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Executions Surge in Iran after Nuclear Talks, Iran off U.S. Terror List

by Shadi Paveh

April 20, 2015

After Iran's "nuclear talks," and after it was comfortably removed as a terrorism threat from the "Worldwide Threat Assessment of the US Intelligence Communities," the International Committee Against Executions (ICAE) reported approximately 55 executions in fewer than three weeks across Iran.

According to Mina Ahadi, Founder of ICAE, various prisoners or their families had contacted her office weeks before the killings. Prison authorities, they said, had told the prisoners that they had received orders from "above" to "cleanse" a large number of the prisoners rapidly after the P5+1 talks. The vast majority of these prisoners had been sentenced to death for non-lethal offences in trials that, according to activists, often fell dramatically short of international standards.

In an interview with Gatestone, Ms. Ahadi stated:

"Those of us who know the regime well speculate that the government feels as if it has somehow surrendered to the West during the nuclear agreements, and fears appearing weak domestically. As a result, it is flexing its muscles by increasing the number of killings— an escalation that is staggering even for the Islamic Republic, which already holds the record for the highest number

of executions per capita throughout the world. The authorities also may want to create fear so that the unhappy population dare not revolt, or even speak out against the regime, during the regime's perceived time of weakness. It is important to note that this government has stayed in power for 36 years *solely* by systematically killing its opponents both inside Iran and abroad.

"We recently received a report that strongly disturbs even the most seasoned human rights activists; it came from Zabol prison in the Baluchistan Province of Iran. Reliable sources told us that prisoners condemned to death are tied to a pole, and are left without food or water the day before they are hanged. No one ever heard of this sort of treatment before. The regime is becoming more barbaric with each day that the world remains silent and refuses to hold them accountable for human rights violations. I am not sure how much more has to happen or be documented before the world starts to take notice. The question I would like to ask the P5+1 negotiators is: Can a country with such extensive, grotesque human rights violations be trusted in *any* way?"

Ms. Ahadi also wrote to Mr. Ban Ki Moon, UN Secretary-General, and to Mr. Martin Schulz, President of the European Parliament, regarding this matter:

Your Excellencies Mr. Ban Ki Moon and Mr. Schulz:

A few days after Iran's nuclear agreement in Lausanne; a new and broader wave of executions began in Iran.

On April 11, 2015, in the Central Prison of Karaj, the Iranian authorities had planned to transfer 40 prisoners to solitary confinement to await execution at dawn the next morning. As a direct result, there was an uprising inside prison to protest these executions. The following day on April 12th, the families of the condemned prisoners gathered in a demonstration in front of the city of Karaj's courthouse; which was filmed. On April 13th, eight prisoners were executed at this prison.

On April 13, 2015, prisoners from another prison in Karaj, Raja-Shahr prison, contacted ICAE to inform us that 11 prisoners were taken to solitary confinement to be executed the next morning. A report the next day indicated that those prisoners along with some others, estimated to be 19 in total, were executed on April 14, 2015.

In Zabol prison [in Eastern Iran province of Baluchistan] one person was hanged and 3 are awaiting imminent execution. On April 10, 2015, two prisoners were tied to pillars without food and water while awaiting execution.

In the past the regime has been known to increase the number of executions in the aftermath of surrendering to a perceived enemy. For example, after the cease fire of the Iran-Iraq war in 1988; which the then Supreme Leader and the Leader of the revolution Ayatollah Khomeini saw as surrendering to then enemy Iraq; Khomeini ordered the mass cleansing of political prisoners, most of which did not have death sentences and were in fact near the end of serving their sentence. For a more in depth report of the 1988 massacres, please see attached 145 page report by Mr. Geoffrey Robertson QC in collaboration with the Boroumand Foundation. This method is being continued by the present leader Ali Khamenei after what the regime and the Iranian public

may see as surrendering to Western influences with regards to the nuclear talks. As such, the regime avoids appearing weak internally by increasing executions, arrests and the like in order to keep an unsatisfied population in constant fear to avoid a revolt. Those who have studied this regime believe that this is the way the regime chooses to show strength and power inside Iran.

During the P5+1 nuclear talks there was absolute silence with regards to the high rate of executions and human rights violations in Iran. Because of this silence, this matter has taken a turn for the worse.

The International Committee Against Executions requests your immediate response to this urgent matter. We ask that you strongly object to these executions. Terrorism is not only achieved by bombs but also by terrorizing citizens for generations through executions. Is the hanging of 700 persons since the beginning of the 'moderate' Mr. Rouhani's presidency, which translates to 2 hangings per day, not a form of terrorism?

We would like to request that the Islamic Republic of Iran be held accountable by the International community and furthermore we ask for political sanctions to be placed on this regime for the high rate of executions. Your silence in this matter is not acceptable to those sentenced to death, their families and human rights organizations around the globe.

Please help us stop executions in Iran. History, as always, shall remain witness.