

Iran Monitor 1



For the period of 1 May to 18 June 2002

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A Monthly of the International Federation of Iranian Refugees (IFIR)

Iran Monitor scrutinizes various aspects of the Islamic Republic of Iran's civil rights violations. In this issue, the following areas are monitored: arrests, executions, children, girls and women, health, general violations, laws, press (government-controlled), prisons, refugees and asylum seekers, relations with the Islamic regime, social, terrorism, torture, youth and workers.

Arrests

(Gulf News, June 18, 2002) A young Afghan who allegedly married an Iranian girl was sentenced to one-year imprisonment.

(The Wall Street Journal, June 05, 2002) The Iranian people's mounting desperation and disgust with the regime is driving them to take more and more overt action against the mullahs. A week ago, a group of armed young people in the city of Lamerd in Fars Province attacked the Revolutionary Guards' headquarters, badly damaging the building. Troops had to be called in to put down the uprising, the latest of many in the last year. Interior Minister Abdol Vahed Moussavi-Lari ominously announced that the "crisis centre" -- a particularly nasty group of Special Forces and trained assassins -- has again started to act. The Revolutionary Guards last week attacked buses carrying students on tour to the historical sites in Gomen, arresting 73 young men and women, killing two of them. Mohammad Khordadian, a noted folk dancer who lives in Los Angeles, returned to Iran six weeks ago to attend his mother's funeral. He was arrested at the Mehrabad airport and locked away, accused of "corrupting youth." Just last Wednesday, the Nationalist-Religious group published graphic photographs documenting the torture of Vahid Sadeqi, one of their activists. Even fun is under assault. Roadblocks manned by the Basij -- the regime's version of the fascist storm troopers -- now routinely stop cars playing forbidden Western music, and if unmarried women are found in the company of men, they are arrested and charged with moral corruption. Thirty people were arrested in Tehran Thursday, and 80 more were picked up in Fuman, all accused of "illegal and immoral behaviour." Single women can be subjected to humiliating virginity tests, and if they flunk, they are given the option of marrying or being flogged.

(The Express Chronicle, June 4) A few tens of young men were arrested in main Iranian cities on June 3. On the death anniversary of Ruhallah Khomeini, the Islamite republic's founder, the Basij and militia forces arrested Iranians who "looked happy" or "enjoyed" the date. The arrests took place in Tehran, Esfahan, Abadan and Orumieh.

(May 30 AFP) Iran's judiciary, backed by the country's Islamic militia, is cracking down again on Western ways of having fun among young people, as political and social tensions increase. Roadblocks manned by the Basiji volunteers, an Islamic police force have sprung up again on the streets of Tehran. Their targets are "juvenile delinquents", by which they mean unmarried couples travelling in the same car to the sound of taped music which lacks the ministry of culture and Islamic guidance's seal of approval. The culprits are hauled off to be charged by police. The woman may well find herself sent to a court-approved doctor for a virginity test, which if negative can mean her being obliged to marry her companion or be flogged for having extramarital sex. Swoops on parties and other celebrations in private homes have also resumed, one of the latest being in trendy north Tehran last Thursday when about 30 people were picked up. Last week, police arrested some 80 people of both sexes who had been on a bus trip to scenic Fuman in northern Gilan province, accusing them of "illegal and immoral behaviour."

(May 29 AP) Mohamad Khordadian, Iran's most famous male dancer, who lives and performs in Los Angeles, has been jailed on charges of promoting corruption among youths during a visit to Iran. Khordadian is being held in Evin prison, north of Tehran

(May 28 AFP) Police arrested some 80 people of both sexes who went on a bus trip to a scenic region and were found to have been indulging in group photography and carrying contraceptive pills. Accused of "illegal and immoral behaviour," they were in a party of some 200 who had organised a "field trip" to Fuman in northern Gilan

province. Most were aged between 26 and 27 and included 33 students. No further details on the "immoral" behaviour of the youngsters were given, but under Iran's Islamic law, pre-marital sex is considered a crime. Islamic laws also lay down flogging for consuming, purchasing and selling alcohol.

(The Guardian, May 25, 2002) A clean-up by the Komiteh, or morals police, has ensured that Barbie is no more. In a crackdown on "spiritual pollutants", shopkeepers have had their stocks seized. In recent weeks, the public morality police have become similarly zealous in cracking down on women breaking Islamic dress codes. Scores have been harassed or arrested on the streets for allowing too much hair or skin to peek out from beneath their clothes. This week, there were rumblings against the enthusiasm that young Iranians have developed for billiards. One mullah, Ali Akbar Qoreishi, warned of the "dangerous" repercussions that the fondness for the game would cause.

(May 20 AFP) - About 150 people including 44 women have been arrested in Mashhad in the biggest crackdown on vice since 1979. Those arrested in the police raids, included "44 runaway women aged from 15 to 30 years with criminal antecedents, including anti-Islamic behaviour". Eight brothels were "discovered and closed and a number of mobile phones, cars, motorcycles, pornographic films as well as alcoholic beverages" were seized. The police "are ready to pick up all street women and prostitutes in less than 72 hours across the country". Tehran justice chief Abbasali Alizadeh said last week "the United States and Israel have invested a great deal to spread Western culture and corruption among our youth (and) to destroy Islam and our revolution".

(Reporters sans frontiers, May 19, 2002) Siamak Pourzand, 71-year-old Iranian journalist was sentenced to 11 years imprisonment. Iran has the dubious title of being the biggest prison for journalists in the Middle East, with 11 imprisoned. Pourzand was convicted on 3 May of having "undermined state security through having links with monarchists and counter-revolutionaries." Pourzand was seized by security police on 29 November last year and held in a secret place for four months without access to a lawyer or a doctor. The authorities said nothing about his disappearance.

Children

(May 18 AFP) Iran has 200,000 children living on the streets, said the head of the state Family Culture Centre, Alireza Kordi. Iran has a total population of 63 million, of whom 12 million live in Tehran, where children begging or selling small items can be seen on most street corners.

Executions

(Worker-communist Party of Iran, June 17) Two and a half years following the Iranian revolution, there was a period of relative open political activity which the Islamic regime in Iran was incapable of suppressing. On 20 June 1981, however, an Islamic, counter-revolutionary coup d'état took place in order to secure Islamic rule and crush the opposition. From that day on, the Islamic regime attacked and executed 300 to 500 people a day in various prisons and all over the country. From 20 June 1981 on, 'they poured onto the streets and arrested anyone who did not look like a Muslim... They arrested anyone who had recited a poem, who was known to be a Socialist or supporter of women's rights, anyone who was not veiled and anyone who looked Left wing and executed them that same night... This was one of the greatest crimes of the 20th Century, comparable to Nazi Germany, the genocide in Indonesia and Rwanda, and much more brutal than what took place in Chile. It is one of the most important catastrophes and human tragedies of the 20th Century. They attacked, suppressed, killed and buried in unmarked graves, innumerable people. They massacred many of the best, the most passionate and progressive people in order to remain in power.' (Mansoor Hekmat) The Islamic regime was not a product of the Iranian revolution, but rather of this widespread suppression that culminated in over 100,000 executions, and many more tortured and imprisoned. After this date, more than two decades of misery and rightlessness was imposed on the people in Iran. The architects of this genocide, under the leadership of Khomeini, were personalities of today's Right and so-called Reformist factions. Both actively took part in and are fully responsible for this genocide. Many of those involved in the genocide are leading politicians in the Islamic regime of Iran today.

(International Committee Against Stoning, 8 June 2002)The Islamic Republic of Iran has recently sentenced another woman, Shahnaz, from the city of Karaj, to death by stoning. Sima and Ferdows B are already awaiting their brutal death. These women were sentenced for having sexual relations outside of marriage.

(Amnesty International, UA 153/02, 22 May 2002) Ali Reza (m), age 19, and Ramin (m), aged 17 are included in up to 20 'guilty delinquents and mischievous' people to be executed in Tehran over the next two weeks, according to a report in the newspaper Norouz on 16 May. At least 10 people have reportedly been executed since then. Four men were reportedly hanged at Qasr Prison in Tehran on the day of the Norouz report. They had been convicted of murder, and the Supreme Court had rejected their appeals. Three days later, the newspaper Seda-ye 'Edalat reportedly published a story that a young man would be executed by hanging imminently; on 20 May, five unnamed 'drug smugglers' were reportedly hanged in the northeastern city of Mashhad. Norouz also reported on 16 May that Ahmad Dolatyari, 'a known thief and murderer', was reportedly executed on 20 May. Ali Reza was reportedly sentenced to 74 lashes on 21 May, for killing a man in self-defence. He has apparently been given 20 days to appeal. Seventeen-year-old Ramin was sentenced to 20 lashes for possession of heroin, on 17 May. The sentence was reduced to 15 lashes because he suffers from a thyroid condition, and will be carried out in three years' time. At least 139 people were executed in Iran in 2001. At least 285 people were flogged, many of them in public.

(The Chicago Tribune, May 21, 2002) Ahmad Dolatyari, convicted on murder, was hanged at sunrise from a tow truck's crane on a soccer field. The spectacle of public executions has become commonplace in Iran since the Islamic regime took power. At least 139 executions were carried out in Iran last year, compared with 75 in 2000, but both figures could be "considerably higher," according to the London-based Amnesty International. Iran does not release death penalty statistics. Public floggings for offences such as drinking alcohol still take place.

(May 20 Reuters) Five convicted drug traffickers were hanged in a prison in Iran and another man was hanged in public for murder in southern Tehran from a crane. A senior police official called for even tougher punishments, including a wider practice of amputations.

(May 16 AFP) - Four were hanged for murder inside Tehran's Qasr prison. Rashid Houshmani-Rad, Ethan Khaled, Mohammad Noshing and Mohammad Lamiae were executed. According to the report, 14 others found guilty of murder, armed robberies and drug trafficking will be hanged next week. Iran's "eye for an eye" law, in force since the Islamic regime took power, stipulates capital punishment for rape, stealing weapons, drug trafficking and murder, but provides for sentences to be commuted to a jail term if the family of the victim offers a pardon.

(Amnesty International, UA 136/02, 9 May 2002) Ferdows B and Sima are two women who have reportedly been sentenced to be stoned to death. Sima was sentenced to death by stoning in January this year, and is now in prison awaiting execution. The Iranian newspaper Entekhab reported on 24 April that a woman called Ferdows B has been sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment, to be followed by death by stoning. Another woman who received a similar sentence was stoned to death in May 2001, after eight years in Tehran's Evin Prison. She had been convicted of adultery and 'corruption on earth'. The exact charges against Sima and Ferdows B are not known, and there are no details of the trial proceedings or whether they were allowed to appeal. Two other women were reportedly sentenced to death by stoning a year ago. An unnamed woman was sentenced to be stoned to death for murder, in May 2001, and in June a woman named only as Robber was sentenced to 50 lashes, to be followed by death by stoning.

(May 9 AFP) A man sentenced to death for murder was hanged in northeastern Korean province. Nor-Mohammad Taheri-Red was executed at a police station in the city of Goanna Northeast Iran.

Girls and Women

(AFP JUNE 09, 2002) Iran has some 300,000 prostitutes and their number will increase rapidly if poor living conditions persist in the country, a senior welfare official said. A total of 1.7 million women in Iran had no homes and one million received no social benefits. "Deprivation is the main factor which drives these women into prostitution," Mohamed said, adding "If no solution is found, prostitution will spread rapidly, increasing every day."

(May 29 Reuters) The Majlis passed a bill giving divorced mothers the same custody rights over boys as girls. The bill must still be approved by the Guardian Council. If approved, the bill would only grant women temporary custody of both boys and girls until they reach seven; the court would decide on which parent has custody. Under the present law, based on the Islamic code, divorced women have automatic custody of girls until they are seven, but only keep boys until they are two. Judges often give fathers the custody of their children, regardless of their

qualifications as parents. Present laws give men the right to divorce a woman without her consent. But a woman can seek divorce only if her husband is a drug addict or impotent, which is almost always impossible for her to prove.

Health

(May 18 AFP) "There are 18,000 people infected with the HIV virus, including 13,000 among the low-risk population and 5,000 among the high-risk population, which includes drug addicts," Iran's deputy health minister Hussein Malek-Afzali said. The disease is growing by 25 percent each year. Minou Mohraz, a Tehran University professor specialised in infectious and tropical diseases told AFP that a total of 3,064 Iranians had died of AIDS since the pandemic was first detected in Iran, 65 percent of who were "drug-addicted inmates". She said a large number of those deaths were reported in the prison of Kermanshah province, near the Iraqi border, but warned that the disease is spreading rapidly in the capital, a 12-million strong metropolis where drug consumption and prostitution are on the rise.

General Violations

(June 7, IRNA) The German government, introducing its sixth human rights report, accused the Islamic Republic of Iran of "massive human rights violations". "Arbitrary arrests, abuses and torture in police detention centres and prisons and violations of freedom of expression are frequent." Stressing that Iran's legal system "contradicted understanding of human rights", the report referred to "frequent death sentences and other severe bodily penalties".

(Amnesty International, May 30, 2002 covering events from January - December 2001) Scores of political prisoners, including prisoners of conscience, were arrested and others continued to be held in prolonged detention without trial or following unfair trials. Some had no access to lawyers or family. In a continuing clamp-down on freedom of expression and association, led by the judiciary, scores of students, journalists and intellectuals were detained. At least 139 people, including one minor, were executed and 285 flogged many in public. There were increasing indications of social, regional and ethnic disquiet and unrest. In July clothing and shoe factory employees protested, including in front of parliament, over unpaid wages. In the same month, disturbances occurred when Tehran officials attempted to destroy unauthorized housing. In August an announcement that the government planned to divide Korean province led to riots in Sabzevar in which three people reportedly died. Thousands of people were detained in October following public disorder after international football matches in Tehran. In July, student groups marked the anniversary of a raid by the security forces on student dormitories in Tehran in 1999, when at least one student was allegedly killed and others were ill-treated. The authorities introduced restrictions on the employment of Afghans and more than 100,000 were repatriated during 2001. In October, following the bombing of Afghanistan, Iran closed its borders with the country and built refugee camps in Afghanistan near the Iranian border.

Law

(The Tehran Times, May 6, 2002) A member of the Guardian Council (GC) has said that the GC is the only authority for the interpretation of the Constitution in case of any ambiguities. Mohsen Esmaeili said that the reason for the existence of the Guardian Council is enshrined in the Constitution. He added that if we want an Islamic and republican system we have to have an institution for safeguarding the Sharia and the Constitution, and that is why the GC has been established by the Constitution. Esmaeili underlined that the most significant institution in safeguarding the republican and Islamic nature of the system is the Guardian Council, which consists of six prominent jurists appointed by the Leader and six other members introduced by the Judiciary for approval by the Majlis. He pointed to supervision of elections as another important function of the GC and added that since the Constitution may contain unclear clauses, therefore changing the Constitution is also another function of the GC. The only institution authorized to change the Constitution is the Guardian Council, which is also responsible for its interpretation.

Press (government-controlled)

(BBC, Sunday, 26 May) Iran's Justice Department has issued a ruling making it a criminal offence for any newspaper to carry material advocating negotiations with the United States.

Prisons

(May 20 AFP) A police chief has described the country's prisons like hotels and called for stricter punishment, including not allowing prisoners to sleep more than four hours at a time. Deputy police commander Amir-Ali Amiri, speaking at Qazvin, northern Iran, which houses a notorious jail, said, "We should review methods of punishment so that the offenders don't dare to repeat their offences again." Iran applies a strict Islamic judicial code, with punishments including amputation and stoning to death. Executions are frequent.

Refugees

(May 30 AP) Turkish police found the bodies of 19 who apparently froze to death during the winter after crossing into Turkey from Iran. Paramilitary police found the bodies, including those of nine children, in a snow-covered mountainous area near the town of Caldiran in the province of Van, close to the Iranian border.

(The Observer, May 26, 2002) Most asylum-seekers are driven to Europe because of war and repression, rather than simply to seek greater wealth, according to a European Union report on forced migration. The conclusions contradict statements from Ministers in Britain and France that most refugees at the controversial Red Cross centre for asylum-seekers in Sangatte are economic migrants. The report for the Director-General for Justice and Home Affairs at the European Commission concludes that 'push factors' such as war and the repression of minorities far outweigh 'pull factors', such as economic hardship or Europe's benefit systems. Researchers from the Refugee Studies Centre at Oxford University examined the ten countries sending the most refugees to Europe. Seven had experienced war in the decade up to 2000 and the other three - Iran, Turkey and Romania - had a history of repressing minorities.

(BBC World Service, May 20, 2002) Refugees returning from Iran to the city of Herat in western Afghanistan say Iranian soldiers and officials harassed them on the way. Many of those arriving at UN reception centres say they used their entire savings to pay bribes on the two-day journey from Tehran.

(May 17 AFP) 420,000 young Iranians, "all graduates from the top universities", have left the country in the last few years. The young leave for "many reasons", not necessarily economic, said Mohammed-Reza Ahari, an actor and guitarist. "I could not handle it anymore" said Hamid. "I was earning a good living in Iran, but I was tired of being constantly harassed by the police, on the pretext that I was walking around with a girlfriend or listening to music that does not qualify as 'normal' in their dictionaries". "All I wanted was to be free".

(International Federation of Iranian Refugees, 5 May 2002) Two Iranian asylum seekers who had been refused status by the Australian government have been arrested by the authorities on their return to Iran and ordered to appear before an Islamic tribunal. Since their arrival, they have been exiled by their families, their phones have been tapped, their movements monitored and they had been prevented from obtaining work or a passport. The two returned 'voluntarily' after two years of detention in Woomera. 'I am very afraid.... I don't know what will happen from one day to the next. There is no future for me. My family is under pressure to disown me,' one told The Age (29 April 2002) from Iran. The man said he decided to go home because the psychological pressure of being in detention for almost two years had finally got to him. 'During the riots last year I was badly beaten by the guards and each day people were slashing themselves and trying to kill themselves. I thought nothing can be worse than this, but I was wrong,' he said. A second former detainee said he was interrogated for six hours at Tehran airport on arrival and ordered to appear before an Islamic tribunal. He said he had been asked to justify criticism he had made of the Islamic regime while seeking asylum in Australia. He also faces charges of leaving the country illegally. Iranians living in Australia on temporary protection visas are also concerned about the disappearance of two other male detainees who 'returned' to Tehran. They say one man apparently never left the airport where his family had been waiting for him and the other vanished from his home several days after returning.

Other Recent Publicised Cases of Persecution of Asylum Seekers who have been deported: According to Amnesty International 6 March 2002 Urgent Action 69/02, Karim Tuzhali was executed on 24 January 2002 at Mahabad prison, western Iran. He was a former asylum seeker who was forcibly returned on 20 June 1998. Also, 50-year-old Khaled Shoghi, who was reportedly forcibly returned from Turkey and arrested in 1997, has been sentenced to death.

Relations with the Islamic Regime

(BBC World Service, June 18, 2002) European Union foreign ministers have agreed to open trade and political talks with Iran. EU Commissioner for External Affairs Chris Patten will meet Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in Brussels on Tuesday to start the process. The European foreign ministers who met in Luxembourg said closer trade and economic links would have to be matched by Iranian efforts to stop terrorism and the spread of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. In 2000, EU imports from Iran - mostly oil products - totalled \$8 billion whereas the value of EU exports to Iran in the same year amounted to \$5 billion. The ministers accepted a call by the EU's administrative arm, the European Commission, for a fast-track agreement with Iran which requires ratification only by the 15 member governments and the European Parliament, not by all the national parliaments.

(Guardian, June 18, 2002) The EU said it would negotiate a trade and cooperation pact with Iran if Tehran joined the EU in regular and meaningful consultations on political and anti-terrorism issues. Foreign ministers reached the decision after Britain, Germany and the Netherlands dropped their insistence on a single agreement covering trade and political and human rights issues. EU imports from Iran, mostly oil products, were worth €8bn (£5.1bn) in 2000, and its exports €5.2bn. In recent years European oil companies have signed lucrative deals with Iran, which has 7% of the world's proved oil reserves. The EU has pleased Mr Khatami by describing the Iraq-based Mojahedin Khalq, as a terrorist organisation.

(Worker-communist Party of Iran, 13 June) On 13 June 2002, Mehdi Karrubi, speaker of the Islamic regime of Iran's Consultative Assembly (Majlis) entered Helsinki in order to meet with Finnish government officials. The Finnish government is hosting Karrubi at a time when the people of Iran are using any opportunity to show their hatred for and protest against this Middle Aged, criminal and religious government.

(The Wall Street Journal, May 28, 2002) European leaders say that accelerating trade with Tehran is an important cornerstone of the EU's decade-long engagement with the Islamic Republic. Already, the EU is Iran's main trade partner. In 2000, bilateral trade exceeded \$12 billion.

(The Tehran Times, May 21, 2002) Foreign Ministry Spokesman Hamid Reza Assefi hailed the "positive" approach of the European Union towards expansion of mutual cooperation. Addressing a press conference, he touched on EU foreign ministers' decision in their recent meeting in Brussels, to conclude trade and commercial agreements with Iran.

(BBC Monitoring Service, May 16, 2002) Chairman of the Iranian-British Parliamentary Friendship Group [Ali Akbar] A'lami, who is currently in London, has described the talks between the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the British authorities as positive.

(International Federation of Iranian Refugees, 16 May 2002) A 6 May conference called for by the Swiss immigration authorities and the Red Cross and in collaboration with the Islamic Republic of Iran ended in disgrace for the Red Cross and the Swiss government. The Red Cross, acting on behalf of the Swiss government, had earlier issued an official letter inviting asylum seekers to the conference and promising 2000 francs to those 'returning' to Iran. According to the letter, the Islamic Republic was effectively deemed safe for asylum seekers. Organised protests and our intervention turned the conference into a scene of protest against the Swiss government and Red Cross and a tribunal against the Islamic Republic. The Red Cross representative apologised several times and declared that the organisation would distance itself from this policy.

Social

(Iran Va Jahan, 20 May 2002) The revolutionary guard commander Zolqadr claimed that "cultural instigations with the purpose of propagation of decadent culture are being implemented in the country and to confront them, resistance must be formed." Zolqadr added that: "I am disappointed with some revolutionary guards who while they are supposed to be enforcers of the Islamic Ideology, they remain silent in the face of the culturally decadent behaviour of their own children." By the order of Khamenei 49 government organizations have been given their missions by the Revolutionary Guard Corps to cooperate with this clamp down. Khatami's cabinet will also join the efforts with 8 of his ministers which have formed the "Supreme Social Council." Police Commander Qalibaf said that the long arms of this clamp down will reach beyond the borders of Iran. He added, "The discussion of social

corruption which is resulting in anarchy and discord in the society is an organized and concerted effort that is being conducted from outside of the borders and therefore it must be dealt with outside of the borders.”

(16 May IPS) Ayatollah Ebrahim Amini, the deputy Speaker of the Assembly of Experts warned that Iran was "on the verge of explosion" and that people are anxious about the situation. Ayatollah Amini said that "If this discontent increases, as is the case, society and the regime will be threatened".

(May 12 AFP) The Tehran police last month seized one million liters of alcoholic beverages, the sale and consumption of which is forbidden under Iran's Islamic law. "The United States and Israel have invested a great deal to spread western culture and corruption among our youth (and) to destroy Islam and our revolution," a cleric said.

(May 6 Reuters) - Iranian police arrested nearly 500 dealers, smugglers and addicts. With youth unemployment high and few diversions available, some two million Iranians are either addicts or regular users of drugs.

Terrorism

(May 22 AP) In an annual terrorism report to Congress, the State Department named seven states — Iran, Sudan, Libya, Syria, North Korea, Cuba and Iraq — as sponsors of terror. The report branded Iran the world's most active sponsor of terror

Torture

(Human Rights Watch, June 12, 2002) On June 9, the torture bill was rejected by the Council of Guardians, whose role is to ensure that all laws passed by the Majlis are compatible with Islam. The Council argued that the bill would limit the authority of judges to adjudicate on the admissibility of confessions and therefore ruled that the bill was against the principles of Islam. The bill was subsequently sent back to parliament for revision, and will now be reviewed by the legal and judicial affairs committee of the parliament. As drafted, the bill would not have provided sufficient safeguards against torture and falls far short of Iran's international obligations. The bill did not uphold the right of detainees charged with a criminal offence to have prompt access to legal counsel, nor did it set limits on the permitted length of time that a detainee may be detained incommunicado. Both practices have long facilitated the use of torture by the authorities. The bill also stipulated that certain categories of suspects are exempted from the safeguards contained in the bill. These include: members of apostate groups, a definition that could include members of the Bahai religious minority; Mohareb (those at war with God), a term that is applied to many types of dissident and government critics; and those accused of espionage, another charge with a very loose definition in Iranian penal law.

(The New York Times, May 19, 2002) The United Nations Committee Against Torture urged Saudi Arabia to end corporal punishments, saying they are prohibited under the 1987 Convention Against Torture. The Saudi delegates, said that the committee had no jurisdiction over Sharia, the Islamic legal code derived from the Koran. Sharia law allows amputations for theft, and floggings for certain sexual offences and drinking alcohol. Other stringent provisions of Sharia, like executing murderers, drug dealers and rapists, do not fall under the torture committee's mandate. Other countries, including Libya and Iran, have come up for review. Peter Thomas Burns, the committee's chairman, said "The committee itself had no doubt that flogging in almost any case constitutes torture." "And amputation of limbs, in every case, would constitute torture under our definitions."

Youth

(The New York Times, June 18, 2002) A third generation are those Iranians from 16 to 30 who have come of age entirely under Islamic rule. While some of them are religious conservatives, most are not. They are young, restless, modern-looking and often unemployed. They are connected to the world via the Internet or satellite dishes -- and they like what they see. They want the good life, a good job, more individual freedom and more connections with the outside world -- and they are increasingly angry that they don't have those things.

Workers

(Worker-communist Party of Iran, May 13) Some Independent 1 May Celebrations in Iran, Tehran: A 1500 strong

meeting was held in Yaqout Hall by bakers, tailors', and metal and engineering workers independent of the government-sponsored ceremonies. The meeting began with a minute of silence in memory of the fallen workers of 1 May; the meeting then heard the history of 1 May. A women worker spoke about the conditions of women workers and the dual oppression of women and demanded equal wages. The workers' theatre performed a comedy about workers and capitalists. At the end of the meeting, a resolution was passed which demanded an increase in wages in line with real inflation, the implementation of a trade union law and the return of shut down trade union properties, equal rights for men and women, support for immigrant workers particularly Afghan workers, support for the people of Palestine, and the abolition of anti-worker laws particularly that which excludes workshops with under three workers and carpet weavers from the labour law. Orumieh: 300 workers assembled in Khomeini Road, carried placards commemorating 1 May and shouted slogans against the Islamic Republic. Security forces attacked the demonstration and arrested 10 to 15 demonstrators. Another group of workers also assembled at the Ministry of Labour in Saat Park and celebrated 1 May. Saqez: Despite ongoing threats by the authorities, the Saqez Baker's Union held its assembly. Workers' representatives gave speeches and passed a resolution. The Ministry of Information had informed the bakers that should they hold a gathering and pass resolution without the regime's presence; the authorities will turn the gathering into another Jenin! Despite these atrocious threats, workers held their meeting, spoke out and passed a resolution, demanding the right to strike, organisation, assembly and protest. They also demanded the abolition of inequality and discrimination between men and women, an increase in wages and the prohibition of expulsion.

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