

## Chronology of Events in Iran, September 2002\*

### September 1

#### **Court grants first "blood money" to a Christian. (Reuters)**

An Iranian court has for the first time granted the family of a murdered Christian man the same "blood money", or compensation, as that of a Muslim. The ruling was part of moves to give Iran's non-Muslim minorities the same right as Muslims to have killers pay their victims' families to avoid execution. The court in a south Tehran suburb granted the family of Christian pastor Haik Hovsepian-Mehr 150 million rials (\$18,750). The blood money for a non-Muslim man had earlier been one-twelfth that of a Muslim under Iran's Islamic laws. Judiciary head Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi recently asked courts to pass equal judgements in such cases and the parliament is to debate a formal legal change. Hovsepian-Mehr, a Protestant pastor, was killed under mysterious circumstances in 1994. Authorities blamed an exiled opposition group for his killing. Western human rights groups said the murder might have been part of alleged extra-judicial killings of dissidents. Official media said the blood money was to be paid from public funds, which is usual in unresolved killings. (\$1=8,000 rials).

### September 2

#### **House destruction and unrest in Karadj. (Student Movement Coordination Centre for Democracy in Iran / SMCCDI)\***

Authorities reportedly decided to demolish more homes in the "Zoor-Abad" area of Karadj. The decision to resume the destruction of homes which are qualified as unauthorized follows the bloody clashes that rocked the area and resulted in tens of injured among the angry residents and the security forces on August 29.

#### **Martial Law instated in Konarak. (SMCCDI)\*\***

Martial Law has reportedly been instated in Konarak located in Sistan and Balouchestan province following the bloody clashes that rocked the city. Hundreds of militiamen of the Bassidj and the Special Units of the Pasdaran Corps were transferred from the eastern borders and the Chah-Bahar Military Center in order to back the local troops and to avoid the spread of the unrest to other cities of the

---

\* *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.

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

province. SMCCDI alleged that, following the amnesty granted to a militiaman accused of raping a local 9 years old girl, residents rebelled, causing bloody clashes and several arrests.

### **Expatriates will be given passports. (Iranian TV)**

The Deputy Foreign Minister for consular and parliamentary affairs said that new facilities will be provided for Iranians who reside in foreign countries and foreign tourists to enable them to enter the country. Mr Hadi said that Iranian embassies will issue passports to all Iranians who have obtained foreign passports and this will also include those who have done so without consulting the authorities beforehand and without obtaining its prior agreement. Mr Hadi said that, so far, the problems caused by the illegal exit of 15,000 Iranians had been resolved and that they faced no difficulties returning to the country. According to this statement, those who have left the country illegally, may go to Iranian embassies, fill in the relevant forms and pay the necessary amount of money. Then they will be able to return to the country after a while.

The Deputy Foreign Minister for consular affairs also said that conscription no longer constituted an obstacle to their return and Iranians who reside in foreign countries can return to the country without worrying about this issue.

### **September 3**

#### **Imprisoned student given temporary prison leave. (Iranian newspaper *Iran Daily*)**

A jailed university student, Ahmad Batebi, has been granted a temporary leave for one month. Batebi, who was imprisoned in the wake of the 1999 unrests of Tehran University dorm complex incident, said that he is presently a student at Payam-e Nur University and studying social sciences in the long-distance program.

### **September 4**

#### **Supreme Court upholds imprisonment for MP. (Reuters)**

Iran's Supreme Court upheld a seven-month jail term against a reformist parliamentarian for spreading lies and propaganda against the state. The jail sentence against Mohammad Dadfar is likely to fan factional disputes over parliamentary immunity which has erupted after hardline courts convicted other reformist deputies over verbal attacks on conservatives. Dadfar, a member of the leading reformist Islamic Iran Participation Front, received a three months jail term for "insulting the members of the Supreme National Security Council in a speech" and another four months for "making propaganda against the Islamic Republic" in a newspaper article. The same court also fined the deputy from the southern province of Bushehr two million rials (\$250) for publishing lies to incite public opinion. Several other reformist parliamentarians, including the chairman of parliament's Foreign Affairs Commission, Mohsen Mirdamadi, have received jail terms but have yet to be imprisoned.

### **Cafes shut down for hosting "unaccompanied women". (AFP)**

Iranian authorities shut down 10 cafes in Karaj for lacking operating permits and for opening their doors to "unaccompanied women" and "delinquents on the run". The cafes, in a residential area in Karaj, did not have the proper authorizations to operate, the town's chief legal officer, Gholamreza Rostami, said. Rostami said the cafes had become popular with "unaccompanied women, children, drug addicts" as well as "delinquents on the run".

### **Oil refinery workers shut down pipelines in Tabriz. (SMCCDI)\***

Several workers of the Tabriz Oil Refinery reportedly shut down the gas pipelines and started a partial strike in order to protest against their poor conditions. 18 workers were reportedly fired on the basis of reports by intelligence. The workers requested the immediate payment of their unpaid wages, the return of their expelled colleagues and the end of the repressive measures in their facilities.

## **September 5**

### **Lawyers for political activists complain to president and Majlis. (Iranian Students News Agency / ISNA)**

The weekly meeting of a group of lawyers involved in the national, political and press cases was held at the offices of the Lawyers Association. Present at the meeting were Dr. Mohsen Rahami, Seyyed Mohammad Seifzadeh, Abdolfath Soltani, Mohammad Ali Dadkhah, Mohammad Sharif, Yusef Mowla'i, Mohammad Ali Jedari Foroghi, the lawyer for Dr. Naser Zarafshan. Bahman Keshavarz, the head of the Lawyers Association, spoke about the steps which have been taken towards defending the legal rights of lawyers who have been convicted by various courts. At the end of the meeting the participating lawyers prepared an open letter to the president and Majlis deputies which was then signed by more than 25 lawyers. The letter addressed to the President said that a number of lawyers who have signed this letter were involved in the defence of the sensitive and national dossiers involving the journalistic and political matters. According to lawyers, "certain individuals" were standing against these lawyers by using "illegal methods and to form unusual cases, unprecedented in Iranian history, against these lawyers in order to force them to abandon the above mentioned dossiers, and to force the community of lawyers into silence". Lawyers said, according to articles 15 and 17 of the Bill on the Independence of Lawyers Association, the courts lack powers for issuing verdicts that could deny the lawyers the practice of their profession.

## **September 7**

### **Political activist goes on trial behind closed doors. (Iranian newspaper *Aftab-e Yazd*)**

Mohammad Mehdi Ardehali, accompanied by his lawyer Yusef Sharifi, went on trial at Tehran's Revolution Court branch 26 where he defended himself against accusations.

---

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

## September 9

### **Violent protest in Esfahan reported. (SMCCDI)\***

According to the Los Angeles-based opposition movement SMCCDI, an accident in Esfahan caused sudden clashes between young protestors and security forces. According to these allegations, the cause of protests was a rumour that the accident, reportedly causing the death of young persons, was the result of a shooting made by Bassidjis against a driver who did not obey the order to stop. Security forces suppressed the protest by using force, causing several injuries.

## September 10

### **Riot after alcohol smugglers killed in Mahabad. (Agence France-Presse / AFP)**

Rioting broke out in Mahabad, after police killed three people smuggling alcoholic beverages. Relatives of the smugglers gathered outside the city's courthouse and ransacked the building and other public places, including several banks. Two employees at the courthouse were injured. 16 protestors were arrested.

## September 11

### **Tension reported, police try to stop September 11 vigils. (UK newspaper *The Financial Times*).**

Iranian riot police resembling robo-cops roared around areas of central Tehran, determined to snuff out any candle-lit vigils on the anniversary of the attacks in the US. Exiled opposition groups had called on Iranians to light candles in public places. Islamist militiamen, in plainclothes, were stationed around the square in large numbers, ready to intervene. Police kept traffic and pedestrians moving. Riot police were also seen at Noor Square while regular police were stationed at Mother's Square where, one year ago, small groups of Iranians gathered to light candles for the victims of the attacks on New York and Washington before being dispersed. It was not immediately known if any arrests were made at night. The small Iran Pak party that contributed to organising last year's vigil said that this year conditions were not right, and that there was "domestic pressure" not to hold any ceremony.

**SMMCDI comment on the same news:**\* It was reported that several young girls boys are held in the LEF Command Centers, such as those located in the Zandjan avenue and the Police Station of Narmak. The latter is reportedly keeping about 65 girls. Several female and male mourners have been reported as being kept in the Khatam-ol-Anbia Medical facility as they were wounded during the intervention by security forces.

**Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty RFE/RL comment on the same news:** Anonymous leaflets calling on Iranians to commemorate the anniversary of the 11 September 2001 attacks against the United States were distributed in Tehran towards 11 September. Conservative press urged the security forces to prevent such commemorations.

---

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

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

### **Protest demonstration by Qerqereh Zeba workers. (Organization of Fadaiian – Minority website)\***

The protest by Qerqereh Zeba workers, which started a month and a half ago after dismissal of about 600 workers, continues. Qerqereh Zeba workers launched a widespread campaign against dismissal of colleagues after the board of directors of the factory affiliated with Bonyad Mostazafan announced the decision.

### **September 14**

#### **Appeals court lifts ban on dancer convicted of corruption. (Associated Press / AP)**

An appeals court has lifted a travel ban on Iran's best-known male dancer, but upheld his conviction for corrupting youth by teaching dancing. The new ruling means that Mohammad Khordadian is free to leave Iran and return to the United States, where he is a naturalized citizen. The court also reduced by half the suspended jail term of 10 years handed down to Khordadian in July.

#### **Report of clash between Azeris and Iranian police in West Azarbayjan province, denied by Islamic Republic. (Azerbaijani TV station ANS)**

A serious clash and casualties between the police and Azeris in Iranian Azerbaijan reported. It was also reported that, fearing that the situation could get out of control, Tehran brought extra forces to the town of Mahabad in West Azarbayjan Province. The Azerbaijani embassy in Iran has neither denied nor confirmed this report. However, the press secretary of the Iranian embassy in Azerbaijan, Izatollah Jalali, said that he knew nothing about this incident. Jalali claimed that the said report was forged.

### **September 15**

#### ***Golestan-e Iran* daily banned. (ISNA)**

The managing-editor of *Golestan-e Iran* daily reported to Bench 1410 of Tehran Public Court, after receiving a writ of summons. The managing-editor asked for 10 days to prepare his response to the accusations made against him. Judge Mortazavi approved his request and issued a writ of bail for five million tumans for him. Based on this report, Judge Mortazavi issued a writ for temporary banning of the newspaper based on Articles 12 and 13 of Security Action Law and Article 28 and Paragraph 2, 10 and 11 and Note 2 of Article 6 of the Press Code.

#### **Wife of political activist summoned to court. (Iranian newspaper *Aftab-e Yazd*)**

Marziyeh Langerudi, the wife of political dissident, Habibollah Payman, has been summoned to court on charges of acting against the security of the country. She was arrested along with her husband on 21 Esfand 79 [11 March 2001] at the home of [Mohammad] Bastehnegar [dissident currently on trial on charges of subversion] and she was released several days later.

---

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

### **Banned future university students protest. (SMCCDI)\***

Tens of future students who were banned from entering the Iranian universities or transferred to remote academic institutions reportedly protested for the 2nd consecutive day in front of the Office for the Appreciation of Studies in Tehran. These future university students were subject to investigation by the "Edare-ye Herrassat-e Daneshgah-ha" (Office of Surveillance of Universities) and judged as "problematic students".

### **September 16**

#### **Court summons writer, publisher of book on homosexuality. (Iranian newspaper *Resalat*)**

The author and publisher of a book on homosexuality have been ordered to present themselves to the court after purchasing all the copies of the book from distributors and book shops. The managing editor of the periodical *Ferdows*, Javad Yasinian, had published the book. He said: "In accordance with instructions of the judge, the writer and I have been ordered to buy back all the copies distributed to book shops. Moreover, we have been ordered to present ourselves to the court next week." The book alleges that prominent figures of the Iranian literature and poetry were homosexuals. In addition, the book criticizes the Islamic instructions for harshly condemning homosexuals.

### **September 17**

#### **Two convicts executed publicly. (Reuters)**

Six men were hanged in Iran in the last two days and six others face the same sentence after being convicted on charges ranging from murder to armed robbery. The four convicted murderers were executed inside Tehran's Qasr prison at dawn on Monday. The other two, who were executed in public in southern Iran in the morning, were described as an armed robber and a drug smuggler. Six members of a gang of men who were found guilty of kidnapping and raping women in the capital would also be publicly executed in Tehran in the next few days.

### **September 19**

#### **Prison riot in Mahabad. (AFP)**

One policeman died and two others were injured during an attempted prison break-out in Mahabad. The director general of prisons in Western Azerbaijan province, Ebrahim Safari, stated that the death resulted from a shoot-out that erupted when several prisoners attacked a prison guard, smashed windows, and took a policeman hostage. He said two prisoners were also hurt.

---

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

## September 22

### **Jury finds newspaper editor guilty. (AFP)**

A Tehran press jury has found the editor of the Persian daily *Hambastegi*, Gholamheydar Ebrahimbay-Salami, guilty on a series of charges, including libel, publishing lies and instigating public opinion. The Tehran Justice Department issued a statement saying the jury convicted the editor on charges brought by several people, including one by the head of the supervisory Guardians Council, Ahmad Jannati. Salami was also convicted on charge of propagating against the Islamic Republic in his publication, but the jury exonerated him of other indictments and announced him deserving leniency in punishment. The editor faced at least 53 counts of complaints in the court, brought by several institutions, including the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting, the State Inspectorate Organization, police and the daily *Kayhan*. Salami, who is also a Majlis representative from the northeastern constituency of Khaf and Roshtkhar in Khorassan province, is now awaiting sentence. Salami was called to appear before court first in July for publishing articles which complained of lack of security in Iranian universities and of prostitution gangs as well as alleged restrictions imposed by the Guardians Council and the arbitative Expediency Council on the parliament.

### **Azeri dancers arrested. (Turkish news agency Anatolian News Agency)**

Members of an Azeri group, visiting a Mashad porcelain factory on the occasion of the birthday of the First Shiite Imam Ali, were arrested for mixed dancing. The director of the factory was also arrested upon arrest warrant by a court. They were barred from leaving the country pending investigation and trial.

## September 25

### **Sixty arrested at youth party in Shiraz. (AFP)**

A unit of Iran's Basij Islamic militia arrested close to 60 people attending a "depraved" party in Shiraz. The group were being detained pending trial, and the Basij forces had seized video film of the party as well as quantities of alcohol. Private parties have been subject to a recent wave of raids by Islamic militiamen. Punishments for attending such soirees include hefty fines, imprisonment terms and flogging.

### **Worker protest in Ahwaz (SMCCDI)\***

In the city of Ahwaz, a peaceful gathering by workers of the Pipe Construction Company of Khoozestan was dispersed by members of the Pasdaran. Several workers defended themselves with pieces of pipes carried in sign of protest while their colleagues shouted slogans, such as, "Ma Gorossne-im" (We're Hungry) and "Sal e Adl e Ali, in hame bi Edalati!" (The year of Ali and so much injustice). Student protests took place at the Amir Kabir University and the Azad Agricultural University.

---

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

## September 28

### **Student leader not released. (Iranian opposition Alliance of Iranian Students web site)\***

Ahmad Batebi, one of the leaders of July 1999 demonstrations, was reportedly released from prison according to a report by the Alliance of Iranian Students on September 1. However, the father of Ahmad Batebi stated that the president of the Islamic Court rejected the request for the extension of Ahmad Batebi's suspension from prison.

## September 29

### **Alleged rape gang hanged in various districts of Tehran at dawn. (AFP)**

A gang of five men convicted of rape and extortion have been hanged at dawn across Tehran. Each member of the gang, dubbed the "black vultures" by police, were executed in a different district of Tehran.

### **Violent protest in Eslamshahr. (SMCCDI)\*\***

The SMCCDI reported violent protests in the town of Eslamshahr south of Tehran. According to this report, hundreds of local residents clashed with government forces resulting in several arrests and injuries among the local population as well as destruction of several militia patrol cars. Protest was to avoid the destruction of several homes by the municipality, on the grounds that houses were not licenced.

## September 30

### **A man and a woman reportedly stoned to death. (Workers Left Unity – Iran web site)\*\*\***

According to press reports in Iran , a woman, Goli Nikkhoo was stoned to death in late September , accused of committing adultery, Goli Nikkhoo had already spent 11 years in prison. Her alleged lover, Yunesh Asadi was also stoned to death in the city of Naghadeh at the end of September 2002.

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

---

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

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

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