full text of the speeches and call me by phone for the next sessions." Two years ago, following a complaint filed by seven members of the Elections' Executive Board in Qom, the Special Clerical Court gave Hadi Qabel a 15-month prison sentence on charges of disseminating falsehood and harming others.

July 23

Torture survivor gets one-year jail for torture claim. (Reuters)

An Iranian court sentenced a man who said he had been tortured by secret agents to one year in prison for inciting public opinion and acting against state security. Pictures showing the back and arms of reformist activist Vahid Sadeqi covered in bruises and burns were published on the Internet earlier this year. He said at the time he had been tortured while under detention by intelligence agents. After his subsequent police arrest, Sadeqi retracted his statement and said he had asked a friend to wound him then dump his body in front of the house of a religious-nationalist dissident in order to claim political asylum in the West. Sadeqi also received a three-year suspended sentence. He has 20 days to appeal the verdict.

Law-Enforcement Force intervenes to disperse demonstrators in Quchan. (Iranian TV)

A group of people from Quchan staged an assembly in protest at the way in which Khorasan Province is being divided. During the assembly, which was held with the permission of the Interior Ministry in the Imam Square of Quchan, those assembled chanted slogans calling for the establishment of a Northern Khorasan Province with its capital in Quchan. The representative of the people of Quchan in the Islamic Consultative Majlis, as well as a member of the Islamic Council of the city of Quchan, made remarks during the assembly, emphasizing that they wanted a Northern Khorasan Province with its capital in Quchan. At the end of the assembly, a group of people blocked the Quchan-Bojnurd road and prevented the passage of vehicles. They smashed the windows of a number of vehicles, as well as the windows of the highway patrol station of Quchan. They were dispersed when the Law-Enforcement intervened to bring the situation under control.

Al-Bawaba comment on the same news: Police in Iran are detaining eighty demonstrators in the northeastern province of Khorasan after a legal protest against its reorganization was marred by rioting. 100 people were arrested after the demonstration in the town of Quchan, but twenty of them were later released without charge. In Sabzevar, another Khorasan town that did not make the grade, violent protests in August last year left at least one person dead, according to media reports. A total of 154 demonstrators were arrested there, of whom 34 were eventually sent to jail.

Neyshabur people stage rally to voice demands on Khorasan division plan. (ISNA)

A group of people of Neyshabur [city in eastern province of Khorasan] staged a rally in the morning to defend the central status of their city in the plan on division of Khorasan Province. The participants chanted some slogans and voiced their demands and expectations from the plan. In this rally, the secretary of the HQ for Defence of Neyshabur's Centrality, the chairman of the city's local council, and the president of the Neyshabur Studies Centre delivered speeches about the scientific, economic and cultural potentials and capabilities of the city. At the end of this rally, a seven-point resolution was read out which was unanimously approved by the participants. A part of this resolution said one of the main demands the people of Neyshabur was to use the scientific views of the experts to determine which city is going to become the provincial capital. This completely peaceful and calm demonstration had received a permit from the office of Neyshabur's governor. The demonstration was held in the city's Dr Ali Shari'ati street.

July 24

***Norooz* suspended six months, director jailed. (AFP)**

A Tehran court upheld the verdict to suspend a leading reformist paper for six months and to sentence its director to six months in prison. The *Norooz* paper is to be suspended for six months as of July 25. MP Mohsen Mirdamadi, its director, who also heads the parliamentary foreign affairs committee, was sentenced by the appeals court to six months and two days in prison. Mirdamadi was also barred from any journalistic activity for four years and was fined two million rials (250 dollars). But it was not clear if and when he would begin his prison term. The MP was found guilty for several charges, notably: "17 cases of anti-regime propaganda, insulting leaders, publishing lies, encouraging hooligans to undermine public order, propagating moral decadence." Those who brought charges against him were mainly the Revolutionary Guards, the legal chief of state radio-television, and the electoral supervision office. Mirdamadi sparked controversy in early May 2002 and angered conservatives when he insisted secret talks had taken place between the Iranian and US officials.

Iran TV shows dissident "confessing" to be spy. (Reuters)

Iran's state television broadcast what it called confessions of espionage by a liberal dissident who is serving an 11-year jail sentence for alleged attempts to undermine the Islamic Republic. Writer and journalist Siamak Pourzand was arrested in 2001 and convicted of charges from ties to U.S.-based opposition groups to efforts to spread

corruption and poisoning the minds of young people. Pourzand, 73, appeared frail but animated, nervously using his hands to make his points during an interview with journalists from the state media. The television, run by conservatives, repeatedly ran the film with a voice-over in its main news bulletins. "My goal was to foster cultural promiscuity and create disillusionment among young people," Pourzand was quoted as saying. "My friends and I planned to promote Western culture, violate (Islamic) sanctities and work for the creation of a secular state." He also confessed to receiving money from opposition groups to finance reformist publications in Iran to "pursue goals dictated from outside," the television said. Iranian newspapers said that some journalists had been summoned to the moral police headquarters in connection with Pourzand's case. The television said Pourzand had exposed links between his wife and associates of the former Shah. "In recent years she has been active in promoting Western-style freedoms and negating the Islamic dress code for women. She gave me articles on these subjects and I published them," he was quoted as saying. Kar has said her husband is suffering from a heart ailment and that he has been coerced into making false confessions.

Iran police announce "social corruption" crackdown. (Reuters)

Iranian police begun a crackdown on "social corruption" with a new force patrolling the capital Tehran to enforce the Islamic Republic's strict laws on moral behaviour. "Sixty special patrols were formed to deal with obvious offences in society," police public relations chief Hassan Zakeri said. He said the new force would concentrate on arresting drug addicts, the "socially corrupt", those harassing women and people exhibiting un-Islamic behavior. Residents observed burly bearded men cruising the streets in black four-wheel drive vehicles over the last month, but there had been no official word on who they were.

Woman who blinded man sentenced to be blinded. (AFP)

A court in southwest Iran condemned a young woman to be blinded after she blinded a man who was harassing her by throwing acid at him. Azam, 21, a resident of Behbahan village in Khuzestan province told the court that Abol Ali, 37, would come and "harass" her at night while her husband was away at work. "One night, he threatened me with a firearm, and said he would climb over the wall if I did not open the door. "I remembered I had some ... acid in the kitchen to unblock sinks. So I opened the window and threw it at his face," Azam was quoted as saying during her trial. Ali, now blind, gave a different account. "This woman is wrong, I wanted only to warn her about something. As I went by her house, she opened the window, called me, and threw something at my face and chest. After that, I remember nothing," he explained. The judge ruled that Ali had only "words, not actions" to be blamed for, and said Azam "was not in a situation of self- defense, and should not have taken justice into her own hands." He sentenced her "to be made blind in public", but Azam has appealed the verdict.

Family of murdered lawyer placed under pressure. (SMCCDI)*

The family members of a lawyer who was a well-known political activist were placed under pressure in order to avoid any public comment about the murder, which

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

happened a week ago. The victim, Mohamad Reza Safai, was gunned down in front of his home, located near Azadi avenue, by an armed commando of two circulating aboard a motorcycle. He was involved in the organization of the July 16th Workers rally and the public denunciation of the official resolution which intended to simulate the workers allegiance to the regime's leader. Sources said that Safai's family members had been warned against making any interview with any abroad based radio or TV and been requested to let the official investigation to take place in order to determine the identities of the murderers.

July 25

Iranian armed opposition says Iranian agents shelled Iraqi camp. (AFP)

Iran's main armed opposition movement, the People's Mujahedin (PMOI), accused persons sent by the Iranian government of shelling one of its camps in Iraq, named Camp Anzali, 30 kilometers from the Iran-Iraq border and on the edge of the town of Jalawla, using 60mm mortars, the Iraq-based group said in a statement. "The Mujahedin did not suffer any losses, but the mortars hit residential areas near the camp. Several mortar shells landed close to a residential house", they said. The incident, which occurred at about 1:00 a.m., was "the 138th attack by the mullahs' regime against the Iranian resistance in Iraq since 1993," it said.

July 27

Court dissolves long tolerated opposition group, jails 33 members. (AFP)

A Tehran court dissolved a liberal opposition party and sentenced 33 of its members to up to 10 years in jail. The 33 members of the long-tolerated Iran Freedom Movement (IFM), who were picked up in a crackdown last year, were found guilty of "attempting to overthrow the regime". Twenty-one received terms of between nine months and 10 years, and 12 terms of between four months and two years coupled with a fine of between 10 million and 30 million rials (1,250 and 3,750 dollars). Another eight of the 52 party members put on trial were fined between 10 million and 50 million rials (between 1,250 and 6,250 dollars), while 11 were acquitted. Court officials said the heaviest terms were reserved for two former ministers -- Hashem Sabarian, who was sentenced to 10 years and Mohammad Tavasoli who was sentenced to nine. The liberal Islamist IFM, which had been largely tolerated until the March 2001 round-up, was founded in the 1960s by the Islamic Republic's first prime minister, Mehdi Bazargan, and was known as close with Khatami's reformist camp. "The revolutionary tribunal has no right to order the dissolution of a political party," Yazdi told. "The trial of a political party like the IFM must be held before the appropriate court and in the presence of jurists." The opposition leader, who is himself a former foreign minister, also rejected the conviction of his supporters, saying it was the court that was damaging Iran's security and not his party. "(The defendants) are accused of acting against national security even though the intelligence minister (Ali Yunesi) recently told MPs that these accusations were baseless," complained Yazdi. "None of the words which the revolutionary tribunal attributes to the accused in its verdict is accepted by the accused themselves and no members of the party said

anything which might justify the charges levelled against them. "We will not accept the verdicts, which are themselves a threat to national security at a time when the country is facing renewed threats from abroad."

Exiled Iranian Kurd official seriously injured in northern Iraq. (Islamic Unity Movement of Iraqi Kurdistan newspaper *Regay Yekbun*)

A *peshmarga* [fighter] of the Revolutionary Union of Iranian Kurdistan, Karim Ahmadpur was fired upon and seriously wounded by unknown persons, close to his house in Tayrawah District, Arbil city. Islamic Unity Movement of Iraqi Kurdistan said "this act is part of a series of acts being committed every now and then against the freedom fighters and peshmergas of Iranian Kurdistan political parties who are living in [Iraqi] Kurdistan region. Over the last two months, many well-known writers and intellectuals, politicians and peshmergas from Iranian Kurdistan are threatened with death in letters and other types of psychological pressure. Thus, for a while these intellectuals and steadfast people have had no choice but to leave through the dangerous route of Turkey towards exile".

July 28

Judge gets 10 years in jail for pimping. (AFP)

An Iranian revolutionary court judge was sentenced to 10 and a half years in jail for pimping and the illegal detention of a 17-year-old girl, court sources said. The judge in the Tehran satellite town of Karaj was found guilty of having covered up for a brothel where 17 girls were detained, many of them as young as seven. They said the judge, whom they identified only by his first name Hadi, had confined a 17-year-old who went missing several months ago before being found by her father in a brothel. Hadi was also sentenced to 90 lashes of the whip and barred from any post in the judiciary, and will have to return a total of 625,000 dollars in bribes received from the brothel owners. Seventeen others were convicted in the same case and handed lesser sentences, the sources said.

"Illegal books" seized, inspectorate body's involvement noted. (IRNA)

Deputy Culture and Islamic Guidance Minister Ali Asghar Ramezanzpur said that in the past eight months, about 200,000 illegal books were seized from the market and legal actions were taken against 35 unauthorized printing centres. Ramezanzpur told reporters that 7,000 copies of illegal books had been seized only in the past two weeks and now nearly 90 complaints have brought up against the publishers. Also, in the past three months, about 1,600 books were scrutinized by the Inspectorate Organization, said the official, adding that judicial actions against the publication of certain books were supported by complaints raised against them.

July 31

Court orders “armed robber”’s hand cut off in public. (Iranian newspaper *Kayhan*)

Bench 3 of Shiraz Revolution Court ordered the right hand of an armed robber, found guilty of warring [against God] by committing armed robbery, to be cut off in public. The robber, 28 year-old Rahim S, was arrested a few days ago during an armed robbery at the Anvari branch of Sepah Bank. During interrogation he confessed to having previously committed armed robbery at a branch of Mellat Bank.

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