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## CORI Research Analysis

**Date:** 21<sup>st</sup> September 2009

**Country:** Iran

**Issues:** Information on the People's Mujahedin of Iran (PMOI) including on the three main military operations of National Liberation Army of Iran (NLA), the PMOI military wing, in 1987-1988 during the Iraq-Iran war. The military operations are called: "the Sun", "40 Lanterns/Stars" and "Eternal Light". Information about the military confrontation in 1991 between the Iranian forces and NLA at the Iraq-Iran borders in Khaniqin and Jalawla (Ex-PMOI members call it Marwarid (Pearl) operation).

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### ***People's Mujahedin Organisation of Iran (PMOI)***

The PMOI is also known as the following organizations; Organization of the People's Holy Warriors of Iran, The National Liberation Army of Iran, National Council of Resistance (NCR), The National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) and the Muslim Iranian Students' Society.<sup>1</sup> According to the USSD the groups' original Persian name was Sazeman-e Mojahedin-e Khalq-e Iran which is now commonly shortened to Mojahedin-e Khalq (MEK).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> US Department of State, Country Reports on Terrorism 2008, 30 April 2009, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2008/122449.htm>, retrieved 16<sup>th</sup> September 2009

<sup>2</sup> US State Department, (Library of Congress. Congressional Research Service. The People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran, by Kenneth Katzman. Washington, Nov 1992. 6 p. Doc. call no.: M-U 42953-1 no.92-824F), <http://www.iran-interlink.org/files/child%20pages/USstatedept.htm>, retrieved 19<sup>th</sup> September 2009

The PMOI is based on Islamic and Socialist ideology<sup>3</sup> the group advocates overthrowing the Iranian government<sup>4</sup> and installing its own leadership.<sup>5</sup> The PMOI was founded in 1965 and was originally devoted to armed struggle against the Shah of Iran, capitalism and western imperialism.<sup>6</sup> The PMOI fought alongside supporters of Ayatollah Khomeini to overthrow the Shah during the Iranian Revolution.<sup>7</sup> Post revolution the PMOI failed to gain power,<sup>8</sup> they then started an armed struggle against the Iranian government.<sup>9</sup> The PMOI have mounted several operations and terrorist attacks against the Iranian government<sup>10</sup> including a bombing campaign in 1981 “against the head office of the Islamic Republic Party and the Prime Minister’s office, which killed some 70 high-ranking Iranian officials, including Chief Justice Ayatollah Mohammad Beheshti, President Mohammad-Ali Rajaei, and Prime Minister Mohammad-Javad Bahonar.”<sup>11</sup> The PMOI was exiled in 1981, its leadership were granted Refugee status in France.<sup>12</sup>

The USSD list’s the PMOI as a terrorist organization.<sup>13</sup> The UK and EU added the PMOI to their list of proscribed terrorist groups in 2002, however the group was removed from the UK list in June 2008 and the EU list on 26 January 2009.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> BBC, US Embassy hunger strikers defiant, 15 August 2009, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/8203142.stm>, retrieved 16<sup>th</sup> September 2009. World Socialist Website, Who are the People’s Mujahedin of Iran?, 14th September 2000, <http://www.wsws.org/articles/2000/sep2000/iran-s14.shtml>, retrieved 16<sup>th</sup> September 2009. US State Department, (Library of Congress. Congressional Research Service. The People’s Mojahedin Organization of Iran, by Kenneth Katzman. Washington, Nov 1992. 6 p. Doc. call no.: M-U 42953-1 no.92-824F), <http://www.iran-interlink.org/files/child%20pages/USstatedept.htm>, retrieved 19<sup>th</sup> September 2009

<sup>4</sup> US Department of State, Country Reports on Terrorism 2008, 30 April 2009, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2008/122449.htm>, retrieved 16<sup>th</sup> September 2009. BBC, US Embassy hunger strikers defiant, 15 August 2009, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/8203142.stm>, retrieved 16<sup>th</sup> September 2009

<sup>5</sup> Hiro, Dilip, The longest war: the Iran-Iraq military conflict, Paladin Books, London, 1990, p246 Right Web Profile, Iran Policy Committee, 1<sup>st</sup> February 2007, [http://www.rightweb.irc-online.org/profile/Iran\\_Policy\\_Committee](http://www.rightweb.irc-online.org/profile/Iran_Policy_Committee), retrieved 19<sup>th</sup> September 2009. US Department State, Foreign Terrorist Organizations, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2009, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/other/des/123085.htm>, retrieved 16th September 2009

<sup>6</sup> Singleton, Anne, Saddam’s Private Army, How Rajavi Changed Iran’s Mojahedin from Armed Revolutionaries to an Armed Cult, 2003, <http://www.iran-interlink.org/files/info/Iran-InterlinkBook2003.htm>, retrieved, 16th September 2009. Aswat al Iraq, MEK helped suppressing 1991 uprising – defector, 23rd May 2009, <http://en.aswatiraq.info/index.php?s=sabaa>, retrieved 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2009

<sup>7</sup> US State Department, (Library of Congress. Congressional Research Service. The People’s Mojahedin Organization of Iran, by Kenneth Katzman. Washington, Nov 1992. 6 p.Doc. call no.: M-U 42953-1 no.92-824F), <http://www.iran-interlink.org/files/child%20pages/USstatedept.htm>, retrieved 19<sup>th</sup> September 2009

<sup>8</sup> BBC, US Embassy hunger strikers defiant, 15 August 2009, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/8203142.stm>, retrieved 16<sup>th</sup> September 2009

<sup>9</sup> US State Department, (Library of Congress. Congressional Research Service. The People’s Mojahedin Organization of Iran, by Kenneth Katzman. Washington, Nov 1992. 6 p.Doc. call no.: M-U 42953-1 no.92-824F), <http://www.iran-interlink.org/files/child%20pages/USstatedept.htm>, retrieved 19<sup>th</sup> September 2009

<sup>10</sup> US Department State, Foreign Terrorist Organizations, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2009, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/other/des/123085.htm>, retrieved 16th September 2009

<sup>11</sup> US Department State, Foreign Terrorist Organizations, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2009, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/other/des/123085.htm>, retrieved 16th September 2009

<sup>12</sup> France 24, People’s Mujahedeen seek to discard terrorist label, 28<sup>th</sup> June 2008, <http://www.france24.com/en/20080628-big-get-together-people%E2%80%99-mujahedeen-iran-france-iran>.

<sup>13</sup> US Department State, Foreign Terrorist Organizations, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2009, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/other/des/123085.htm>, retrieved 16th September 2009

<sup>14</sup> France 24, People’s Mujahedeen seek to discard terrorist label, 28<sup>th</sup> June 2008,

The PMOI and its associated organizations are led by husband and wife Massoud and Maryam Rajavi.<sup>15</sup> The PMOI is headed by Maryam Rajavi.<sup>16</sup> Several sources claim that the PMOI operates as a cult.<sup>17</sup> Former members have given accounts of torture, imprisonment and brainwashing by the PMOI against their own members.<sup>18</sup>

The PMOI is accused by several sources of mounting a propaganda campaign to increase support within the west.<sup>19</sup> The PMOI accuses the Iranian government of producing propaganda to discredit them.<sup>20</sup>

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<http://www.france24.com/en/20080628-big-get-together-people%E2%80%99-mujahedeen-iran-france-iran>. United Kingdom Government, International Affairs and Defence Section, House of Commons, 23rd March 2009, [www.parliament.uk/commons/lib/research/briefings/snria-05020.pdf](http://www.parliament.uk/commons/lib/research/briefings/snria-05020.pdf), retrieved 16<sup>th</sup> September 2009

<sup>15</sup> BBC, Profile of Maryam Rajavi, 8<sup>th</sup> July 2003,

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle\\_east/3052366.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/3052366.stm), retrieved 19<sup>th</sup> September 2009

<sup>16</sup> Right Web Profile, Iran Policy Committee, 1<sup>st</sup> February 2007, [http://www.rightweb.irc-online.org/profile/Iran\\_Policy\\_Committee](http://www.rightweb.irc-online.org/profile/Iran_Policy_Committee), retrieved 19<sup>th</sup> September 2009

<sup>17</sup> Abrahamian, Ervand, Radical Islam: the Iranian Mojahedin, I. b.Tauris, Trowbridge, 1989. Singleton, Anne, Saddam's Private Army, How Rajavi Changed Iran's Mojahedin from Armed Revolutionaries to an Armed Cult, 2003, <http://www.iran-interlink.org/files/info/Iran-InterlinkBook2003.htm>, retrieved, 16th September 2009. Rand Corporation, The Mujahdein e Khalq in Iraq: A Policy Conundrum, 2009 [http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2009/RAND\\_MG871.pdf](http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2009/RAND_MG871.pdf) retrieved 19th September 2009

Iran Interlink <http://www.iran-interlink.org/>

Nejat Society <http://www.nejatngo.org/en/>

<sup>18</sup> Human rights Watch, No exit; human Rights abuses inside the MKO camps, May 2005, <http://www.hrw.org/legacy/backgrounder/mena/iran0505/iran0505.pdf>, retrieved 16<sup>th</sup> September 2009.

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<sup>19</sup> US Department of State, Country Reports on Terrorism 2008, 30 April 2009,

<http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2008/122449.htm>, retrieved 16<sup>th</sup> September 2009. Gessler, Antoine, Autopsy of an ideological drift: Analysis and background of the People's Mujahedin of Iran Organisation, [http://www.nejatngo.org/Storage/File/Book\\_EN/autopsy\\_of\\_%20an\\_%20ideological%20\\_drift1.pdf](http://www.nejatngo.org/Storage/File/Book_EN/autopsy_of_%20an_%20ideological%20_drift1.pdf)

Sajed, <http://www.sajed.ir/en/content/view/8/200/>. US Department of State, Foreign Terrorist Organizations," Country Reports on Terrorism 2005, US State Department, (Library of Congress.

Congressional Research Service. The People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran, by Kenneth Katzman.

Washington, Nov 1992. 6 p.Doc. call no.: M-U 42953-1 no.92-824F), <http://www.iran-interlink.org/files/child%20pages/USstatedept.htm>, retrieved 19<sup>th</sup> September 2009. Rand Corporation, The Mujahdein e Khalq in Iraq: A Policy Conundrum, 2009

[http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2009/RAND\\_MG871.pdf](http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2009/RAND_MG871.pdf) retrieved 19th September 2009

The Jamestown Foundation, Terrorism Monitor Volume: 6 Issue: 11, Is Iran's Mujahideen-e-Khalq a Threat to the Islamist Regime? 29 May 2008,

[http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no\\_cache=1&tx\\_ttnews\[swords\]=8fd5893941d69d0be3f378576261ae3e&tx\\_ttnews\[any\\_of\\_the\\_words\]=mojahedin&tx\\_ttnews\[tt\\_news\]=4950&tx\\_ttnews\[backPid\]=7&cHash=3d3fc1ecb2](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[swords]=8fd5893941d69d0be3f378576261ae3e&tx_ttnews[any_of_the_words]=mojahedin&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=4950&tx_ttnews[backPid]=7&cHash=3d3fc1ecb2)

<sup>20</sup> Friends of a Free Iran, Press Conference; NCRI about the relation between PMOI and Saddam Hussein, 25 January 2009,

[http://docs.google.com/gview?a=v&q=cache:o8q1p7lj5pYJ:www.newsdesk.se/view/download/3188%3Ftype\\_of\\_media%3Ddocument%26type\\_to\\_download%3Dresource+document+Friends+of+a+Free+Iran,+Press+Conference%3B+NCRI+about+the+relation+between+PMOI+and+Saddam+Hussein,+25+January+2009,&hl=en&gl=uk&sig=AFQjCNEjgR2xllsmcGghvtDVN5JUIJwQg](http://docs.google.com/gview?a=v&q=cache:o8q1p7lj5pYJ:www.newsdesk.se/view/download/3188%3Ftype_of_media%3Ddocument%26type_to_download%3Dresource+document+Friends+of+a+Free+Iran,+Press+Conference%3B+NCRI+about+the+relation+between+PMOI+and+Saddam+Hussein,+25+January+2009,&hl=en&gl=uk&sig=AFQjCNEjgR2xllsmcGghvtDVN5JUIJwQg)

National Council of Resistance of Iran <http://www.ncr-iran.org/>

The PMOI has an armed wing which is called the National Liberation Army of Iran (NLA).<sup>21</sup>

### ***National Liberation Army***

The NLA was formed on 20<sup>th</sup> June 1987<sup>22</sup> as the armed wing of the PMOI, lead by Masood Rajavi. The NLA states that in 1988 Maryam Rajavi was Deputy Commander in Chief of the National Liberation Army.<sup>23</sup> According to several sources including the BBC and USSD, the NLA received financial and military assistance from the Iraqi regime.<sup>24</sup>

The USSD states that towards the end of the 1980-88 war with Iran, Iraq armed the PMOI and sent it into action against Iranian forces,<sup>25</sup>

“Expelled by France in 1986, MEK leaders turned to Saddam Hussein's regime for basing, financial support, and training. Near the end of the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq War, Baghdad armed the MEK with heavy military equipment and deployed thousands of MEK fighters in suicidal, mass wave attacks against Iranian forces. The MEK's relationship with the former Iraqi regime continued through the 1990s.”<sup>26</sup>

According to the BBC,

“The PMOI set up a base in Ashraf camp in the 1980s. The exiles' presence was welcomed by former president, Saddam Hussein, who was fighting a war against Iran at the time.

He funded and armed the PMOI's military wing, the National Liberation Army of Iran, which fought alongside Iraqi troops.”<sup>27</sup>

According to Anne Singleton, former PMOI member and author who now views the organization as a cult,

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<sup>21</sup> US Department of State, Country Reports on Terrorism 2008, 30 April 2009, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2008/122449.htm>, retrieved 16<sup>th</sup> September 2009. US Department of State, Foreign Terrorist Organizations," Country Reports on Terrorism 2005, US Department of State, April 30, 2006.

<sup>22</sup> Sajed, <http://www.sajed.ir/en/content/view/8/200/>, retrieved 16<sup>th</sup> September 2009

<sup>23</sup> National Liberation Army, The Road to Tehran, undated, <http://www.iran-e-azad.org/english/nla/lit1.html>, retrieved 19<sup>th</sup> September 2009

<sup>24</sup> BBC, US Embassy hunger strikers defiant, 15 August 2009, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/8203142.stm>, retrieved 16<sup>th</sup> September 2009. US Department of State, Country Reports on Terrorism 2008, 30 April 2009, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2008/122449.htm>, retrieved 16<sup>th</sup> September 2009.

<sup>25</sup> US Department of State, Country Reports on Terrorism 2008, 30 April 2009, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2008/122449.htm>, retrieved 16<sup>th</sup> September 2009

<sup>26</sup> Country Reports on Terrorism, 2007. United States Department of State, April 2008.

<sup>27</sup> BBC, US Embassy hunger strikers defiant, 15 August 2009, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/8203142.stm>, retrieved 16<sup>th</sup> September 2009.

“The Mojahedin have only ever undertaken military operations into Iran with full liaison with the Iraqi military, commanded by Saddam Hussein. The Iraqi military provided training and logistical support, and maps from reconnaissance flights over the proposed route. The Iraqis agreed to bomb Iranian positions twenty-four hours before the start of any Mojahedin operation in order to put the Iranian forces on the defensive and to create disarray. Only with all this support would the Mojahedin start their offensive.”<sup>28</sup>

Little detailed information was found about the treatment of civilians and Iranian forces during NLA operations within the timeframe of this research.

### **Operation Eternal Light**

Operation Eternal Light is also known as Forouq-e Javidan.<sup>29</sup>

On 18 July 1988 the Iranian government accepted UN Security Council Resolution 598 and called for a cease fire in the Iran-Iraq war.<sup>30</sup> The NLA commenced Operation Eternal light on 25 July 1988<sup>31</sup>, advancing from Iraq under Iraqi air cover 150 km inside Iran reaching the outskirts of Kermanshah<sup>32</sup> According to Hiro Dilip author of *The Longest War: the Iran Iraq Military Conflict*, the NLA seized Karand and Islamabad-e Gharb, the latter- a town of 15,000 was “razed to the ground.”<sup>33</sup> The NLA state that the fighting lasted four days.<sup>34</sup> The NLA left Kerend on 28 July 1988.<sup>35</sup> The NLA claim that they took control of Islamabad on 27 July 1988.<sup>36</sup> The NLA describe 9 consecutive battles taking place in and around Islamabad.<sup>37</sup>

According to author John Bulloch the NLA were “fully supported” by Iraq. Bulloch states that it was the NLA’s intention to

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<sup>28</sup> Singleton, Anne, Saddam’s Private Army, How Rajavi Changed Iran’s Mojahedin from Armed Revolutionaries to an Armed Cult, 2003, <http://www.iran-interlink.org/files/info/Iran-InterlinkBook2003.htm>, retrieved 16<sup>th</sup> September 2009

<sup>29</sup>Iran-Interlink, Mojahedin (Rajavi cult) timeline, undated, <http://www.iran-interlink.org/files/child%20pages/Timeline.htm>, retrieved 19<sup>th</sup> September 2009

<sup>30</sup> Hiro, Dilip, *The longest war: the Iran-Iraq military conflict*, Paladin Books, London, 1990, p246. Human Rights Watch, *Ministers of Murder: Iran’s New Security Cabinet*, December 2005, <http://www.hrw.org/legacy/backgrounders/mena/iran1205/2.htm>

<sup>31</sup> Human Rights Watch state it was the 24<sup>th</sup> July and Hiro Dilip states the 26<sup>th</sup> July. Hiro, Dilip, *The longest war: the Iran-Iraq military conflict*, Paladin Books, London, 1990, p246. Human Rights Watch, *Ministers of Murder: Iran’s New Security Cabinet*, December 2005, <http://www.hrw.org/legacy/backgrounders/mena/iran1205/2.htm>

<sup>32</sup> National Liberation Army, *The Road to Tehran*, undated, <http://www.iran-e-azad.org/english/nla/lit1.html>, retrieved 19<sup>th</sup> September 2009. Hiro, Dilip, *The longest war: the Iran-Iraq military conflict*, Paladin Books, London, 1990

<sup>33</sup> Hiro, Dilip, *The longest war: the Iran-Iraq military conflict*, Paladin Books, London, 1990, p246

<sup>34</sup> National Liberation Army, *The Road to Tehran*, <http://www.iran-e-azad.org/english/nla/lit1.html>, retrieved 19<sup>th</sup> September 2009

<sup>35</sup> Iran e Azad, National Liberation Army, *Operation Eternal Light, The Road to Tehran*, undated, <http://www.iran-e-azad.org/english/nla/lit1.html>, retrieved 19<sup>th</sup> September 2009

<sup>36</sup> Iran e Azad, National Liberation Army, *Operation Eternal Light, The Road to Tehran*, undated, <http://www.iran-e-azad.org/english/nla/lit1.html>, retrieved 19<sup>th</sup> September 2009

<sup>37</sup> Iran e Azad, National Liberation Army, *Operation Eternal Light, The Road to Tehran*, undated, <http://www.iran-e-azad.org/english/nla/lit1.html>, retrieved 19<sup>th</sup> September 2009

“seize a large area of territory on the border around Qasr – e –Shirin, Sar –e–Pol-e-Zahab, Kerend, Islamabad and Kermenshah, setup a provisional Iranian government in this ‘liberated’ zone, and rally all the dissidents inside Iran.”<sup>38</sup>

According to a USSD report

“The group launched its most significant incursion in June and July 1988, when they coordinated an advance into Iran with Iraqi forces. During the same offensive, Iraqi units in other sectors of the front used chemical weapons against Iran. NLA units briefly seized the Iranian border towns of Mehran, Karand, and Islamabad-e Gharb. The Mojahedin claimed to have killed 40,000 Iranians, but other military observers said the, NLA "just got wiped out" when Iranian reinforcements arrived.”<sup>39</sup>

According to author Hiro Dilip around 7000 NLA forces took part, he claims that a large number were ill trained<sup>40</sup> The NLA claim that 1,263 of their combatants were killed, captured or are missing as a result of Operation Eternal Light.<sup>41</sup>

The Times and Human Rights Watch (HRW) report that in July 1988 Khomeini issued a fatwa,

“It is decreed that those who are in prisons throughout the country and remain steadfast in their support for the Monafeqin (Mojahedin) are waging war on God and are condemned to execution.”<sup>42</sup>

The Times states that over 30,000 prisoners in Iran were executed following Operation Eternal Light, many were PMOI/NLA members.<sup>43</sup>

According to the Times and HRW ‘Death committees’ made up of an Islamic judge, a representative of the Ministry of Intelligence, and a state prosecutor determined which prisoners would be executed<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Bulloch, John, The Gulf War: its origins, history and consequences, Methuen Books, London, 1989

<sup>39</sup> US State Department, (Library of Congress. Congressional Research Service. The People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran, by Kenneth Katzman. Washington, Nov 1992. 6 p. Doc. call no.: M-U 42953-1 no.92-824F), <http://www.iran-interlink.org/files/child%20pages/USstatedept.htm>, retrieved 19<sup>th</sup> September 2009

<sup>40</sup> Hiro, Dilip, The longest war: the Iran-Iraq military conflict, Paladin Books, London, 1990, p246

<sup>41</sup> Iran e Azad, National Liberation Army, Operation Eternal Light, The Road to Tehran, undated, <http://www.iran-e-azad.org/english/nla/lit1.html>, retrieved 19<sup>th</sup> September 2009

<sup>42</sup> The Times, Khomeini fatwa ‘led to killing of 30,000 in Iran’, 4 February 2001, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iran/1321090/Khomeini-fatwa-led-to-killing-of-30000-in-Iran.html>, retrieved 16<sup>th</sup> September 2009. Human Rights Watch, Ministers of Murder: Iran’s New Security Cabinet, December 2005, <http://www.hrw.org/legacy/backgrounder/mena/iran1205/2.htm>

<sup>43</sup> The Times, Khomeini fatwa ‘led to killing of 30,000 in Iran’, 4 February 2001, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iran/1321090/Khomeini-fatwa-led-to-killing-of-30000-in-Iran.html>

<sup>44</sup> The Times, Khomeini fatwa ‘led to killing of 30,000 in Iran’, 4 February 2001, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iran/1321090/Khomeini-fatwa-led-to-killing-of-30000-in-Iran.html>. Human Rights Watch, Ministers of Murder: Iran’s New Security Cabinet <http://www.hrw.org/legacy/backgrounder/mena/iran1205/2.htm>

The Times reports that “prisoners were loaded onto forklift trucks in groups of six and hanged from cranes in half-hourly intervals.”<sup>45</sup>

### ***Operation Shining Sun***

Operation Sun is also known as Shining Sun and Sunshine<sup>46</sup>. The NLA state that Operation Shining Sun occurred at the southern front of the Gulf War on 27 March 1988.<sup>47</sup>

According to veteran and author Manoucher Avaznia the confrontation lasted less than fourteen hours.<sup>48</sup>

### ***Operation 40 Lights***

Operation Forty Lights is also known as ‘Forty Stars’ and ‘Chelcheraq’.<sup>49</sup>

According to the NLA Operation Forty Stars commenced in June 1988, during which time they took the western Iranian town, Mehran with the backing of Iraqi forces.<sup>50</sup>

According to Anne Singleton

“In the case of Chelcheraq, the Mojahedin agreed with the Iraqis that they would advance and the Iraqis would follow on behind to capture any spoils of war, such as artillery. Instead, however, the Iraqis built trenches and dug-in on the captured territory, making military gains on the back of the Mojahedin's idealism.”<sup>51</sup>

According to veteran and author Manoucher Avaznia,<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> The Times, Khomeini fatwa ‘led to killing of 30,000 in Iran’, 4 February 2001, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iran/1321090/Khomeini-fatwa-led-to-killing-of-30000-in-Iran.html>

<sup>46</sup> Avaznia defected from Iranian forces to the NLA during Iran Iraq war. Avaznia, Manoucher, *The Iran-Iraq War; A Path to Nowhere*, Infinity Publications, 2007

<sup>47</sup> Iran eAzad, National Liberation Army, undated <http://www.iran-e-azad.org/english/nla/sun1.html>, retrieved 19<sup>th</sup> September 2009. Avaznia, Manoucher, *The Iran-Iraq War; A Path to Nowhere*, Infinity Publications, 2007

<sup>48</sup> Avaznia defected from Iranian forces to the NLA during Iran Iraq war. Avaznia, Manoucher, *The Iran-Iraq War; A Path to Nowhere*, Infinity Publications, 2007

<sup>49</sup> Singleton, Anne, *Saddam’s Private Army, How Rajavi Changed Iran's Mojahedin from Armed Revolutionaries to an Armed Cult*, <http://www.iran-interlink.org/files/info/Iran-InterlinkBook2003.htm>, retrieved 16<sup>th</sup> September 2009

<sup>50</sup> Iran eAzad, National Liberation Army, *Operation Forty Lights, Liberation of Mehran and \$2 Billion Weapons Captured*, undated, <http://www.iran-e-azad.org/english/nla/fortystars.html>, retrieved 19<sup>th</sup> September 2009. Singleton, Anne, *Saddam’s Private Army, How Rajavi Changed Iran's Mojahedin from Armed Revolutionaries to an Armed Cult*, 2003, <http://www.iran-interlink.org/files/info/Iran-InterlinkBook2003.htm>, retrieved 16<sup>th</sup> September 2009

<sup>51</sup> Singleton, Anne, *Saddam’s Private Army, How Rajavi Changed Iran's Mojahedin from Armed Revolutionaries to an Armed Cult*, <http://www.iran-interlink.org/files/info/Iran-InterlinkBook2003.htm>, retrieved 16<sup>th</sup> September 2009

<sup>52</sup> Avaznia, Manoucher, *The Iran-Iraq War; A Path to Nowhere*, Infinity Publications, 2007

“the NLA killed several thousand men from the army and the Guards. It took three thousand prisoners of war including two colonels from army’s headquarters. Tens of tanks, armored personnel carriers, American-made anti-armor TOW missiles sold to Rafsanjani during Iran-Contra Scandal, tens of pieces of cannons and mortars, hundreds of machine guns, and hundreds of light and heavy military vehicles were seized. The NLA held the already ruined and depopulated Town of Mehran for three days while evacuating booties and prisoners.”<sup>53</sup>

### **Operation Morvarid**

Operation Morvarid is also known as Operation Pearl.<sup>54</sup> In 1991 Iraqi forces suppressed an uprising from the Kurdish population in Southern Iraq known as the Safar Intifada.<sup>55</sup> Several sources state that the NLA participated within the Iraqi crackdown on Kurds.<sup>56</sup>

The USSD states that

“In 1991, the group reportedly assisted the Iraqi Republican Guard's bloody crackdown on Iraqi Shia and Kurds who rose up against Saddam Hussein's regime.”<sup>57</sup>

The Asia Times reports that

“a number of Iraqi Shi'ites and Kurdish organizations have alleged that MEK forces played a role in the suppression of the so-called Safar Intifada of March 1991 against the former Iraqi regime.”<sup>58</sup>

The Nejat Society (Nejat means ‘rescue’<sup>59</sup>) is an organization founded by former PMOI members who consider the PMOI to be a terrorist cult<sup>60</sup> They state that prior to the 1991 Operation Morvarid the PMOI hid prisoners of war from the Red Cross, keeping

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<sup>53</sup> Avaznia, Manoucher, *The Iran-Iraq War; A Path to Nowhere*, Infinity Publications, 2007

<sup>54</sup> Nejat Society, *Kurds Suppression; PMOI atrocities against Iraqi Kurds*, undated, <http://www.scribd.com/doc/15647564/Kurds-Suppression-by-PMOI>, retrieved 16<sup>th</sup> September 2009

<sup>55</sup> Gessler, Antoine, *Autopsy of an ideological drift: Analysis and background of the People’s Mujahedin of Iran Organisation*, undated, [http://www.nejatngo.org/Storage/File/Book\\_EN/autopsy\\_of\\_%20an\\_%20ideological%20\\_drift1.pdf](http://www.nejatngo.org/Storage/File/Book_EN/autopsy_of_%20an_%20ideological%20_drift1.pdf)

<sup>56</sup> France 24, *People’s Mujahedeen seek to discard terrorist label*, 28<sup>th</sup> June 2008, <http://www.france24.com/en/20080628-big-get-together-people%E2%80%99-mujahedeen-iran-france-iran>. Singleton, Anne, *Saddam’s Private Army, How Rajavi Changed Iran’s Mojahedin from Armed Revolutionaries to an Armed Cult*, 2003, <http://www.iran-interlink.org/files/info/Iran-InterlinkBook2003.htm>, retrieved 16<sup>th</sup> September 2009

US Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2008*, 30 April 2009, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2008/122449.htm>, retrieved 16<sup>th</sup> September 2009

<sup>57</sup> US Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2008*, 30 April 2009, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2008/122449.htm>, retrieved 16<sup>th</sup> September 2009

<sup>58</sup> Asia Times, *Iranian exile group strikes back*, 8th June 2005, [http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle\\_East/GF08Ak02.html](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/GF08Ak02.html)

<sup>59</sup> Fox News, *Iranian Militant MeK Group Losing Fight to Stay in Iraq*, 12th January 2009, <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,479404,00.html>

<sup>60</sup> Nejat Society, *Kurds Suppression; PMOI atrocities against Iraqi Kurds*, undated, <http://www.scribd.com/doc/15647564/Kurds-Suppression-by-PMOI>, retrieved 16<sup>th</sup> September 2009



prisoners at a base called Sardar near Kirkut and later transferring them to Hanif Camp in Nozhvel.<sup>61</sup>

Iran Interlink, an organization which also views PMOI as a cult, claims that the Mojahedin operated as Saddam Hussein's private army, playing a decisive role in the 1991 uprisings and responsible for the massacre of many Iraqi Kurds.<sup>62</sup>

Anne Singleton states that the NLA raised Kurdish villages with tanks and fired on civilians.<sup>63</sup>

A USSD report states that

"In March 1991, following Operation Desert Storm, the NLA reportedly fought against the Iranian Revolutionary Guards near the border town of Qasr-e Shirin. Analysts assume that Saddam permitted the NLA to cross into Iran at this time in order to signal that he would not tolerate Iranian support for a Shi'a uprising in southern Iraq. At that time, the Iraqi Kurds also claimed the Mojahedin had assisted the Iraqi army in its suppression of the Kurds, "a claim-substantiated by refugees who fled near the Iranian border." The leader of the patriotic Union of Kurdistan of Iraq, Jalal Talabani, told reporters that "5,000 Iranian Mojahedin joined Saddam's forces in the battle for Kirkuk."<sup>64</sup>

According to New York Times magazine, Maryam Rajavi commanded NLA forces to

"take the Kurds under your tanks, and save your bullets for the Iranian Revolutionary Guards"<sup>65</sup>

Batoul Soltani, a former member of the MEK leadership Council told a press conference,

"MEK played a prominent role in repressing the *intifada* in the southern Iraqi cities in 1991 as it sent forces from the organization to the cities of al-Amara and DIALA, as the former regime did not rely on its soldiers more than relying on the MEK fighters in this particularly respect."<sup>66</sup>

Fox News reports that a Commander of the Kurdish Peshmerga stated that the NLA attacked his battalion in Kirkuk province in 1991.

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<sup>61</sup> Nejat Society, Kurds Suppression; PMOI atrocities against Iraqi Kurds, undated, <http://www.scribd.com/doc/15647564/Kurds-Suppression-by-PMOI>, retrieved 16<sup>th</sup> September 2009

<sup>62</sup> Iran Interlink, Employee's true face; background of a Fox News analyst, February 2004, <http://www.iran-interlink.org/files/info/Jafarzadeh%20bio.htm>, retrieved 19<sup>th</sup> September 2009

<sup>63</sup> Singleton, Anne, Saddam's Private Army, How Rajavi Changed Iran's Mojahedin from Armed Revolutionaries to an Armed Cult, 2003, <http://www.iran-interlink.org/files/info/Iran-InterlinkBook2003.htm>, retrieved 16<sup>th</sup> September 2009

<sup>64</sup> US State Department, (Library of Congress. Congressional Research Service. The People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran, by Kenneth Katzman. Washington, Nov 1992. 6 p. Doc. call no.: M-U 42953-1 no.92-824F), <http://www.iran-interlink.org/files/child%20pages/USstatedept.htm>, retrieved 19<sup>th</sup> September 2009

<sup>65</sup> New York Times Magazine, The Cult of Rajavi, 13 July 2003, <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/07/13/magazine/13MUJAHADEEN.html>, retrieved 19<sup>th</sup> September 2009

<sup>66</sup> Aswat al Iraq, MEK helped suppressing 1991 uprising – defector, 23rd May 2009, <http://en.aswataliraq.info/index.php?s=sabaa>, retrieved 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2009

"Mujahideen fighters who were backed by Iraqi army helicopters and tanks attacked my battalion in March 29, 1991. They killed many of my Peshmergas and wounded a lot, including me"<sup>67</sup>

The article further states that the military architect of the uprisings who is now Chairman of Kurdish media group Wusha Corporation, says of the MEK

"They were working in cooperation with the Iraqi Army.... They attacked many bases belonging to the PUK.

"They occupied the road from Kanar to Kirkuk. They occupied a hospital in Kanar. They killed a doctor and many other civilian people. Saddam Hussein was protecting them in Iraq".<sup>68</sup>

A school teacher told Fox News that he witnessed the NLA's random shelling of Kurdish towns, taking locals hostage, attacking and killing 20 bus passengers, all of whom were young people. The teacher also reported seeing bodies which had been run over by MEK tanks.<sup>69</sup>

"I knew they were opponents of the Iranian regime at the time. I did not expect them to intimidate people in a country in which they were guests, and to interfere in internal issues."<sup>70</sup>

However, in a statement released by Friends of a Free Iran, the Chair of Foreign Affairs at the NCRI stated that,

"It is absolutely false that the PMOI participated in the fight with Iraqi troops. There are no indications that PMOI did so. Regarding the Kurds and the Shiites: We have the best relation with Shiites in Iraq; 3 million Shiites signed a petition supporting PMOI."<sup>71</sup>

He further claims that the Iranian government has put a lot of funds into discrediting the PMOI.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Fox News, Iranian Militant MeK Group Losing Fight to Stay in Iraq, 12th January 2009, <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,479404,00.html>

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## **Khaniqin and Jalawla**

Khaniqin and Jalawla are also spelt as Khaneghein and Jelola/Jelula.<sup>73</sup>

According to Journalist Antoine Gessler

“The group used the logistical support of the Iraqi intelligence services to cross the border and to send commando groups into Iran to carry out terrorist attacks. The People’s Mojahedin brutally assaulted the Kurdish towns of Jelola and Khaneghein and took an active role in the repression of the popular uprisings in Southern Iraq in 1991. They provided Iraqi intelligence with all kinds of information on what was happening inside Iran”.<sup>74</sup>

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