

## Chronology of Events in Iran, August 2004\*

### August 1

#### **Journalist in secret trial in Qom. (Iran News Daily website)**

The court investigating charges against Mojtaba Lotfi, a journalist and writer for *Naqshineh* website, is underway behind closed doors in Qom. The managing editor of *Naqshineh* website said that Lotfi has been in custody for 69 days. He said: "We are asking for an open court to try the journalist in the presence of his lawyer and a jury."

#### **Iran extradites Egyptian opposition figure. (Iran News Daily website)**

Iran has turned over a suspected Egyptian Islamist to the authorities in Cairo. Muhammad Khalil was based in the holy city of Mashhad before being netted by Iranian police. Khalil is a member of al-Jamaat al-Eslamiah Organization, which advocates peaceful struggle. Khalil left Egypt in the mid-1980s and toured the Arab nations before he settled in Tehran to work with the state-run Radio Palestine.

### August 3

#### **Iranian editor released on bail a year after arrest. (Agence France Presse / AFP)**

An Iranian newspaper editor arrested more than a year ago for publishing a front-page photograph of banned opposition People's Mujahedeen leader Maryam Rajavi has been freed after paying a huge bail. Soghi Baghernia, the managing director and license holder of the *Asia Financial Daily*, said her husband Iraj Jamshidi -- the paper's editor-in-chief -- was released from Tehran's Evin prison. The release came after she submitted the title deeds of her printing house to match the 4.5-billion-rial (517,000-dollar) bail. She said her husband was facing 11 charges, including propagating against the Islamic regime, relations with a foreign group and bribery. In addition, he is also still facing charges related to the front-page photo of Rajavi that the paper carried in July 2003 and which initially landed him into trouble. He has already paid bail of two billion rials (230,000 dollars) to go free on that charge. Jamshidi has pleaded not guilty to the charges. According to the media watchdog Reporters Without Borders (RSF), Jamshidi was kept in solitary confinement for more than 200 days during his 13 months behind bars, and was also barred from receiving visits from family or lawyers for several months.

#### **Jailed Iranian reformist journalist continues hunger strike. (Iranian newspaper *Etemaad*)**

It is reported that Heshmatollah Tabarzadi secretary-general of Iran's Democratic Front, who has been on hunger strike in jail since [July 28] in protest to the way his case has been handled within 2003, has begun his sixth day of strike. Tabarzadi who

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\* 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.

is has been detained since June 2003 was meant to be released on bail a week ago. He is on hunger strike for delay in his freedom since last Wednesday.

## **August 6**

### **Convicted kidnapper hanged in Zahedan. (AFP)**

A convicted kidnapper has been hanged publicly in the city of Zahedan in the province of Sistan Baluchestan. Yusof Porsheh was charged with a series of armed robberies, opening fire on police, escape from jail and kidnapping as well as disturbing and terrifying people.

### **Journalist appears in court over banned book. (Iranian newspaper *Iran Daily*)**

Pro-reform journalist, Emadeddin Baqi, and his lawyer, Saleh Nikbakht, appeared in Tehran Public Court's Branch 1083 over a complaint lodged by the Intelligence Ministry. Baqi is accused of spreading fabrications and writing a book entitled "Tragedy of Democracy in Iran" which has been banned. Baqi said he had told Judge Eslami that the contents of his book had earlier been published in the format of newspaper articles and he was tried twice for the same articles. "I was once tried in Press Court's Branch 1410 during which I was sentenced to three years in jail. Later the Islamic Revolutionary Court focused on the security issues of my dossier," he said. Baqi pointed out that when a presiding judge passes the verdict on a case, it cannot be prosecuted again in another court.

## **August 7**

### **Tehran prisons' head denies detainee on hunger strike. (Iranian Students News Agency / ISNA)**

The director-general of Tehran Province's prisons said that [Heshmatollah] Tabarzadi was only refraining from eating prison food, but he was consuming water, tea and tinned foods. He said that someone who goes on strike does not consume any food and is treated in accordance with prison regulations about hunger strikes. He said that no action has been taken against him on the basis of the regulations.

## **August 8**

### **Hamedan judiciary orders lashes for loud music. (AFP)**

The judiciary in the western Iranian province of Hamedan has ordered that anyone caught playing thumping tunes in their cars should be subject to jail terms or lashes. "Playing any type of music loud in the vehicles is regarded as a crime and violators will be dealt by legal measures," Hamedan province's judiciary stated. "The creation of any noise or racket, or unusual behaviour that disturbs public order and calm are considered crimes which deserve imprisonment from three months to one year with 74 lashes," the statement said.

### **Disciplinary Committee convicts Yazd University students. (Iran News Daily website)**

Three members of Yazd University Republican Students Association Behrouz Khaleqi, Mehdi Heydari and Navid Gholami were sentenced by the disciplinary committee to 'change their place of study' because of their political activities.

## August 9

### **Iranian police warns women not to dress up like "models". (AFP)**

The chief of Iran's police has told women not to dress up like "models", amid fresh signs of a mounting crackdown on skimpy dressers still defying the Islamic Republic's dress code. "In accordance with the law, the police are confronting people who appear in public in an indecent and inappropriate way, and who are regarded by the law enforcement officials as models," police chief Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said. "This is social deviancy and cannot be solved by normal police operations," Ghalibaf added. Noting that many arrests have taken place in the past two months, he said one of the initiatives in dealing with poorly-veiled women and girls was to invite their parents to meetings organised by the police. For the past several months police have been carrying out a series of operations across the capital Tehran, rounding up large numbers of young women sporting flimsy headscarves, three-quarter length trousers and shape-revealing coats. Witnesses said the detainees -- picked up in parks, fast food restaurants or from sidewalks -- have been briefly hauled into police stations and subjected to lessons on morality before being freed. Women ignoring the Islamic dress code can be jailed for up to two months or fined between 50,000 and 500,000 rials.

## August 10

### **Reformist daily banned in Iran two days after resuming publication. (Iranian newspaper *Jomhuri-ye Eslami*)**

The managing director of *Nasimi-e Saba* said that the newspaper was banned by the Press Court. The publication of *Nasim-e Saba* had earlier been halted because of some problems and a change in the management. Rasul Montajabnia said: "The paper has been banned without the newspaper's personnel having been informed and merely through a letter, with no date, number or signature, sent to the Culture and Islamic Guidance Ministry on the orders of judge Hoseynian."

### **Hamedan Court of Appeals Commutes Students' Sentences. (Iran News Daily website)**

An attorney representing members of the Islamic Association of Bu Ali Sina and Hamedan Medical Sciences universities, Morteza Javanmardi, said: "Two Abu Ali Sina University students, Alireza Khoshbakht and Yahya Safi Aryan, were previously sentenced to two years in jail for 'disturbing the peace'. Moreover, they were also convicted to one-year in jail for 'propagation against the Islamic system and insulting high-ranking officials'. "However, the appellate court in Hamedan has overturned the previous verdicts and sentenced them to a four-year suspended jail term", he added.

### **Student organisation suspended. (Iranian newspaper *Iran Daily* and Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty RFE/RL *Iran Report*)**

A Yazd University student association has been banned for permitting the reading of a message from the banned Freedom Movement's leader, Ebrahim Yazdi, and for arranging a speech by Office for Strengthening Unity central-council member Mehdi Aminzadeh. The ban lasts four months and began on 18 July. Three members of the

student association reportedly face charges of provoking student unrest and participating in the July 1999 demonstrations in Tehran.

## **August 11**

### **New measure relevant for Baha'i students. (RFE/RL *Iran Report*)**

Diane Alai, the Bahai community's representative to the United Nations, stated that Bahai high-school students who pass the university entrance exam are not being allowed to enter institutions of higher learning in Iran. In previous years, she explained, applicants had to declare their religious affiliation when registering for the exam. The question on religion was omitted on the applications in 2004, however, while the exam results identified the individuals as Muslims. Students who corrected the mistake were denied admission. Bani Dugal, a Bahai representative, said, "The Iranian government is, in effect, attempting to force Bahai youth to recant their faith if they want to go to university," according to a press release from the Bahai International Community (<http://www.wfn.org/2004/08/msg00057.html>). By taking the exam at all, according to reports from Iran described in the press release, "officials are saying that their action amounts to a de facto declaration of faith in Islam."

### **Islamic Criminal Law hardens on drinking alcoholics. (Iran Daily News web site)**

Islamic criminal law has been hardened for dealing with crimes related to the sale, purchase, keeping and/or carrying of alcoholic drinks. The related offenders will be sentenced to jail terms ranging from three months to one year and/or 74 lashes, plus monetary fines.

## **August 12**

### **Student activist goes on hunger strike. (Iran Daily News web site)**

Mazandaran University student Masoud Sani who was expelled from university due to his political activities will stage a sit-in and go on hunger strike at the Minister of Science's office on Saturday August 14.

### **Hamedan Student Activist Returns to Jail. (Iran Daily News web site)**

Bonyad Shahmoradi, a Hamedan student activist, returned to prison after his one-month leave came to an end. Meanwhile his spouse complained: "Although the Head of Hamedan Justice Department said all student prisoners will be pardoned, Shahmoradi still remains in jail."

## **August 14**

### **Iran court sentences journalist to 46 months imprisonment. (AFP)**

An editor of a reformist website based in the religious city of Qom has been sentenced to three years and ten months jail. Mojtaba Lotfi, a member of the editorial board of the *Naqshineh* website, said that he had been accused of publishing lies, activities against the Islamic regime and disclosing official secrets. He had been released on 650 million rials (81,250 dollars) bail pending appeal. *Naqshineh*, which has already been filtered for a week by the authorities, covers political, economic, social, cultural and sports events happening in Qom.

### **Iran reformist organization concerned over arrest of two members. (ISNA)**

The spokesman for the Islamic Revolution Mojahedin Organization has said that a person affiliated with the organization was arrested about 10 days ago. Mohsen Armin stated: "On Wednesday [28 July], two weeks ago, the person who had contacts with the organization was arrested by a group of unidentified people. After his arrest, an employee of *Emrooz* web site was arrested as well. After pursuing the matter, it became clear to us that the aforementioned people had been arrested to obtain information on and confront *Emrooz* web site." He said that after the arrests, people who apparently had a relationship with the office of the prosecutor went to the homes of the aforementioned people and confiscated their personal computers and CDs.

### **August 15**

#### **Teachers' representative freed on bail. (IRNA)**

Member of Board of the Teachers Association for Tehran Ali Asghar Zati was freed on bail after posting 70m-rial bail. On 10 August, secretary-general of the Teachers Association Mahmud Beheshti Langerudi was also freed after posting 50m-rial bail. The two activists lobbying for pay rise for the teachers with the parliament and government officials were detained on 10 July.

#### **Head of Judiciary appoints new chief justice, prosecutor-general. (IRNA)**

Judiciary chief Ayatollah Mahmud Hashemi-Shahrudi replaced prosecutor-general and the chief justice. He appointed Ayatollah Hoseyn Mofid as the head of the Supreme Court and Ayatollah Qorbanali Dorri-Najafabadi as the prosecutor-general. Shahrudi thanked chief justice Ayatollah Mohammad Mohammadi-Gilani and prosecutor-general Abdol Nabi Namazi who served in their posts for five years. Ayatollah Mofid was head of one branch of the Supreme Court and Ayatollah Dorri-Najafabadi was head of the Administrative Court.

#### **Shahriar Revolutionary Court convicts four students. (Iran Daily News web site)**

The First Circuit of Shahriar Revolutionary Court convicted four student activists of being members of an illegal establishment. Their last hearing in court was more than a month ago (July 12).

### **August 16**

#### **Six teachers' union activists detained in Mazandaran Province. (Iranian newspaper *Iran*)**

The deputy head of the Teachers' Trade Association said: "In recent days, six members of the Educationalists' Trade Association of Mazandaran Province have also been detained... The reason for these detentions by security officials has been said to be their past political activities and their unlawful acts in holding protest rallies in the province."

#### **Student summoned to court for "publishing insults", "false reports". (Iranian Students News Agency / ISNA)**

Sowlat Shoja'ian, secretary of the Islamic Student Associations of Esfahan and the Medical Sciences universities and the former managing-director of the *Ma'refat* student publication, has been summoned to court. Ahmad Mirza'i, a member of the

central council of the association and the current managing director of *Ma'refat*, said that the warrant had been issued by Bench 41 of Esfahan Public Court. The charges against him are; publishing insults and false reports in the student publication, *Ma'refat*. He added that the law clearly stated the Students Publications' Supervisory Board as the only source which can investigate violations by student publications.

**Sabzevar City Council member sentenced to two years. (Iran Daily News web site)**

A member of Sabzevar Islamic City Council was sentenced to two years in jail and 148 lashes by the 6th Circuit Sabzevar Public Court on charges of "distorting public opinion". He was summoned to court on June 30 and jailed temporarily. However he was later released on a 100-million-rial bail.

**August 17**

**Official of the Office for Fostering Unity kidnapped. (Iran Daily News web site)**

An official of the Office for Fostering Unity (OFU) has been kidnapped. Wearing civilian clothes, three individuals referred to the OFU premises and took him to an unknown location with a Peugeot vehicle. The kidnappers interrogated the OFU official about organizational issues and members of the organization. The hostage's abdomen and shoulders were severely battered by the kidnappers.

**August 18**

**Iranian parliament refuses to define political crimes. (AFP)**

Iran's conservative-controlled parliament blocked a plan to define political crimes which would have clarified the status of political prisoners. The parliament, or Majlis, blocked a proposal that asked the government to give a legal definition of political crimes. Human rights activists say a legal definition of political crimes is required so that those who are convicted because of their political beliefs are not punished under common law.

**Vigilantes attack lecture, beat up human rights lawyer. (ISNA)**

A speech by Ne'mat Ahmadi [a lawyer who has been defending detained university students] was abandoned after disturbances during the programme in the city of Sirjan. This lawyer, who was staying at the Office of the Sirjan Governor when this report was being sent, said: "I came to Sirjan at the invitation of Sirjan's Islamic Association of Students to speak about the life of Dr Seyyed Hoseyn Fatemi, the foreign minister in the cabinet of Mohammad Mossadeq [in the 1950s]. The programme was scheduled for 18:00 at the Department of Islamic Guidance in the city but it was abandoned after a group attacked the meeting." Ahmadi said: "The programme had been sanctioned by the governor but since last night I was being warned by various people not to hold the lecture. Nothing particular happened until the programme was to begin. When I was entering the hall a group of people attacked me. They damaged the car that I was travelling in and beat me up. I was injured."

### **Court issues arrest warrant for *Omid-e-Javan* Managing Director. (Iran Daily News web site)**

The 6th Circuit of Administrative and Media Court issued an arrest warrant for the managing director of *Omid-e-Javan* Weekly, after a private plaintiff filed a complaint against him. He is charged with 'spread of lies, insults and defamation of character'.

### **August 19**

#### **Islamic Coalition Party introduces its new leader. (ISNA)**

A ceremony was held this morning at the Jamaran mosque to introduce the new secretary-general of the Islamic Coalition Party, Mohammad Nabi Habibi, and to thank the outgoing leader Habibollah Askarowladi.

#### **Iran court orders killer of unfaithful wife to be freed. (AFP)**

Iran's judiciary ordered a man to be released after he killed his unfaithful wife in the courtroom, because the woman's immediate parents are not alive to claim retaliation. The man, identified as Mahmoud, had filed a complaint against his wife and her lover when he had found out that she was cheating on him. When she appeared in court in Shahr Ray city in Tehran province in 2003 he stabbed her to death. But a court sentenced him only to pay compensatory "blood money" to the "parents of the blood", who are in fact himself and their three children, because the parents of the murdered woman, Fatemeh, 29, are dead. The court followed an order by the head of Iran's judiciary, Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi. The children would have lost their only breadwinner if the murderer had been put in jail. The woman's lover, charged with illegitimate relations, was sentenced to be lashed and the verdict will be executed soon. "I asked the court for the ultimate punishment for her. But I thought they would not punish her," the husband said, "so I left the court building, hid a knife in my clothes to escape the body search at the court entrance, then I stabbed her in the courtroom in presence of the court staff."

### **August 20**

#### **Arzhang Davoodi in solitary confinement in Evin Prison. (Amnesty International)\***

Arzhang Davoodi is now in solitary confinement in Evin prison, where it is feared that he is at risk of torture. He has been detained without charge since his arrest approximately 10 months ago, and is reportedly suffering from medical problems for which he has been denied necessary treatment. He was arrested in October 2003 after he assisted in the making of a secretly and illegally filmed TV documentary, in which he criticised the Iranian authorities. He was kept in solitary confinement for over three months in a detention facility run by the Revolutionary Guard, where he was severely tortured, resulting in injuries including a broken shoulder blade, bleeding in his left eye, deafness, a broken jaw and broken teeth. He was later transferred to Evin prison, where he has been moved around several different wings. His family paid bail in March 2004, but he was not released. Arzhang Davoodi has not been charged, and his lawyer has recently been told that the case against his client is still not complete. Arzhang Davoodi has been summoned to court to see the judge assigned to his case

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

on at least three occasions, and each time he has been asked to sign a confession several pages long. The judge is alleged to have told him that the court will not hear his case, and he will not be released, until he signs the confession.

**PMOI member reportedly in Evin Prison. (Amnesty International)\***

Hojjat Zamani, from the Elam region of south western Iran, was reportedly forced to return to Iran from Turkey in November 2003. He is said to be held in Section 209 of Tehran's Evin prison. Amnesty International is concerned that he is now facing execution following a trial in Tehran. According to media reports, Hojjat Zamani was accused of aiding the banned opposition group, Peoples' Mojahedin of Iran (PMOI), in placing a bomb outside an unspecified Revolutionary Court in May or June 1998. The explosion reportedly killed three and injured 22 people. He was reportedly arrested in a square in Tehran in 2000. According to a PMOI statement, he was severely tortured in detention without his case ever coming to trial. Around August 2003, Hojjat Zamani escaped his detention and fled to Turkey. He was reportedly arrested by the Turkish authorities. In response to queries made by the UNHCR and the Istanbul branch of Human Rights Association, the relevant Turkish authorities denied that Hojjat Zamani was ever detained in Turkey. On 17 July 2004, Hojjat Zamani was reportedly tried at Branch six of Tehran's Revolutionary Court, allegedly for aiding the PMOI in planting the bomb. According to unconfirmed reports Hojjat Zamani has been sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment and four death sentences. He was reported to have had a lawyer – possibly an appointed lawyer, though Amnesty International is concerned at unconfirmed reports that judicial officials did not cooperate with him, denying Hojjat Zamani the right to effective counsel. Two of Hojjat Zamani's brothers were executed in Iran in 2001. Massoud Moqtadari, who was detained at the same time as Hojjat Zamani but subsequently released, is no longer at risk in Turkey.

**August 21**

**Iran hangs three drug smugglers in public. (Reuters)**

Iran has hanged three persons convicted of drug smuggling in a public square in the southern province of Kerman.

**Court fines reformist writer for "insulting" state officials. (Iranian newspaper *Mardom Salari*)**

Branch 1009 of Tehran's Public Court has ruled that reformist writer Emadeddin Baqi should pay a 1m-rial cash fine for insulting state officials. Baqi's lawyer, Saleh Nikbakht said that Baqi is fined to pay a 1m-rial cash for insulting the Guardian Council, the Election Supervisory Boards and other state officials.

**August 22**

**Person convicted of rape hanged in public in Orumiyeh. (AFP)**

An Iranian man convicted of rape and kidnapping has been hanged in a square in the northwestern city of Orumiyeh.

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



## August 23

### **Iranian authorities block three reformist websites. (AFP)**

Internet access to three websites close to Iranian's leading reformist party has been blocked by the authorities, prompting a protest by the party leader. The sites, *Rouydad* (Happening), *Emrouz* (Today) and *Bamdad* (Dawn), all close to the Islamic Iran Participation Front, have been unobtainable at least since August 22. On *Rouydad*, the only page which could be accessed but only through certain internet servers, was a letter of protest from the Front's general secretary, Mohammad Reza Khatami to the authorities.

## August 24

### **Amnesty International protests execution of girl in Iran. (AFP)**

Amnesty International has expressed its "outrage" at the reported execution of a girl, believed to be 16, in the northern Iranian province of Mazandaran. The human rights group said Ateqeh Rajabi was reportedly executed in the town of Neka on August 15 for "acts incompatible with chastity". She was reported to have been publicly hanged on a street there. The group said Rajabi "was not believed to be mentally competent" and "reportedly did not have access to a lawyer at any stage" of her trial. According to the group, Rajabi's hanging is the tenth execution of a child offender in Iran since 1990. Urging Iran to at least raise the minimum age of execution to 18, Amnesty also called for clarification on whether Rajabi had legal representation and whether a legally-approved doctor deemed her psychologically fit to stand trial.

### **Member of the Komala party sentenced to death penalty. (Amnesty International)\***

Amnesty International fears that Esmail Mohammadi is at imminent risk of execution after the death sentence against him was reportedly upheld by the five judges of Branch 32 of the Supreme Court on or around 11 August. Esmail Mohammadi was arrested in or around October 2002, by a group of officials from the Revolutionary Guard (*Pasdaran*) at his home in Bukan, western Iran. It is feared that he was tortured or ill-treated, during approximately eight months of incommunicado detention following his arrest. He has been detained in Oroumiye prison since his arrest. In July 2003 Esmail Mohammadi was sentenced to death, following a reportedly unfair trial at Branch 1 of the Oroumiye Revolutionary Court, in the administrative centre of Western Azerbaijan province, western Iran. He reportedly faced security-related charges including 'armed struggle against the Islamic regime' and 'membership of a proscribed organization'. Recent reports suggest that he was also accused of 'being at war with god' (*morharebe*), and 'corruption on earth' (*fesad fil-arz*). According to an alleged copy of the Supreme Court verdict, Esmail Mohammadi, who entered Iran illegally on two occasions, was accused of being an armed member of the proscribed organization Komala, and of taking part in the kidnap, torture and murder of at least one government official. At an inspection of his place or residence, it is alleged that light arms and grenades were discovered. The Supreme Court verdict states that he 'confessed' to the charges against him.

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

### **Split in the Worker-communist Party of Iran. (Worker-communist Party of Iran web site)\***

On 24 August 2004, some members of the Central Committee of the Worker-communist Party of Iran (WPI) announced their split from the Party. They decided to leave the WPI soon after their views, which were debated within the leadership for two years, were made public to the cadres and met with a resounding critique from the majority. The views put forward by Koorosh Modaresi have been on issues surrounding the programme, strategy, tactic, and method of work and have been effectively contrary to the WPI's programme, its resolutions passed at previous congresses, and the fundamentals of worker-communism as well as the discussions regarding the Party's role in society and political power.

### **August 25**

#### **Leader of gang hanged in Karaj. (Iranian TV Vision of the Islamic Republic of Iran Network 1)**

Leader of a gang known as Karaj vultures [Persian: karkas-ha-ye Karaj] was publicly hanged in Hesarak in Karaj. The case's judge has sentenced the first, the second and the third of the accused to public hanging. The death sentence of the first accused, known as Parviz Karkas, was carried out today.

#### **Tehran university student summoned to Revolution Court. (ISNA)**

Amin Bozorgeyan, a student at Tehran University, has been summoned to branch 15 of the Revolution Court. Stating that he is accused of taking action against the internal security of the country, he said: "Before this case I spent eight days in solitary confinement, and when the court met my lawyer said the case had been forwarded to the disciplinary committee."

### **August 31**

#### **A man hanged publicly for murdering his wife. (Anatolian News Agency)**

It was reported that a man was hanged in Arak city for murdering his wife after a family fight.

#### **Several people arrested for nuclear spying. (AFP)**

Iran's Intelligence Minister Ali Yunessi said that "several people" have been arrested for spying on the country's nuclear programme. The minister said those arrested "were sending information on Iran's nuclear activities abroad", but did not say when the arrests took place. "The Monafeqin [hypocrites, official reference to the People's Mujahideen Organisation of Iran, PMOI] played the main role in transferring the information," he said. The Mujahideen first began disclosing information on the clerical regime's nuclear activities in mid-2002, before the launch of a major probe by the UN nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

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