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Issue Paper

IRAN

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS AUGUST 1994-FEBRUARY 1995 (Supplement to Chronology of Events June 1989-July 1994) April 1995

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MAP

See original.

GLOSSARY

ICRC

International Committee of the Red Cross

IRNA

Islamic Republic News Agency
KDPI
Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran
Majlis
Iranian legislative assembly
PMOI
People's Mujaheddin Organization of Iran

For more detailed information on Iranian opposition groups, please consult the August 1993 DIRB Question and Answer Series paper entitled Iran: Political Opposition.

CHRONOLOGY

This paper supplements the January 1995 Iran: Chronology of Events June 1989-July 1994 and should be read in conjunction with that paper. Entries that are cross-referenced to events before August 1994 refer to this previous paper.

1994

August

The "irreversible character" of the fatwa facing Salman Rushdie is reaffirmed by President Hashemi Rafsanjani (*Index on Censorship* Nov.-Dec. 1994a, 241; HRW Dec. 1994, 270).

1 August

Mahdi Nahvi, accused of responsibility for a 20 June bombing at a shrine in Mashhad, is arrested (IRNA 1 Aug. 1994; *Keesing's* Aug. 1994c, 40162). Nahvi, who Iranian officials denounce as a People's Mujaheddin Organization of Iran (PMOI) member, dies the following day, allegedly of bullet wounds sustained during a clash with police during his arrest (*ibid.*; IRNA 2 Aug. 1994). The PMOI denies that Nahvi was a member of their organization (Reuters 13 Aug. 1994).

2 August

Libération reports that two Iranian men have been hanged in the central square of Jolfa. The men were charged with rape and administered 110 lashes prior to their execution (*Libération* 2 Aug. 1994; AFP 1 Aug. 1994).

3 August

Riots erupt in Qazvin city after the Majlis votes down a bill that proposes to separate Qazvin from the province of Zanjan (Reuters 3 Aug. 1994; AP 4 Aug. 1994). Demonstrators clash with security forces, resulting in damage to public buildings, shops and banks, and reportedly causing four deaths and several casualties (*ibid.*). The following day, Interior Minister Ali Mohammad Besharate announces that the government will allow the city to split from Zanjan and join Tehran province. This concession addresses Qazvin's demand that it receive a larger share of government monies (*ibid.*; Reuters 7 Aug. 1994).

Three days later Al-Hayah reports that Iranian Revolutionary Guards arrested some 745 people following the Qazvin riots (*Al-Hayah* 6 Aug. 1994). Some sources report that at least 30 people were killed and about 400 injured during the disturbances (*ibid.*; HRW Dec. 1994, 271), while others maintain that at least four people were killed and hundreds were arrested (*Middle East Times* 15-21 Aug. 1994, 3; *Keesing's* Aug. 1994a, 40161-62; AFP 5 Aug. 1994). According to Country Reports 1994, security forces arrested 3,000 people in the aftermath of the riots (*Country Reports* 1994 1995, 1079).

4 August

A leading Kurdish activist, Ghafur Hamza'i, is murdered in Baghdad (AFP 4 Aug. 1994; *Keesing's* Aug. 1994d, 40162). The Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI) holds "terrorists" of the Islamic regime responsible (AFP 4 Aug. 1994), but the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) infers that the murder may be a result of conflict between the PMOI and the KDPI (IRNA 4 Aug. 1994).

13 August

Bahram Abbaszadeh, accused of planning a bomb attack in a Zahedan mosque (see 6 June 1994 entry), is hanged in Tehran (Reuters 13 Aug. 1994; *Keesing's* Aug. 1994c, 40162). Abbaszadeh, an alleged PMOI member, is also accused of collaborating with Mahdi Nahvi in the 20 June bombing in Mashhad (ibid.; Reuters 13 Aug. 1994; IRNA 1 Aug. 1994).

14 August

Four senior army officers send a letter to Iranian leaders asking that "urgent measures [be taken] to prevent the country from falling into the claws of crisis and chaos" (Al-Sharq Al-Awsat 18 Aug. 1994; MEI 9 Sept. 1994, 14). The letter states that the army had been reluctant to use force against civilians during the Qazvin riots, and warns the government not to expect the army to do so in the future (ibid.; *Keesing's* Aug. 1994a, 40162; *The Economist* 2 Sept. 1994, 34). The officers recommend that Ayatollah Khamenei use the volunteer militia to quell domestic disturbances (ibid.).

19-20 August

Riots and protest marches erupt among sports fans in Tabriz, the capital of Azerbaijan province, after the alleged mistreatment of women at a soccer game by paramilitary volunteer forces (Basij) (MEI 9 Sept. 1994, 14; Voice of Iranian Kordestan 27 Aug. 1994; *Keesing's* Aug. 1994b, 40162). The women were attacked for "mixing" with men at the game (ibid.; MEI 9 Sept. 1994, 14; HRW Dec. 1994, 271). The Voice of Iranian Kordestan, a clandestine radio station operated by the KDPI, reports that participants in the march chanted "Death to the Regime" and "Death to Khamenei and Hashemi-Rafsanjani" (Voice of Iranian Kordestan 27 Aug. 1994).

25 August

The United Nations Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities issues a statement in Geneva calling on Iran to halt all acts of persecution and oppression of minorities, specifically of Christians, Kurds and Arabs (UPI 25 Aug. 1994; HRW Dec. 1994, 269). The subcommission condemns Iran for its persistent use of "arbitrary and summary executions, arbitrary arrests and imprisonment [and] unexplained disappearances" (ibid.).

1 September

A senior Iranian official announces that two PMOI members have been arrested in northwestern Iran (Xinhua 1 Sept. 1994; AFP 1 Sept. 1994). The PMOI denies the report, stating that the regime, "frustrated by the Mojahedin ... has resorted to ... fabrications" (ibid.).

7 September

Ayatollah Khamenei reiterates his disapproval of the Middle East peace process, declaring that Israel "should disappear" (AFP 7 Sept. 1994).

A spokesman for the government repudiates the charges of torture levied against Iran by German engineer Helmut Szimkus (Reuters 7 Sept. 1994). He reiterates that Szimkus, convicted of being an American and Iraqi spy, had stated in writing that he had "no problem" during his five years in an Iranian prison (ibid.; *Moneyclips* 8 Sept. 1994). Originally sentenced to death, Szimkus had been pardoned by Iranian authorities in June 1994 (see 14 June 1994 entry).

14 September

Iranian interior minister Ali-Mohammad Besharati states that Afghan refugees residing in Iran with temporary residence permits may have their permits extended by eight months (AFP 15 Sept. 1994; BBC Summary 16 Sept. 1994). The minister further states that Iran regards the decision as an Islamic-humanitarian duty (*ibid.*). Iran is sheltering over two million Afghan refugees (see 31 Jan. 1994 entry).

17 September

A percussion bomb placed under the car of an Iranian Christian explodes in downtown Tehran (Xinhua 17 Sept. 1994). Although one source reports that no one is injured (*ibid.*), others state that a schoolboy is killed in the blast (*Libération* 19 Sept. 1994; Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network 17 Sept. 1994), and another reports one person killed (*Keesing's* Sept. 1994a, 40206). No one claims responsibility for the bombing (*ibid.*), but Iranian television reports that a "suspicious individual" was arrested the following day (IRIB Television 18 Sept. 1994).

18 September

AFP reports that a renewed crackdown on Islamic dress code violations has begun (AFP 18 Sept. 1994; see also HRW Dec. 1994, 271). A similar crackdown occurred in June 1993, with over 800 women and men arrested for violations (see 23 June 1993 entry). According to AFP, authorities are clamping down on "'manifestations' of western culture ... especially 'loose dress' for women" (AFP 18 Sept. 1994).

20 September

The Majlis votes in favour of a ban on satellite dishes (Keesing's Sept. 1994c, 40206; *Middle East Times* 25 Sept.-1 Oct. 1994, 3; *Resalat* 24 Sept. 1994). Debate on the issue is heated, with several Iranian leaders denouncing the dishes as "conduits of Western 'corruption'" (Reuters 27 July 1994), although some reportedly feel the ban is "short-sighted and unenforceable" (*Keesing's* Sept. 1994c, 40206).

21 September

In response to the August rioting in the city of Qazvin (see 3 Aug. 1994 entry), the Iranian cabinet approves the separation of Qazvin from Zanjan province (IRIB Television 21 Sept. 1994; *Keesing's* Sept. 1994b, 40206). Qazvin will become part of Tehran province, a compromise solution as city representatives initially lobbied for creation of a new province with Qazvin as its capital (*ibid.*).

26 September

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) distributes a memo to UN Security Council members stating that Iranian government allegations about Iranian prisoners of war (POW) being held in Iraq are without basis (INA 28 Sept. 1994). The memo requests that Iran supply information on the circumstances of 13,000-19,000 Iraqi POWs registered with the ICRC, and that Iran allow Red Cross representatives to visit the POW camps (*ibid.*; *Country Reports* 1994 1995, 1079). Iran insists that Iraq continues to detain over 15,000 Iranian POWs (IRIB Television 28 Sept. 1994; IRNA 24 Jan. 1995).

October

The Middle East publishes an article that details a recent CIA report alleging that the Iranian government is fully aware of "Iranian inspired" terrorist activities (*The Middle East* Oct. 1994, 11; *Financial Times* 19 Oct. 1994). In the report, CIA director James Woolsey states that the Iranian intelligence service "executes terrorist attacks or oversees attacks by its surrogates directed primarily against Iranian emigres who are opposed to the clerical regime in Tehran" (*The Middle East* Oct. 1994, 11). The report specifically refers to Iranian support of Lebanon's Hizbullah movement (*ibid.*; *Financial*

Times 19 Oct. 1994).

According to an Iranian government statement, the three Christian ministers murdered in Iran in 1994 (see entries for 24 and 29 June 1994) were killed by the PMOI (*Country Reports 1994 1995*, 1078; see also *Moneyclips* 8 Sept. 1994).

Hengameh Amini, daughter of Iranian singer Marzieh, is arrested (AI 2 Nov. 1994; Reuters 2 Nov. 1994b; AFP 3 Nov. 1994). Marzieh, who now lives in Paris and recently joined the opposition group National Council of Resistance, claims her daughter's arrest is related to this development (Reuters 11 Nov. 1994; *ibid.* 2 Nov. 1994b; AI 2 Nov. 1994; *The Middle East* Mar. 1995, 42). Amnesty International later reports that Hengameh Amini is released from prison on 7 November 1994 (AI 14 Nov. 1994). On 11 November Amini denies her arrest, stating "there has been no problem" (Reuters 11 Nov. 1994). Amini's mother is reluctant to believe her daughter, however, stating "she was forced to say this.... Someone had definitely been standing next to her" (*ibid.*).

7 October

President Rafsanjani initiates a clamp-down on "hoarders and profiteers 'not satisfied with reasonable profits'" (*Keesing's* Oct. 1994, 40254; Xinhua 16 Oct. 1994; *International Herald Tribune* 21 Nov. 1994). The government is empowered to punish "profiteers," with penalties ranging from fines and flogging to imprisonment and execution (*Keesing's* Oct. 1994, 40254).

10 October

Despite assurances by the Iranian government that Afghan refugees would be allowed to remain in Iran an additional 8 months (see 14 Sept. 1994 entry), AFP reports that Iran has increased pressure on the refugees to leave the country (AFP 10 Oct. 1994). According to one Afghan diplomat, Iranian police are "systematically confiscating [Afghan refugees'] identity cards and providing them instead with a temporary permit valid for a few weeks" (*ibid.*). Once the temporary permit expires, the Afghan asylum seeker must leave or be forcibly ejected. According to AFP, these claims were confirmed by UNHCR officials in Tehran (*ibid.*).

23 October

Retired army General Azizollah Amir-Rahimi, long known for his harsh criticism of the Iranian government, pens a letter calling on Iran's religious clerics to "return to the mosques and theological seminaries" and allow "competent people to assume the government of the nation" (DPA 25 Oct. 1994; *Al-Majallah* 6 Nov. 1994; *The Ottawa Citizen* 2 Nov. 1994). The general also calls on the Iranian government to "normalise" relations with the United States (*MEI* 4 Nov. 1994, 13; *ibid.* 2 Dec. 1994, 14; Reuters 8 Nov. 1994). Amir-Rahimi, who had written a similar letter in September accusing the regime of "untold atrocities" (*The Ottawa Citizen* 2 Nov. 1994), was detained by security agents and questioned for several hours following publication of his letter (*ibid.*; *MEI* 4 Nov. 1994, 13).

24-25 October

An open letter signed by 134 Iranian writers and intellectuals is sent to the Iranian press and the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance (*Index on Censorship* Nov.-Dec. 1994a, 241; *Le Monde* 14 Nov. 1994; *The Ottawa Citizen* 2 Nov. 1994; AFP 25 Oct. 1994). The writers protest the "censorship and harassment" of domestic authors and urge the creation of an independent trade union to "restore freedom of thought ... [and] fight collectively against censorship" (*ibid.*; *Le Monde* 14 Nov. 1994; *Index on Censorship* Nov.-Dec. 1994b, 63-64; *ibid.* Nov.-Dec. 1994a, 241). According to *Index on Censorship*, on 30 October the Tehran Times demands that legal action be taken against the signatories to the letter (*ibid.*).

Later reports indicate that the letter writers are denounced in the press as prostitutes, homosexuals, drug addicts, perverts and agents of Mossad and the CIA (*Index on Censorship* Jan.-Feb. 1995, 8; *Le Monde* 14 Nov. 1994; *MEI* 2 Dec. 1994, 14; *Keesing's* Nov. 1994b, 40304). An Iranian cleric warns that Muslims may retaliate against the writers (*ibid.*; *Country Reports* 1994 1995, 1080). One source reports that the denunciation of the female writers as "prostitutes" resulted in some of them being sexually assaulted on Tehran streets (*MEI* 2 Dec. 1994, 14).

29 October

Several mullahs close to Ayatollah Hoseyn Montazeri are arrested (*Al-Sharq Al-Awsat* 2 Nov. 1994). Montazeri, once groomed as the successor to Ayatollah Khomeini, is known for his vocal disapproval of the Iranian government and leading clerics. The mullahs are accused of "instigating sedition" after circulating copies of a Montazeri letter criticizing the government (*ibid.*).

30 October

An Iranian government official states that President Rafsanjani is still the best qualified person to lead Iran and hints that the constitution may be amended to allow Rafsanjani to pursue a third term as president (*IRNA* 30 Oct. 1994; *Xinhua* 30 Oct. 1994). Rafsanjani, however, rejects any move to amend the constitution to allow his reelection (*ibid.*; *Reuters* 27 Dec. 1994).

31 October

Hundreds of Iranian women rally outside the French embassy in Tehran (*Xinhua* 31 Oct. 1994; *Moneyclips* 1 Nov. 1994; *Reuters* 2 Nov. 1994a). The women protest the French government's decision to ban female students from wearing traditional Muslim veils or hijab in French schools (*ibid.*; *Xinhua* 31 Oct. 1994; *Moneyclips* 1 Nov. 1994).

1 November

The Majlis passes a bill permitting law enforcement officers to use arms "during illegal armed rallies, and at ... time[s] of unrest and armed revolts" (*Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network* 1 Nov. 1994; *HRW* Dec. 1994, 271). Officers who make use of these new measures will not be subject to criminal or civil prosecution (*Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network* 1 Nov. 1994; *Voice of Iranian Kordestan* 13 Jan. 1995).

6 November

Iran launches scud missiles at a PMOI base near Baghdad, Iraq (*Voice of Mojahed* 6 Nov. 1994; *IRNA* 6 Nov. 1994; *MEI* 18 Nov. 1994, 10; *AFP* 6 Nov. 1994). A PMOI spokesman claims there are no casualties, although some buildings are damaged (*ibid.*).

7 November

The arrest of General Amir-Rahimi is confirmed (see 23 Oct. 1994 entry) (*Keesing's* Nov. 1994b, 40304). Government reports state that Amir-Rahimi, arrested on 31 October and again on 3 November (*MEI* 4 Nov. 1994, 13; *Reuters* 8 Nov. 1994; *AI* 11 Nov. 1994), "has been hospitalized in a psychiatric clinic for the treatment of 'neurological problems'" (*Keesing's* Nov. 1994b, 40304). *IRNA*, the Islamic republic's official news agency, reports that Amir-Rahimi has been hospitalized to treat an opium addiction (*Reuters* 8 Nov. 1994; *AI* 11 Nov. 1994).

The following day Amir-Rahimi's wife reports that her 28-year-old son is missing, fearing that he too has been arrested by Iranian authorities (*Reuters* 8 Nov. 1994). Amnesty International reports confirm the 8 November arrest of Mehrdad Amir-Rahimi (*AI* 11 Nov. 1994; *AI* 28 Nov. 1994a; *Country Reports* 1994 1995, 1080).

A bomb explodes in southern Tehran, killing two people (*Keesing's* Nov. 1994a, 40304; BBC Summary 9 Nov. 1994). The PMOI is blamed for the attack (*ibid.*; *Keesing's* Nov. 1994a, 40304).

9 November

Iranian military jets bomb KDPI headquarters in northern Iraq (MENA 9 Nov. 1994; INA 9 Nov. 1994; *MEI* 18 Nov. 1994, 10; *Keesing's* Nov. 1994a, 40304). Iranian jets also attack PMOI bases, killing at least one person (*ibid.*; *MEI* 18 Nov. 1994, 10).

In response to recent Iranian acts of aggression, the Iraqi ambassador submits a letter of protest to the United Nations. According to the Iraqi News Agency (INA), a UN spokesman states that the secretary-general is monitoring the situation and encourages both Iran and Iraq to "exercise maximum self-restraint and abandon such [hostile] actions, which will only escalate tension in the region" (INA 9 Nov. 1994).

12 November

Amnesty International reports that Mohammad Khandjari, a Tehran taxi driver, has been arrested and reportedly beaten by Revolutionary Guards outside his home (AI 17 Nov. 1994). Khandjari was apparently arrested for participating in the Qazvin riots of 3 August (see 3 Aug. 1994 entry), and Amnesty International fears he may be tortured while in prison (*ibid.*).

14 November

Mohammed Ali Assadi, an alleged monarchist opposition leader, is assassinated in Bucharest, Romania (*Country Reports* 1994 1995, 1078; Reuters 14 Nov. 1994). A UNHCR spokesman states that in October 1994, Assadi, expressing "fears for his safety in Romania," had applied for asylum through the United Nations (*ibid.* 15 Nov. 1994; *ibid.* 16 Nov. 1994). On 17 November Romanian police, claiming Assadi had been involved in "illicit business," announce that he was killed by rival Iranian criminals in Romania (Reuters 17 Nov. 1994). The Iranian embassy in Bucharest also alleges that Assadi was a criminal and that his murder was not political but "a conflict between criminals" (*ibid.*; *ibid.* 15 Nov. 1994; BBC Summary 16 Nov. 1994). Iranian opposition groups in London maintain that they have never heard of Mohammed Ali Assadi (Reuters 17 Nov. 1994).

16 November

AFP cites a report in *Abrar*, an Iranian newspaper, detailing the stoning deaths of three people in northern Iran (16 Nov. 1994). The two men and one woman had allegedly committed kidnapping, murder, rape and adultery (*ibid.*).

24 November

As part of celebrations to commemorate the birth of Fatima Zahra, the daughter of Muhammad, Ayatollah Khamenei pardons 190 female prisoners (AFP 24 Nov. 1994; IRIB Television 24 Nov. 1994). Although information on the nature of their crimes is not available, the women had been sentenced by Iranian general and revolutionary courts (*ibid.*).

27 November

Acclaimed writer and poet Ali Akbar Saidi-Sirjani dies in prison, allegedly of a heart attack (*Keesing's* Nov. 1994b, 40304; *Current History* Jan. 1995, 45; AI 28 Nov. 1994b; Reuters 28 Nov. 1994). Saidi-Sirjani was arrested in March 1994 and his imprisonment had been the focus of international attention (see 14 Mar. 1994 entry). Four days later over 100 exiled Iranian academics urge the UN to investigate `Sirjani's death (*ibid.* 1 Dec. 1994). Amnesty International also calls for an investigation into Sirjani's death, noting his family's contention that he had no previous history of heart problems (AI 29 Nov. 1994).

29 November

The "Marja-e-Taghlid" Grand Ayatollah Mohammad Ali Araki, the highest ranking Shia cleric, dies in Tehran (*Keesing's* Nov. 1994c, 40304; AFP 1 Dec. 1994; *Libération* 4 Dec. 1994, 16). Debate over the successor to Araki's position begins to escalate (*ibid.*; AFP 1 Dec. 1994).

December

The all-party British Parliamentary Human Rights Group issues a report on the situation of women and human rights in Iran (*WIN News* Winter 1995, 62; *The Middle East* Mar. 1995, 42; *The Ottawa Citizen* 8 Dec. 1994). The report cites several documented incidents of torture, oppression and executions of women improperly dressed, convicted of adultery or "spreading corruption" (*ibid.*; *WIN News* Winter 1995, 62). According to *WIN News*, the report states that "Iranian women are treated by the regime as subhumans" (*ibid.*; *The Ottawa Citizen* 8 Dec. 1994).

3 December

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei is listed as one of seven possible candidates for the position of Marja-e-Taghlid, the "source of religious emulation for Shiites worldwide" (AFP 3 Dec. 1994; IRIB Television 2 Dec. 1994). Khamenei later withdraws his candidacy, leaving the race open to more moderate clerics (Inter Press Service 21 Feb. 1995).

6 December

A French court finds Ali Vakili Rad guilty of murdering former Iranian prime minister Shahpur Bakhtiar (AFP 6 Dec. 1994a; *Middle East Times* 11-17 Dec. 1994, 3; *Keesing's* Dec. 1994, 40337). Bakhtiar was prime minister from January to February 1979. Rad, who French prosecutors argued had the backing of the Iranian government, was sentenced to life imprisonment for the August 1991 murder in Paris (see 6 Aug. 1991 entry) (*ibid.*; *Country Reports 1994* 1995, 1078). Some sources indicate that Massud Hendi, an alleged accomplice of Rad's, is given a ten-year prison term (AFP 6 Dec. 1994a; *Keesing's* Dec. 1994, 40337), although *Country Reports 1994* indicates that he was sentenced to 18 years (1995, 1078).

Ten people accused of armed robbery, extortion and arms smuggling are executed in southern Iran (Xinhua 6 Dec. 1994; Reuters 6 Dec. 1994; AFP 6 Dec. 1994b).

7 December

A man and a woman are reportedly stoned to death in Ramhormoz, a city in southwestern Iran. The two were accused of having an affair and of murdering the woman's husband (AFP 8 Dec. 1994; Reuters 7 Dec. 1994; *Chicago Tribune* 7 Dec. 1994).

9 December

A draft resolution on the status of human rights in Iran is delivered to the third committee of the UN General Assembly (IRNA 11 Dec. 1994). The states preparing the resolution are highly critical of Iran's human rights record, particularly its use of torture, executions and discrimination against women and minorities (*ibid.*; AP 13 Dec. 1994; *Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran* 4 Dec. 1994; Reuters 13 Dec. 1994). Specific concern is expressed over the continuing threat to the life of Salmon Rushdie and the recent deaths of three Christian ministers (*ibid.*; AP 13 Dec. 1994). The Iranian press calls the UN findings a "bunch of lies" (*Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran* 4 Dec. 1994), maintains that the rights of Iranian minorities are admirably protected in the Iranian constitution, and that "the Islamic Republic of Iran strictly observes the principles of tolerance and protection of the rights of religious minorities" (IRNA 1 Dec. 1994; *ibid.* 26 Dec. 1994).

Prior to release of the draft resolution, Iranian officials, upon learning of the committee's allegations,

proclaim Iran's willingness to accept representatives of international human rights groups, provided they are impartial (Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network 4 Dec. 1994). However, UN special representative Reynaldo Galindo Pohl's exclusion from Iran is reaffirmed (see entries for 18 Feb. 1992 and 23 Feb. 1993) (*ibid.*)

10 December

For the second time this year (see 22 Apr. 1994 entry) a group of foreign and Iranian media officials are granted permission to visit Evin prison (*International Herald Tribune* 12 Dec. 1994; AFP 10 Dec. 1995; Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network 10 Dec. 1994). A senior state prison official tells the journalists that Iran is pursuing a policy of education and rehabilitation in its prison systems (*ibid.*; AFP 10 Dec. 1995). The journalists are denied access to areas of the prison where political prisoners are believed held (*International Herald Tribune* 12 Dec. 1994).

26 December

Iranian theology students protest outside the home of Ayatollah Hoseyn Ali Montazeri, demanding that Montazeri no longer conduct classes in the Shiite Moslem religious school he directs (Reuters 27 Dec. 1994; AFP 26 Dec. 1994). Montazeri, considered a "disgraced religious leader," has long been critical of the Iranian government (see 2 Nov. 1994 entry) (*ibid.*).

1995

January

A declassified 1991 CIA document alleges Iranian involvement in the 1988 Pan Am Lockerbie bombing. Iranian officials deny the allegation, describing the document as a forgery and part of a propaganda campaign against Iran (Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran 25 Jan. 1995; *Mideast Mirror* 25 Jan. 1995, 19; *Manchester Guardian Weekly* 29 Jan. 1995, 1). A British official also denies Iranian involvement in the incident, describing the CIA report as dated "dud intelligence," and stating that "it clearly doesn't represent evidence" (Xinhua 24 Jan. 1995).

8 January

Sweden's Sveriges Radio Network reports that Abdolrahim Gavahi, the Iranian ambassador to Norway, has been recalled to Tehran after hinting that the Iranian government may remove the fatwa against Salmon Rushdie (Sveriges Radio Network 8 Jan. 1995; AFP 18 Jan. 1995). Norway reacts by recalling its own ambassador two weeks later (*ibid.*). Less than one month later Iranian deputy foreign minister Mahmoud Vaezi reportedly states that Rushdie must be killed, but senior Iranian government officials indicate that Iran would not be actively pursuing Rushdie (Reuters 9 Feb. 1995).

11 January

The Council of Guardians declares unconstitutional the law banning the import and distribution of satellite dishes (see 20 Sept. 1994 entry) (*Libération* 12 Jan. 1995, 16; *Country Reports* 1994 1995, 1080), which the Majlis had passed in late December 1994 (*Current History* Feb. 1995, 93; *The Times* 3 Jan. 1995; *Middle East Times* 8-14 Jan. 1995, p. 5). However, on 29 January Majlis deputies approve all of the amendments requested by the council (Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network 29 Jan. 1995). The Council of Guardians is comprised of 6 clergymen and 6 laymen who verify that all laws passed by the Majlis conform to the constitution and Islamic law (*Country Reports* 1994 1995, 1081).

14 January

A report from Baku, Azerbaijan contends that for the past 20 days, roads in Tabriz city, the capital of

Azerbaijani Iran, have been patrolled by armed Iranian gunmen (Turan 14 Jan. 1995). The patrols reportedly search all vehicles and question their occupants between midnight and 6 a.m. The report further suggests that Iranian authorities are trying to "persianize" the Azeri population in Iran by compelling Azeris to find work in Persian-dominated centres (*ibid.*).

15 January

Ayatollah Khamenei pardons or reduces the sentences of 841 prisoners to commemorate the birth of His Eminence Hojjat Bin Hasan Askari, the 12th Imam (IRIB 15 Jan. 1995; AFP 15 Jan. 1995). Although the nature of their crimes is not released, the prisoners were reportedly convicted by revolutionary, military and general courts (*ibid.*).

19 January

AFP reports the recent opening of an all-women cancer clinic (AFP 19 Jan. 1995). A new government policy, branded "gender apartheid" by its detractors, seeks to further lessen the social interaction of men and women by creating women-only institutions and services (*The Ottawa Citizen* 23 Aug. 1994). *The Ottawa Citizen* cite numerous examples of how women are separated from men in day-to-day life in order to protect them from a "wide range of dangers" (*The Ottawa Citizen* 23 Aug. 1994; DPA 27 July 1994), including women-only taxis, buses, banks and special shopping hours for women (*ibid.*; *The Ottawa Citizen* 23 Aug. 1994).

20 January

A clash among soccer fans escalates into an anti-government demonstration when police enter the stadium to restore order. Fans reportedly chant anti-Islamic regime slogans and set fire to seats in the stadium (Voice of Iranian Kordestan 23 Jan. 1995; DPA 21 Jan. 1995). Later unconfirmed reports indicate that several people were killed and hundreds wounded and arrested during the clash (*ibid.*; Reuters 21 Jan. 1995; Voice of Iranian Kordestan 5 Feb. 1995). The opposition KDPI expresses concern about the arrests and demands the immediate release of all those detained (*ibid.*).

22 January

An Iranian television broadcast claims that over 1,500 "addicts" and drug smugglers have been arrested in national anti-narcotics operations in the last week (Voice of the Islamic Republic First Program Network 22 Jan. 1995). Other reports indicate that more than 50,000 drug traffickers have been arrested in recent months (Xinhua 22 Feb. 1995b; *ibid.* 5 Mar. 1995; AFP 30 Jan. 1995).

25 January

Al-Sharq Al-Awsat reports that in an open letter to Iranian authorities, Ayatollah Seyyed Sadeq Rowhani has "accused the Iranian government of 'violating the basic principles of Islam'" (*Al-Sharq Al-Awsat* 25 Jan. 1995). Rowhani, a senior Iranian Ayatollah, protests the storming of private homes, the confiscation of private property, government interference in the selection of a new "source of religious emulation" and the reiteration of fatwas in Ayatollah Khomeini's name (*ibid.*).

9 February

Ayatollah Khamenei pardons numerous prisoners on the 16th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution in Iran (IRNA 11 Feb. 1995; BBC Summary 11 Feb. 1995). Those pardoned include prisoners convicted of armed robbery, kidnapping, rape and bribery (*ibid.*).

11 February

A bomb explodes in a mosque in Narmak, east of Tehran, one day after Iran celebrates the 16th anniversary of the Islamic revolution. IRNA reports no injuries, and a suspect was reportedly arrested five hours after the incident (IRNA 12 Feb. 1995; AP 12 Feb. 1995; Xinhua 12 Feb. 1995). No group

has claimed responsibility for the blast (Xinhua 12 Feb. 1995).

12 February

Iranian authorities close *Jahan-e Islam* for violating press laws (AFP 12 Feb. 1995; IRNA 13 Feb. 1995; MEI 17 Feb. 1995, 13; FBIS 13 Feb. 1995). The newspaper, which is owned by a brother of Ayatollah Khomeini, had reportedly been critical of both Islam and the present clerical leadership in Iran (*ibid.*). AFP reports that the paper recently carried an interview in which former MP 'Ali Akhbar Mohtashami criticized Rafsanjani's pro-market economic reforms (AFP 12 Feb. 1995).

Mid-February

Middle East Times reports that an Iranian journalist is administered 74 lashes and suspended for three years for fabricating news stories. The journalist reportedly confessed to the crime, claiming he wanted to increase sales and circulation figures for his publication (*Middle East Times* 19-25 Feb. 1995, 3; *The Independent* 14 Feb. 1995).

20 February

UN representative Reynaldo Galindo Pohl submits his report on the human rights situation in Iran for 1994. Pohl acknowledges Iran's August recognition of the "universal character of human rights," but states that the number of public executions continues to rise and that the sentences handed down by Iranian courts are still incompatible with international norms (AFP 20 Feb. 1995; Reuters 22 Feb. 1995; DPA 20 Feb. 1995). Pohl's report indicates that the rights of prisoners, political dissidents, women and religious and ethnic minorities are particularly susceptible to abuse (*ibid.*). An Iranian foreign ministry spokesman responds that the report only repeats previous charges (Reuters 22 Feb. 1995), and is "influenced by the allegations of the United States" (Xinhua 22 Feb. 1995a; Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network 22 Feb. 1995).

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