
Amalie Andresen

Fra: yag ghobishi [yag104@hotmail.com]

Sendt: 20. november 2006 23:17

Til: Amalie Andresen

Emne: Alahwaz i sydvestlige Iran

Kære: Amalia andrisen

Jeg skriver til dig, hvor over 11 unge Ahwazi arab folk (Sydvestlige Iran) skal hænges på åben gaden, det er meget alvorlige situation, og det er heller ikke sidste gang

At unge ahwazi folk bliver domt til døden af præstyr i Iran. der eneste krav de Havde var demokrati og frihed, men præstyr kalde dem ventro og vestlig spioner

(se vedlagte dekomment).

Jeg hedder Yasin Ghobishi og er talsmand for Ahwaz kultur Centret i Danmark, og Vil meget gerne have et møde med de Danske myndighed i folketing, hvor jeg vil

forklare situation i Ahwaz Land (sydvestlige Iran) som kaldes Khozistan af regimmet i Iran jeg vil gerne bede det danske folketing om at presse regimmet i Iran for at stoppe

**Henrettelse af Ahwazi unge.
Jeg håber snarligest at høre fra dig.**

**Beste Hilsner
Yasin Gh.
Talsmand for Centret i Danmark
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http://www.ahwazstudies.org/main/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogsection&id=4&Itemid=47&lang=EN

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Urgent Action- AHRO**Ahwaz Human Rights Organization**

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Urgent Action

To: General Secretary of the United Nations, World Leaders, International Human Rights Organizations and NGOs, and to World Media:

Ten ethnic Arab-Iranian (Ahwazi-Arabs) rights activists are going to be hanged in Iran this week, possibly on Tuesday or Wednesday.

On November 9, Abbas Jaafari Dowlatabadi, head of Iran's Judiciary in the southern province of Khuzistan, told the Islamic Republic News Agency that Iran's Supreme Court has confirmed the execution sentence of 10 Iranian Arabs.

We are making an emergency appeal to you to save their lives. Your action might help stop these executions.

The names of the 10 men are:

1. Ali Motairi, 2. Abdullah Solaimani, 3. Abdulreza Sanawati (Zergani), 4. Ghasem Salamat, 5. Mohamad Chaab Pour, 6. Abdulmir Farajullah Chaab, 7. Alireza Asakreh, 8. Majed Alboghbaish, 9. Khalaf Khaziri, 10. Malek Banitamim

These men have been found guilty of allegedly bombing oil installations at Southwestern Iranian province of Khuzesatn (al-Ahwaz), homeland to 5 million Ahwazi-Arabs. All 10 men are members of the persecuted Ahwazi community. The trials were deeply flawed, according to Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and other international and Iranian human rights organizations. All the evidence points to their innocence.

All 10 men were tortured into making false confessions. Their lawyers were not allowed to see them prior to their trial and they were given the prosecution case only hours before the start of the trial, which was held in secret. The lawyers for the condemned men (Khalil Saeedi, Mansur Atashneh, Dr Abdulhasan Haidari, Jawad Tariri, Faisal Saeedi and Taheri Nasab), all Ahwazi-Arabs but one, have been arrested for complaining about the illegal and unjust nature of the men's trials. They have been charged with threatening national security.

Iranian media announced that the confessions (forced) of the 10 men sentenced to death will be broadcasted on Khuzestan TV, on Monday evening, 13 November. Their executions will be held in public, probably on Tuesday or Wednesday. This follows the pattern when two other Ahwazis, Ali Afrawi-(age 17) and Mehdi Nawaseri (20 years old) were executed in March of this year for similar charges.

Although Ahwazi-Arab homeland in Iran's Khuzestan province is one of the most oil-rich regions in the world and represents up to 90 per cent of Iran's oil production. Yet this community endures extreme levels of poverty, unemployment and illiteracy. Ahwazis are subjected to repression, racial discrimination and faced with land confiscation, forced displacement and forced assimilation.

In addition to the 10 due to be killed next week, 9 other Ahwazis (including 3 brothers) are also due to be executed later, after they were sentenced to death on 8 June, 2006 following a one-day trial in absence of lawyers or witnesses. Two of these 9 men sentenced to death, Nazem Bureihi and Abdolreza Nawaseri, were already serving prison sentences for insurgency at the time of the bomb attacks for which the regime claims they were responsible for. "One of the wonders of the Iranian Judiciary is that it can accuse a person of carrying out bombings while he's in prison," said Sarah Leah Whitson, director of the Middle East and North Africa division at Human Rights Watch. "That lays bare the arbitrariness of his conviction."

The convictions are evidently arbitrary and are intended to collectively punish Ahwazi Arabs for opposing the system of apartheid that they are subjected to.

Peaceful opposition among Ahwazi Arabs to the Iranian regime's racist policies of ethnic cleansing has been brutally suppressed. Since April 15, 2005 the beginning of the Ahwazi Intifada (Uprising), over 25,000 Ahwazis were arrested, at least 131 were killed and over 150 were disappeared (believed to have been tortured and killed by Iranian security forces). Iranian authorities level accusations against the USA, Great Britain and Israel as the cause of Ahwazi demands for democracy, social and economic justice. Ethnic cleansing against Iranian-Arabs in Khuzestan has intensified since the mid-1990s, particularly following the election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

We urge for an immediate action to pressure the Iranian government to commute these sentences.

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<http://hrw.org/english/docs/2006/11/11/iran14560.htm>

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Ahwazi

2003-11-14

Geography

Boundaries from the North, mountains of Lurestan and Kurdistan, from the East and Southeast Zagrus Mountains, from south Dashtestan and the Gulf, from the West Iraq, South and Southwest is the Gulf and the Shat-el-Arab Waterway. Ahwaz (Arabistan) or Khuzestan is strategically located on the northern tip of the Gulf and the Shatt-al-Arab waterway- It sits atop of a vast mineral resources including a reserve of over 40 billion barrels of oil and 210 billion cubic meters of natural gas, which is the second known oil and gas reserves in the world. The land produces 3.5 -5 million barrels of oil per day, or 20% of OPEC' daily production.

People

Population and Culture
The population is estimated to be between 4 and 6 million. The U.S. State Department 2002 Human Rights Report estimates the Ahwazi Arabs in Iran to be over 4 million.

Prior to its annexation in April 20, 1925, Arabistan enjoyed full autonomy and independence at various times in its history of 5,000 years. Arabic was taught and spoken as the official language prior to annexation.

After the emergence of Reza Shah and by enforcing centralization, he invaded Arabistan with 22,000 soldiers, overthrew the local administration, occupied and destroyed Arabistan's sovereignty, and subordinated the province to Iran, all against the wishes of its Arab inhabitants and without their direct involvement or a referendum. The state adopted Farsi (Persian) as the official language, which is spoken by less than 40% of the total population. The government shut down the schools and banned Arabic education in the province where about 90% of the people were native Arabic speakers. The Iranian government officially changed the name of the province from Arabistan to Khuzestan in 1936.

This is how Ahwazi Arab people were put under political, cultural, social and economic subjugation by the past Iranian monarchist and the current clerical regimes for the past 78 years. These regimes stripped Arabs of Ahwaz from their human rights and lowered their status to the ranks of 2nd and 3rd class citizens.

History

Ahwaz used to be an autonomous Arab territory that had its own ruler, Shaykh Khazal, until he was deposed in 1925 by Persian General Reza Khan, who went on to become king of Iran. Ahwaz gradually lost its political, economic and cultural independence when it was completely annexed by Reza Shah Pahlavi, who forcefully took over Ahwaz. Before Iran annexed Ahwaz, the Persians referred to the region as Arabistan (signifying the territory's Arab character). After its annexation, the central government changed the territory's name to Khuzestan. Since 1925, Ahwaz, or Khuzestan, is a province that lies in southwest Iran, bordering Iraq, Kuwait and the Persian Gulf. Ahwaz is now the name of the province's capital, used by Persians and Arabs alike. However, Persians refer to the province as Khuzestan, while Arabs still refer to the province as Ahwaz (or Al-Ahwaz in the Arabic language).

Ahwaz is very rich in oil and natural resources. However, the Ahwazi people do not benefit from the riches of their own land. Our people deserve to benefit from the wealth generated by the resources on their own lands. The only "benefits" they receive is a terribly polluted environment resulting from a mismanaged oil industry and the diversion of oil wealth to Tehran. The quality of the drinking water and irrigation water is poor due to an inadequate sewage system and industrial contamination, primarily from the sugar cane plants. This problem is exacerbated by the diversion of water out of Ahwaz to other parts of Iran and the sale of Ahwaz's water to the Gulf States by the Iranian government.

The confiscation of Arab-owned land by the Iranian government has been an established policy since 1925. The lands are typically given over to non-Arab settlers and used by the government as new construction sites. No matter who is in charge in Tehran, be it Reza Shah, his son, Mohammad Reza Shah, or the heads of the Islamic Republic, the same undemocratic policy has always been pursued toward the national and religious minorities in Iran, and in particular, toward the Arab people of Ahwaz.

In recent years, self-awareness and the growth of the Ahwazi Arab national movement have been on the rise. This is a reality that cannot be ignored when dealing with the issues of freedom and democracy in Iran and the Middle East at large, particularly in the Gulf region. Due to its fertile land, numerous rivers, and vast oil reserves, Ahwaz has the resources to sustain itself and generate significant income from oil and agricultural exports. Bordering Iraq, Kuwait, and the Persian Gulf, Ahwaz weighs in heavily in geopolitical balance of the Middle East.

Organizations

Democratic Solidarity Party of Ahwaz (DSPA) is the representative of nation of al-Ahwaz (Arabistan) in UNPO.

Statistics

Geographical	territory:	69,000	km ²
Population:	4	6	million
Language:			Arabic
Religion:	Islam with small minority of Christians		

Thematic Issues

Tolerance Self-determination Non-violence Human Rights Democracy

News

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Appeals

UNPO on Imminent Unjust Execution of Ahwazi Arab brothers UNPO on Unlawful Arrest and Detention of Ahwazi women UNPO on Illegal Syrian Handover of Ahwazi-Arabs to Iran

Reports

Ahwazi: WS on Human Rights Violations Against Ahwazi Arabs in Iran Ahwazi: WS on the Case of Ahwazi Arabs in Iran [The Plight of the Ahwazis](#) [More Ahwazi reports](#)

Activities

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European Parliament condemns Iran over Ahwazi executions



british ahwazi friendship society

European Parliament condemns Iran over Ahwazi executions

The European Parliament has condemned the imminent execution of 11 Ahwazi Arabs by the Iranian regime in a motion supported by all political groups.

The motion highlighted the Iranian regime's discrimination against ethnic minorities, particularly the Ahwazi Arabs who are "being displaced from their villages according to statements by Miloon Kothari, UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, while some of them remain in detention or have been sentenced to death."

It "condemns the current disrespect of minority rights and demands that minorities be allowed to exercise all rights granted by the Iranian Constitution and international law" and "calls upon the authorities to eliminate all forms of discrimination based on religious or ethnic grounds or against persons belonging to minorities, such as Kurds, Azeris, Arabs and Baluchis."

The motion also "calls on the Iranian authorities to immediately halt the imminent execution of the Arabs Abdullah Suleymani, Abdulreza Sanawati Zergani, Qasem Salamat, Mohammad Jaab Pour, Abdulmir Farjallah Jaab, Alireza Asakreh, Majed Alboghbaish, Khalaf Derhab Khudayrawi, Malek Banitamim, Sa'id Saki and Abdullah Al-Mansouri."

The vote of condemnation was supported by the Conservative, Socialist, Green, Liberal Democrat, Radical and Communist groups, representing the entire spectrum of political opinion in Europe. British Green MEPs Caroline Lucas and Jean Lambert have pushed the issue of Ahwazi Arab rights at the European Parliament and have strongly condemned the Iranian regime's violent persecution of minorities (click here for further details).

The European Parliament's unanimous censure of the Iranian regime's treatment of minorities will have a major impact on EU relations with Iran. The mass executions of Ahwazi Arabs have focused attention on the regime's violent racism, with the campaign for a halt in executions gathering pace. The Finnish government - which currently holds the EU presidency - is reportedly preparing to take up the matter of executions of Ahwazis with the Iranian government on behalf of the EU.

The lobbying effort in the UK has been intense. William Hague, the Shadow Foreign Secretary and former leader of the Conservative Party, met with Foreign Office officials yesterday to highlight concerns about the execution of Ahwazi Arabs. His office told the British Ahwazi Friendship Society that the officials "assured him that they are taking the case extremely seriously, and that the FCO regularly raises the issue of individual death sentences with the Iranian government. Mr Hague believes it is important that international condemnation of this case is heard in Tehran, and he will continue to follow the matter closely."

Labour MP Chris Bryant, a long-standing critic of Iran's atrocious human rights record, is preparing to table an Early Day Motion in the British parliament which will condemn Iran's mass execution of Ahwazis.

DEMONSTRATION AGAINST EXECUTIONS AND ETHNIC CLEANSING OF AHWAZI ARABS:

DATE: SATURDAY 18 NOVEMBER

TIME: 1PM-3PM

PLACE:

IRANIAN EMBASSY

PRINCE'S GATE

LONDON

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اطلق النافذة

News Release, 13 November, 2006

EURO-MPs DEMAND UN HALTS IRAN EXECUTIONS EXECUTIONS OF ARAB ACTIVISTS 'ETHNIC CLEANSING', SAY GREENS



UN SECRETARY General Kofi Annan should insist Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad halts the executions of ten Iranian Arabs due to take place tomorrow, the European Parliament heard today.

UK Green Party MEPs Caroline Lucas and Jean Lambert have called on Mr Annan – as well as a range of senior EU and UN leaders – to step in and demand Tehran commutes the death sentences, which follow convictions in unfair trials based on evidence extracted under torture and widely condemned by human rights groups worldwide.

Dr Lucas, who represents South-East England, said: *"These executions seem to be part of a deliberate campaign of ethnic cleansing of the Ahwazi Arabs, who make up three per cent of Iran 's population, and the international community must intervene to stop them."*

"All 10 men were tortured into making false confessions. None had a fair trial, according to both Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch."

As well as writing to Kofi Annan, she demanded immediate action from EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana, the EU's External Relations Commissioner Benito Ferrero-Waldner (with whom Dr Lucas first raised the issue of persecution of Ahwazi Arab persecution last month) and the UN's High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour.

London 's Green Party MEP Jean Lambert said the men's convictions were in clear breach of international human rights standards.

"Their lawyers were not allowed to see them prior to their trial and they were given the prosecution case only hours before the start of the court proceedings, which were held in secret."

"The men must be released without charge or face new fair trials in accordance with internationally accepted standards," she added.

The Green Party MEP, who has been awarded for her work on Justice and Human Rights, today called on the European Parliament for urgent action to halt the executions.

She has previously written to the Iranian President, the British embassy and other relevant authorities on the issue and today raised the situation with the Iranian Embassy in London , as well as EU officials.

"The situation of these ten people is now desperate. I am adding my voice to the many asking for the death penalty not to be carried out," she said.

"Iran is a signatory to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and should therefore grant these men a fair and public hearing by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal. By not doing so and continuing with the executions Iran will critically damage its international reputation."

The ten men in question were originally convicted of terrorism offences. Since the trial the lawyers have been arrested for complaining about the illegal and unjust nature of the trials, and have been charged with threatening national security. The men could be hanged as soon as tomorrow, according to Iranian media reports.

Human rights groups have warned that the trials form part of a wider campaign of ethnic cleansing by Tehran , which they say is 'waging a secret, racist war against its Arab population'.

Iran 's Arabs (known as the Ahwazi Arabs) reside predominantly in the south western province of Khuzestan and are believed to make up approximately three per cent of Iran 's population. They represent a majority in Al-Ahwaz, an area which is home to most of Iran 's oilfields.

According to the Ahwaz Human Rights Organization, over the course of the past year 25,000 Ahwazis have been arrested; 131 have been executed, and a further 150 have disappeared. Amnesty International has recently

reported that Tehran has been imprisoning Ahwazi children along with their mothers in an attempt to force their political activist fathers to surrender to the police. Ahwazi political parties, trade unions and student groups are illegal. Arab candidates have been barred from standing for election.

The MEPs also called on the UN and EU to investigate the wider context and take immediate steps to ensure the protection and basic rights of the Ahwazi Arabs.

Dr Lucas added: *"The international community must act now to prevent the escalation of yet another campaign of persecution against an ethnic minority. The UN and EU must send a clear message to Tehran that the world is watching – and is not prepared to stand by and find itself saying 'Never Again' again."*

ENDS

The ten men facing execution, possibly as soon as tomorrow, are: Ali Motairi, Abdullah Solaimani, Abdulreza Sanawati (Zergani), Ghasem Salamat, Mohamad Chaab Pour, Abdulmir Farajullah Chaab, Alireza Asakreh, Majed Alboghubaish, Khalaf Khaziri and Malek Banitamim.

[Dr Lucas's letter to Kofi Annan and other UN and EU officials](#)

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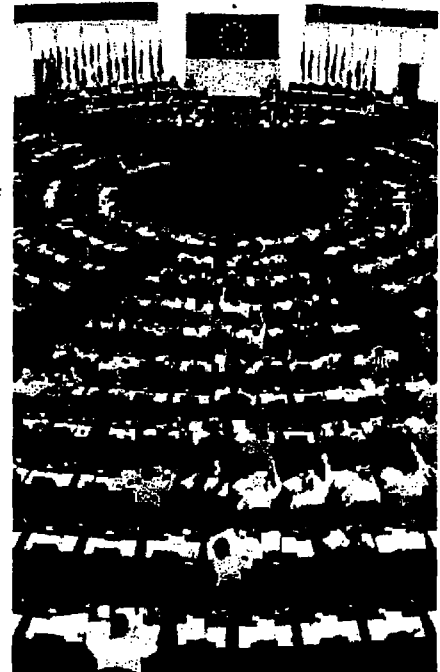
European Parliament condemns Iran over Ahwazi executions-BAFS**Thursday, November 16, 2006**

The European Parliament has condemned the imminent execution of 11 Ahwazi Arabs by the Iranian regime in a motion supported by all political groups.

The motion highlighted the Iranian regime's discrimination against ethnic minorities, particularly the Ahwazi Arabs who are "being displaced from their villages according to statements by Miloon Kothari, UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, while some of them remain in detention or have been sentenced to death."

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The vote of condemnation was supported by the Conservative, Socialist, Green, Liberal Democrat, Radical and Communist groups, representing the entire spectrum of political opinion in Europe. British Green MEPs Caroline Lucas and Jean Lambert have pushed the issue of Ahwazi Arab rights at the European Parliament and have strongly condemned the Iranian regime's violent persecution of minorities (click here for further details).

The European Parliament's unanimous censure of the Iranian regime's treatment of minorities will have a major impact on EU relations with Iran. The mass executions of Ahwazi Arabs have focused attention on the regime's violent racism, with the campaign for a halt in executions gathering pace. The Finnish government - which currently holds the EU presidency - is reportedly preparing to take up the matter of executions of Ahwazis with the Iranian government on behalf of the EU.

The lobbying effort in the UK has been intense. William Hague, the Shadow Foreign Secretary and former leader of the Conservative Party, met with Foreign Office officials yesterday to highlight concerns about the execution of Ahwazi Arabs. His office told the British Ahwazi Friendship Society that the officials "assured him that they are taking the case extremely seriously, and that the FCO regularly raises the issue of individual death sentences with the Iranian government. Mr Hague believes it is important that international condemnation of this case is heard in Tehran, and he will continue to follow the matter closely."

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The barbaric deaths meant to spread fear

Mail Foreign Service Last updated at 08:39am on 15th November 2006

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Hanged by crane: A common execution in Tehran

[ENLARGE](#)

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As Tony Blair warms to Iran, Tehran's hard-line Islamic regime is preparing to hoist 11 Iranian Arabs from cranes and slowly strangle them to death in public.

The men were convicted of involvement in a bombing spree after secret trials. But activists insist they are innocent and paying the price for merely hailing from the country's downtrodden Arab minority.

It is feared they could be hanged as early as today because their 'confessions' were broadcast on Iranian television on Monday night.

Two other ethnic Arabs were publicly hanged from a crane in March just two days after their heavily-edited 'confessions' were televised.

Public executions are not uncommon in the Islamic Republic. It carries out more every year than any country but China. Some are particularly gruesome.

In front of a baying crowd last year, serial child killer Mohammad Bijeh was flogged at the stake, stabbed in the back by the 17-year-old brother of one of his 16 victims and stoned by the chanting mob.

Then, to shouts of 'make him twist', he was hoisted up on a crane by a noose that had been placed around his neck by the mother of another victim.

It took more than five minutes for him to choke to death while he was taunted and spat at. 'Dance and think of what you did to our kids,' one bereaved father shouted. His corpse was then left dangling for another 20 minutes.

The 11 were convicted for their alleged role in explosions that killed more than 20 people in Iran's oil-rich province of Khuzestan last year.

The slow strangulation method to be used on them is designed to maximise suffering. It prolongs the agony and 'intimidates the public', said Dr Karim Abdian, executive director of the Ahwaz Human Rights Organisation in Washington.

The 11 were due to be hanged in the city of Ahwaz, capital of Khuzestan, where ethnic Arabs are a majority.

Now it is believed the hangings will take place in several cities with largely Arab populations to spread the fear, said Dr Abdian.

The imminent executions are raising a storm of protest from British MPs. Human rights campaigner Peter Tatchell, backed by Labour MP Chris Bryant and Tory MP Michael Gove, is urging the Government to petition Iran to commute the executions. 'The men were tortured into giving false confessions,' said Mr Tatchell.

The sentences were imposed after trials behind closed doors which human rights groups say did not meet international standards. One of the condemned men was even in jail at the time of the bombings.

Iranian and foreign activists say the trials of the 11 were flawed, the charges baseless and the sentencing based on a spurious interpretation of the law.

'We've challenged the regime if they have any evidence whatsoever of any crime to show it and they haven't been able to show a shred of evidence,' said Dr Abdian.

The condemned men come from three groups, he added. Most are from a reformist ethnic Arab party whose goal is to win rights for Ahwazi Arabs through legal and constitutional means.

The peaceful group was banned last week after the Iranian judiciary accused it of inciting unrest and opposing the Islamic system.

Some are human rights activists and others 'are just professionals like engineers and doctors who have been picked just because they are smart people of the Arabs'.

Add your comment Reader comments (3)

Here's what readers have had to say so far. Why not add your thoughts below?

And Tony Blair wants dialogue with people who not only condone this but think it's perfectly acceptable?

How outrageous.

- Dr Nick Ashley, Huntingdon, England

This shows the correct way to deal with terrorists.

- Ken, UK

Iran is an Islamic state. And Islam a peaceful religion. Why don't we convert as soon as possible. I just can't wait!

- Jim, Cardiff

Add your comment

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PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 13/127/2006

13 November 2006

Further Information on UA 107/06 (MDE 13/042/2006, 28 April 2006) Fear of torture and ill-treatment/ Medical concern/ Possible prisoners of conscience - New concern: Fear of imminent execution

IRAN	Ali Matouri-Zadeh (m), aged 30] husband and wife
	Fahima Ismail Badawi (f) aged 26]
	Salma', aged eight months] daughter

Ali Matouri-Zadeh, a member of Iran's Arab minority and one of the founding members of Hizb al-Wifaq (or Lejnet al-Wefaq) an illegal political party in Iran, has reportedly had his death sentence upheld by the Supreme Court. He could be executed at any time.

On 9 November, the head of the Khuzestan Prosecutor's offices, Abbas Ja'afari Dowlat Abadi, reportedly announced that the Supreme Court had upheld the death sentence against ten out of 19 people accused of involvement in bomb explosions in Khuzestan, including Ali Matouri-Zadeh, and that they would be publicly hanged.

Ali Matouri-Zadeh was reportedly arrested on 28 February and held incommunicado in an unknown place of detention where he has been at risk of torture or ill-treatment. His wife, Fahima Ismail Badawi, and her mother were reportedly arrested at the couple's home a few hours later and taken to Sepidar prison, in Khuzestan province. Her mother was released a week later.

Fahima Ismail Badawi was eight months' pregnant when she was arrested and gave birth to a daughter Salma' in the prison on 25 March 2006. Both mother and child were then reportedly transferred to Karoon prison. At the beginning of June, Fahima Ismail Badawi was reportedly sentenced to 15 years imprisonment by Branch 3 of the Revolutionary court in Ahvaz. She had been a school teacher in Ahvaz city, in Khuzestan province and had studied mathematics at Dezfoul University, north of Ahvaz, where she became politically active.

On 4 November, the Judiciary banned Hizb al-Wifaq and declared it illegal on charges of instigating unrest and opposing the system. According to a statement from the Ahvaz Prosecutor's office "The Lejnat al-Wefaq party (Committee of reconciliation) is illegal and ... membership and connection with that party will be severely confronted".

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Much of Iran's Arab community lives in the province of Khuzestan which borders Iraq. It is strategically important because it is the site of much of Iran's oil reserves, but the Arab population does not feel it has benefited as much from the oil revenue as the Persian population. Historically, the Arab community has been marginalised and discriminated against. Tension has mounted among the Arab population since April 2005, after it was alleged that the government planned to disperse the country's Arab population or to force them to relinquish their Arab identity. Hundreds were arrested and there have been reports of torture. Following bomb explosions in Ahvaz City in June and October 2005, which killed at least 14 people, and explosions at oil installations in September and October, the cycle of violence intensified, with hundreds more people reportedly arrested. Further bombings on 24 January 2006, in which at least six people were killed, were followed by further mass arrests. Two men, Mehdi Nawaseri and Ali Awdeh Afrawi, were executed in public on 2 March after they were convicted of involvement in the October bombings. Their executions followed unfair trials before a Revolutionary Court during which they are believed to have been denied access to lawyers, and their confessions, along with those of seven other men, were broadcast on television. At least 13 other Iranian Arabs are also reportedly under sentence of death, accused of involvement in the bombings.

distributing material against the state, having contact with dissident organizations operating abroad, and endangering state security. Amnesty International recognizes the right and responsibility of governments to bring to justice those suspected of criminal offences, but is unconditionally opposed to the death penalty as the ultimate violation of the right to life. Please see *Iran: Death Sentences appeal case – 11 Iranian Arab men facing death sentences*, AI Index MDE 13/051/2006, May 2006, <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGMDE130512006?open&of=ENG-IRN>

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English, Arabic, Persian or your own language:

- expressing grave concern that Ali Matouri-Zadeh may be in imminent danger of execution;
- urging the Iranian authorities to commute his death sentence immediately;
- asking for details of Ali Matouri-Zadeh and Fahima Ismail Badawi's trial proceedings, including the specific charges against them, whether they have been granted access to independent lawyers of their choice, and of any appeals they may have made against their sentences;
- acknowledging that governments have a responsibility to bring to justice those suspected of criminal offences, but stating your unconditional opposition to the death penalty, as the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment and violation of the right to life.
- calling on them to ensure that they are given immediate access to lawyers, their family, interpreters and any medical treatment they may need;
- seeking assurances that they are not being tortured or ill-treated;

APPEALS TO:

Leader of the Islamic Republic

His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei, The Office of the Supreme Leader
Shoahada Street, Qom, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: info@leader.ir OR istiftaa@wilayah.org

Fax: +98 251 774 2228 (mark "FAO the Office of His Excellency, Ayatollah al Udhma Khamenei")

Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary

His Excellency Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi
Ministry of Justice, Park-e Shahr, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: info@iranjudiciary.com

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Iran accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 13/126/2006

UA 301/06

Fear of imminent execution

13 November 2006

IRAN

Abdullah Suleymani (m) aged 27,
Abdulreza Sanawati Zergani (m),
Qasem Salamat (m) aged 43,
Mohammad Jaab Pour (m),
Abdulmir Farjallah Jaab (m),
Alireza Asakreh (m),
Majed Alboghubaish (m),
Khalaf Derhab Khudayrawi (m),
Malek Banitamim (m) aged 30

The nine men named above, all members of Iran's Arab minority, are believed to be at imminent risk of execution. According to reports the men have been convicted of being *mohareb* (at enmity with God) in connection with involvement in bomb explosions in the city of Ahvaz, in Khuzestan province, which took place in October 2005.

On 9 November, the head of the Khuzestan Prosecutor's offices, Abbas Ja'afari Dowlat Abadi, reportedly announced that the Supreme Court had upheld the death sentences against 10 out of 19 people involved in bomb explosions in Khuzestan and that they would be publicly hanged. There are fears these executions will be carried out in the coming days. The tenth man sentenced to death, Ali Matouri-Zadeh, is the subject of a separate Urgent Action (see UA 107/06, MDE 13/042/2006, 28 April 2006 and follow up MDE 13/127/2006, 13 November 2006).

According to information received by Amnesty International, Khalaf Derhab Khudayrawi was reportedly shot by the security forces on or around 2 March 2006 before being taken away. His family believed he had died in the shooting, but a few days later received a phone call from the authorities informing them that he had been transferred to the Sepidar detention centre. His wife Soghra Khudayrawi and four-year-old son Zeidan son were arrested in Ahvaz on 7 March 2006. (See UA 65/06, MDE 13/028/2006, 23 March 2006) and Iran: Appeal Case: *Four women and two children prisoners of conscience*, AI Index: MDE 13/059/2006, 17 May 2006).

Abdullah Suleymani, Mohammad Jaab Pour and Abdulmir Farjallah Jaab were also reportedly arrested on 7 March 2006.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Much of Iran's Arab community lives in the province of Khuzestan which borders Iraq. The Province is strategically important because it is the site of much of Iran's oil reserves, but the Arab population does not feel it has benefited as much from the oil revenue as the Persian population. Historically, the Arab community has been marginalised and discriminated against. Tension has mounted among the Arab population since April 2005, after it was alleged that the government planned to disperse the country's Arab population or to force them to relinquish their Arab identity. Hundreds were arrested and there have been reports of torture. Following bomb explosions in Ahvaz City in June and October 2005, which killed at least 14 people, and explosions at oil installations in September and October, the cycle of violence intensified, with hundreds people reportedly arrested. Further bombings on 24 January 2006, in which at least six people were killed, were followed by further mass arrests. Two men, Mehdi Nawaseri and Ali Awdeh Afrawi, were executed in public on 2 March after they were convicted of involvement in the October bombings. Their executions followed unfair trials before a Revolutionary Court during which they are believed to have been denied access to lawyers, and their confessions, along with those of seven other men, were broadcast on television. At least 13 other Iranian Arabs are also reportedly under sentence of death, accused of

involvement in the bombings, distributing material against the state, having contact with dissident organizations operating abroad, and endangering state security. Amnesty International recognizes the right and responsibility of governments to bring to justice those suspected of criminal offences, but is unconditionally opposed to the death penalty as the ultimate violation of the right to life. Please see *Iran: Death Sentences appeal case – 11 Iranian Arab men facing death sentences*, AI Index MDE 13/051/2006, May 2006).

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English, Arabic, Persian or your own language:

- expressing grave concern that the nine men (naming them) may be in imminent danger of execution;
- urging the Iranian authorities to commute their death sentences immediately;
- asking for details of the men's trial proceedings, including the specific charges against them, whether they have been granted access to independent lawyers of their choice, and of any appeals they may have made against their sentences;
- acknowledging that governments have a responsibility to bring to justice those suspected of criminal offences, but stating your unconditional opposition to the death penalty, as the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment and violation of the right to life.

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Email: info@iranjudiciary.com

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Iran accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.

Individual citizen rights are not enough-group rights are as important.- Daniel Brett



gozaar

نامه‌ای برای دموکراسی و حقوق بشر در ایران

A Journal on Democracy and Human Rights in Iran

Federalism: the Only Solution for Iran's Minorities

Daniel Brett



All Western democracies possess legislation to combat racism, but few have the commitment to ethnic equality enshrined in the Iranian Constitution. Article 15 allows the use of non-Persian regional and tribal languages in the media and education. Article 19 states that "All people of Iran, whatever the ethnic group or tribe to which they belong, enjoy equal rights; and colour, race, language, and the like, do not bestow any privilege", while Article 20 establishes the equal cultural rights for all. The Constitution is an acknowledgement that Iran is and always has been a multi-cultural society. Cultural equality is an Iranian tradition that dates back some 2,500 years to Cyrus the Great who similarly acknowledged the importance of regional identity, ruling over a plethora of different cultures and kingdoms through a system of autonomous satrapies.

While the Constitution may lay out commitments to equality, the reality is far different for Iran's cultural minorities. Iran has the dubious distinction as being one of the world's worst oppressors of minorities, with ethnic groups one of the regime's main targets. Atrocities against Iran's ethnic and cultural minorities occur on a daily basis.

Located in the geopolitically sensitive and oil-rich Khuzestan province - called Arabistan by the Safavid in early 16th century and changed by Reza Shah in 1936 to Khuzestan - neighbouring Iraq, the Ahwazi Arabs suffer more than most. The irony is that the regime preaches solidarity with the Palestinians, funding the Sunni Islamist group Hamas with the oil wealth extracted from land confiscated from Shia Arabs who comprise around 70 per cent of Khuzestan's population.

The treatment of the Ahwazi Arabs belies the regime's professed solidarity with the poor and dispossessed in the Arab world. Displaced from their traditional lands and crowded into slums, the Ahwazi Arabs endure human development indicators that fall well below those of the Palestinians and the Iranian national average. Illiteracy among Ahwazi Arab men is around 50-60 per cent for men, higher for women, compared to 14-18% for Iran as a whole and 4% for Palestinian territories. The average malnutrition rate for Iran is 11% and in the Palestinian territories 4%, but in the Arab district of Susangerd the level is around 80%. Unemployment among Ahwazi Arabs is around 50 per cent, compared to Iran's national average of 12 per cent and 30 per cent among Palestinians. Added to this are the lingering effects of the Iran-Iraq War, with landmines continuing to kill and maim Arab farmers and contamination from chemical weapons leading to high rates of birth deformities. Levels of poverty among Ahwazi Arabs outstrip many African countries: Zimbabwe has higher rates of literacy; Ethiopia has lower levels of child malnutrition. Poverty has fuelled a sense of despair among the youth, with a spiralling problem of drug addiction and suicide. Yet, these African levels of deprivation are occurring in a province that has more oil wealth than the UAE and Kuwait combined.

There is strong evidence that poverty is the result of institutional racism that has recently escalated into full-scale ethnic cleansing and violent repression. Despite constitutional guarantees of equality, Amnesty

International states that Ahwazi Arabs have "reportedly been denied state employment under the gozinesh criteria. Many villages and settlements reportedly have little or no access to clean running water, sanitation or other utilities such as electricity ... land expropriation by the Iranian authorities is reportedly so widespread that it appears to amount to a policy aimed at dispossessing Arabs of their traditional lands. This is apparently part of a strategy aimed at the forcible relocation of Arabs to other areas while facilitating the transfer of non-Arabs into Khuzestan and is linked to economic policies such as zero interest loans which are not available to local Arabs."

In a visit to Khuzestan in July 2005, UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing Miloon Kothari verified the fact that land confiscation was being conducted to set up housing and industrial projects that excluded the Ahwazi Arabs. He said: "...when you visit Ahwaz...there are thousands of people living with open sewers, no sanitation, no regular access to water, electricity and no gas connections... why is that? Why have certain groups not benefited? ... Again in Khuzestan, ...we drove outside the city about 20 km and we visited the areas where large development projects are coming up - sugar cane plantations and other projects along the river - and the estimate we received is that between 200,000 - 250,000 Arab people are being displaced from their villages because of these projects. And the question that comes up in my mind is, why is it that these projects are placed directly on the lands that have been homes for these people for generations? I asked the officials, I asked the people we were with. And there is other land in Khuzestan where projects could have been placed which would have minimised the displacement."

More than 200,000 hectares of land owned by Ahwazi Arabs farmers have been confiscated since the 1979 Revolution and given to the government sponsored Sugar Cane Project, an intensive sugar cultivation project. Around 47,000 hectares of Ahwazi Arab farmland in the Jofir area have been transferred to non-indigenous settlers and a further 25,000 hectares have been taken from Ahwazi Arab farmers and given to the government-owned Shilat corporation and government agencies. More than 6,000 hectares of Ahwazi farmland north of Shush have been taken to "resettle the faithful non-indigenous Persians", according to directives by the Ministry of Agriculture and the IRGC's Command. In 2004, the homes of 4,000 Arab residents of Sapidar were destroyed and bulldozed over in 2004 with little or no compensation to make way for a shining new housing development for settlers from Isfahan and Fars, enticed into Khuzestan with zero-interest loans not available to the local Ahwazi Arabs.

Ethnic cleansing has been stepped up under the Ahmadinejad administration with the creation of the 155 sq km Arvand Free Zone, a military-industrial zone along the border with Iraq's Basra province. Entire villages are being eradicated to make way for petrochemical projects that will profit only the ruling mullahs and their friends in the Chinese business community who are investing heavily in the zone. The now banned Hamsayeha newspaper has reported complaints from Arabs living on Minoo Island - where they have cultivated dates for centuries - that agents working for the government and the Arvand Free Zone are bullying them into selling their homes ahead of a planned land confiscation programme. Mostafa Motowarzadeh, the Majlis (parliament) member for Khorramshahr, has confirmed the problems facing the farmers. He added that the Iranian authorities were pushing ahead with acquisitions before the end of the official consultation period for the land acquisitions.

Faced with such blatant discrimination, poverty and ethnic cleansing, Ahwazi Arabs began mobilising around their right to equality. In 1999, taking advantage of the modest relaxation of political repression under the Khatami administration, Ahwazi Arab intellectuals set up the Lejnat Al-Wefaq (Reconciliation Committee) to campaign for equal cultural, political and economic rights. The group participated in elections and its general secretary, Jasem Shadidzadeh Al-Tamimi, succeeded in winning a parliamentary seat in the Sixth Majlis (2000-04) as well as winning all but one seat on the Ahwaz municipal council in 2003. However, in the last parliamentary elections in 2004, conservatives in the regime barred candidates nominated by Lajnat Al-Wefagh. The group was dismantled, closing down legal possibilities for demands for Ahwazi rights.

A ban on the party participating in elections led many Ahwazi Arabs to conclude that they could not expect the regime to respect their constitutional right to equality, leading to ethnic unrest. In April 2005, Ahwazi Arabs staged an uprising against the confiscation of their land and racial discrimination. The government of President Mohammed Khatami responded by brutally clamping down on the demonstrators, leading to 51 confirmed deaths. The use of state terror has continued with at least 25,000 arrests and hundreds of killings, executions and disappearances.

Lejnat Al-Wefaq's former Majlis member Jasem Shadidzadeh Al-Tamimi appealed to the government to accede to Ahwazi demands for cultural tolerance and an end to racial discrimination and land confiscation. In an open letter to President Khatami, he urged him to "do your utmost in lowering the 'wall of mistrust' between the proud Iranian ethnicities, so that the 'infected wounds' of the Arab people of Ahwaz may heal." In response, the government detained Al-Tamimi, but released him without charge - although regime hardliners have called for his arrest and he has faced at least one assassination attempt. Dozens of Wefaq activists have been imprisoned and many have escaped into exile. Many are buried at a place the government calls "Lanat Abad", the place of the "damned people". The bodies do not stay long in the unmarked graves, before they are dug up and eaten by feral dogs. Relatives of the dead claim that they do not know where they are buried and say they have not been buried in accordance with Islamic custom, despite being killed by the Islamic Republic for offending the same religion by opposing the theocracy.

In November 2006, the Ahwaz prosecutor's office declared that the Wefaq had been outlawed due to its alleged opposition to the Islamic regime and encouraging communal violence. Anyone associated with the party is therefore guilty of mohareb (enmity with God), which carries the death penalty. Meanwhile, traditional Arab cultural events held around religious festivals such as Eid ul-Fitr have been banned, with actors, singers, imams and teachers among those jailed for mohareb and threatening national security, while mosques and Islamic meeting centres run by Arabs have been closed.

The denial of constitutional rights is the surest sign that Ahwazi Arabs cannot expect freedom and justice under the Islamic Republic. The question is: what is the alternative? As yet, only a minority support pan-Arab and separatist parties, but the failure the broader Iranian opposition to extend solidarity to Ahwazi Arabs and acknowledge their plight and support their cause is leading many desperate youths to support complete independence from Iran.

The Democratic Solidarity Party of Al-Ahwaz has proposed a new constitutional settlement that would enable Ahwazi Arabs to exercise their cultural rights and enjoy some degree of control over the resources of their traditional lands. The solution is federalism.

Many Iranians eschew such a concept, fearing that it would be the first step towards their country's fragmentation. The Balkans wars are cited as an example of what would happen to Iran if its regional governments were given a measure of autonomy. There is also the fear that local autonomy would make Iran vulnerable to the kind of interference in its domestic affairs seen during certain periods of Iranian history, notably by the British and Russians during the Qajar dynasty and the Second World War and the Iraqis in the 1980s.

The notion that Iran would balkanise with the introduction of a federal democratic constitution is based on the supposition that Iran's minorities are inherently disloyal. It is, in fact, a racist belief that ensures that the ambitions of regional-based ethnic minorities should be forever repressed to ensure the integrity of the Iranian state. This attitude is shared by significant sections of the Iranian opposition and the Islamic regime itself. The ethnic oppression of Ahwazi Arabs also predates the Islamic Republic and was a characteristic of the chauvinistic nationalism of the Pahlavi dynasty. Yet, the majority of Ahwazi Arabs did not rally behind Saddam Hussein's call for pan-Arab unity, but rather fought and died in their thousands against the Iraqi invasion. They have paid and continue to pay a blood price for passing the loyalty test, but are still regarded as an enemy within. It is clear to most Ahwazis that a constitutional commitment to equality is not enough. Equality needs to be accompanied by the devolution of power and a fair redistribution of wealth generated by the abundant resources in their traditional lands.

There is no proof that federal states are any weaker than centralised states. On the contrary, federalism allows regional authorities to contest the central government within a constitutional framework, thereby undermining the separatist cause. Federalism has enabled the world's largest democracy, India, to maintain its territorial integrity despite its huge diversity of ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious groups and attempts by neighbouring Pakistan to inflame communal hatred and divide Indians.

Contrary to those who claim that federalism would lead to Balkanisation, Yugoslavia is in fact a good example of where the centralisation of power in the hands of those from a particular ethnic group can destroy a multi-ethnic state. The Balkan region is a warning to those who seek to characterise Iran solely in terms of Persian culture and language and centralise power in Tehran. Serbian chauvinism, not federalism, was the ultimate reason for the Balkans wars. Serbian domination of monarchist Yugoslavia fuelled

separatist sentiment that was exploited by the Nazis with the installation of the fascist Ustashe regime in Croatia, leading to the genocide of Croatia's ethnic Serbs. The re-establishment of Yugoslavia as a neutral socialist federal state after the Second World War led to decades of communal harmony. But these were shattered by Slobodan Milosevic's Serbian nationalism, which sought to centralise power in Belgrade and reorganise the country's federal structures to ensure Serbian hegemony. It was ethnic chauvinism by the leaders of Yugoslavia's largest national group that led to the bloody wars that devastated the Balkans, not federalism itself.

Yugoslavia is a warning of what could happen to Iran if its constituent national minorities are not given the autonomy that enjoyed for centuries before Reza Pahlavi's rise to power. India shows that a stable democracy can accommodate a diverse population like Iran if regional demands are accommodated through federal power structures. Iran would be a stronger, more stable, cohesive and peaceful nation.

For the Ahwazi Arabs, federalism and regional autonomy would enable them to control their own affairs, protect their land rights and exercise their cultural rights. The only other alternative to being crushed forever under the weight of a militaristic centralised state is independence. Increased oppression and continued social and economic marginalisation of the Ahwazi Arabs will also generate the kind of extremist backlash seen in the Balkans, but which has so far only been seen in a minority of disillusioned Ahwazi youth.

* Daniel Brett is the Chairman of British Ahwazi Friendship Society

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comment is free...

Flawed trials and injustice

Peter Tatchell

November 15, 2006 09:46 AM

http://commentisfree.guardian.co.uk/peter_tatchell/2006/11/irans_antiarab_racism.html

This week, 11 Ahwazi Arab rights activists are scheduled to be hanged in Iran. They will be strung up by cranes in public squares, using the slow strangulation method, which is deliberately designed to maximise and prolong their suffering. This is "justice" in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Instead of pressing President Ahmadinejad to commute these death sentences, Tony Blair seems more interested in enlisting Iran's help to get him and George Bush out of the mess in Iraq. Mr Blair's speech at the Guildhall on Monday night implored Tehran to stop supporting terrorism in Iraq and abide by its international obligations on nuclear non-proliferation. Not a word about Iran's duty to uphold international human rights laws.

Mr Blair may not care about human rights in Iran, but the international campaign against the execution of the 11 Arab activists is backed by Labour MP Chris Bryant, Conservative MP Michael Gove and Green MEPs Caroline Lucas and Jean Lambert.

The condemned men were found guilty of bombing oil installations in 2005. But no material evidence of their guilt was offered at their trial. In fact, all the evidence points to their innocence. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have repeatedly expressed serious concern about the fairness of trials involving Ahwazi Arabs and the safety of their convictions.

The men's lawyers were not allowed to see them prior to their trial and they were given the prosecution case only hours before the start of the court proceedings. The trials were held in secret. Witnesses for the defence were refused permission to testify. The lawyers for the condemned men were recently arrested for complaining about the illegal and unjust nature of the trials. They face charges of threatening national security.

Family members say the men sentenced to death were tortured into making false confessions, which were broadcast on Iranian television on Monday night. In a recent letter to the chief of the judiciary, Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi, one of Iran's leading human rights advocates, Emadeddin Baghi, said that the trials of Ahwazi Arabs were flawed, the charges baseless, and that the sentencing was based on a spurious interpretation of the law.

According to the Ahwazi Human Rights Organisation and the British-Ahwazi Friendship Society, these men have been framed as part of Tehran's on-going persecution of its Ahwazi Arab ethnic minority population in the south-west Iranian province of Khuzestan.

Ahwazi Arabs accuse Tehran of Persian chauvinism, racism and ethnic cleansing, as I recently exposed in Tribune. The response from Islamists and their far left apologists was to accuse me of being racist and anti-Muslim. How can it be Islamophobic or racist to defend Arab Muslims against Tehran's persecution?

Anyway, don't take my word for it. Amnesty International has also expressed concern about the victimisation of the Arab minority in Iran. The planned hangings look like a deliberate attempt by

Tehran to intimidate and silence Ahwazi Arab protests against ethnic subjugation and mass impoverishment.

The Ahwazi Arab homeland produces 90% of Iran's oil output and 10% of Opec's global production. Tehran expropriates all the oil revenues, leaving the region as the third poorest in the country, with near-African levels of poverty.

Tehran treats Arabs similarly, in some respects, to the way the South African apartheid regime treated black people. Under apartheid, black pupils were compelled to take school lessons in the oppressor language of Afrikaans. Likewise, Tehran has banned Arabic in Ahwazi schools and made instruction in Farsi (Persian) compulsory. The result is a 30% Arab drop-out rate at primary level and a 50% drop-out rate at secondary level. Illiteracy rates among Arabs are at least four times those of non-Arabs.

This ethnic persecution is one aspect of Tehran's systemic human rights abuses. Iran also executes Muslims who turn away from their faith, unchaste women and gay people. According to Amnesty International, its prisons are full of political prisoners: Sunni Muslims, Bahais, Kurds, trade unionists, students, journalists, lawyers, communists and human rights advocates.

On land confiscated from Ahwazi Arabs, Iran is training, financing and arming Islamist death squads in Iraq. With Tehran's approval, these killers are murdering Sunni Muslims, men wearing jeans and shorts, unveiled women, barbers, sellers of alcohol and videos, and people who listen to western music or who have a stylish haircut.

Contrary to Tehran's misinformation campaign, the vast majority of Ahwazi Arabs reject separatism. They want regional self-government, not independence. Nor do they support a US invasion. This would, they argue, strengthen the position of the hardliners in Tehran, allowing President Ahmadinejad to use the pretext of defence and security to play the nationalist card and to further crack down on dissent. Many Ahwazis believe the route to reform - for the benefit of all the people of Iran - is an internal alliance of Iranian democrats, leftists, trade unionists, minority nationalities and local civic organisations.