

Four women get jail terms

IranTimes: Iran has sentenced four prominent women's rights activists to six months in jail over articles written on feminist websites that the regime says threatened national security. The



prison terms were not suspended; the women will have to serve their sentences. Parvin Ardalan, Jelveh Javaheri, Maryam Hosseinkhah and Nahid Keshavarz were sentenced over articles on the "Change For Equality" and "Zanestan" websites, their lawyer, Nobel laureate Shirin Ebadi, was quoted as saying in the daily Korgozaran. "You can't accuse people on security charges for expressing their opinions," said campaigner Sussan Tahmasebi, who is appealing a partly suspended two-year jail sentence issued last year. The women are active members of the One Million Signatures Campaign, an initiative that seeks to convince legislators to amend discriminatory laws against women by collecting one million petition signatures. Dozens of campaign members have been arrested and detained since the campaign began in 2006. Ardalan, who won Sweden's Olof Palme Prize in 2007 for her activism in support of women's rights, already faces another six-month jail term and suspended sentences of two and 2 1/2 years—which are being appealed—on national security charges. She was not able to attend the awards ceremony as Iran barred her from leaving the country. "This is part of a backlash against women's rights activists who demand equal rights in a patriarchal system," Tahmasebi said about the sentencing, adding that the women would appeal the decision. "The security strategy of this country is that where there is dissent—workers, women, bloggers—they crack down on it right away, because they are afraid of the domino effect," one Iranian analyst, who

asked not to be named, told Reuters. Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt criticized Iran for sentencing Ardalan to prison, saying, "I see the sentence as yet another expression of the dete-

riorated respect for human rights in Iran. The number of executions has dramatically increased and more have taken place in public. At least five people have since June been executed for crimes committed when they were minors [and] the list of people who risk suffering the same fate is long." Ebadi said, "There are no laws against Internet activities and the convictions are against international conventions on freedom of expression." While Tehran has received much criticism for sentencing the women, Reporters Without Borders last week welcomed a ruling by Tehran's Supreme Court overturning a death sentence against Kurdish journalist Adnan Hassanpour because of a procedural error. "We welcome this ruling by the Iranian justice system with great relief. It is now time to free this journalist who has been through agony since his arrest more than 18 months ago," the world press freedom organization said. "There was never any evidence of his guilt, but despite this, the judges in the case have twice decided to sentence him to death." The court decided that the 26-year-old journalist, who had been convicted of "subversive activities against national security", could not be considered as a 'mohareb' (an enemy of God) and sent his case back to a lower court in the northwestern city of Sanandaj. Hassanpour was arrested outside his home on January 25, 2007. He worked for the weekly Asou covering Kurdish issues and contributed to foreign media including the Voice of America and Radio Farda.

Iran starts exporting electricity

Despite the electricity shortage in Iran that is causing power outages all across the country, Iran will begin exporting electricity to Pakistan this month. Officials did not explain why they would export electricity when Iranians are having their power supply shut off for two to four hours a day. But the officials may be calculating that with cooler weather, they will have a power surplus by this month. The initial export will total only 100 megawatts for the city of Gawadar in Pakistani Baluchestan. But an Energy Ministry statement said the two countries have agreed to fast track plans for Iran to export 1,000 megawatts of power to Pakistan. The statement gave no target date for that volume. Although offi-

cialists have given different figures at different times, it appears Iran has an installed capacity to produce about 40,000 megawatts. But with a variety of problems—chiefly the drought, which reduces the water available at hydroelectric dams—total production is now less than 35,000 megawatts. The Energy Ministry is seeking 7 billion euros (\$10 billion) from the Foreign Exchange Reserve Fund to increase capacity quickly so as to avoid power outages next year. The Energy Ministry blames part of the problem on subsidies, which make electricity very cheap in Iran. It says that encourages the public to waste electricity.

Iranians to sue Holland

IranTimes: A group of Iranian students in the Netherlands is planning to sue the Dutch government over a ban prohibiting Iranians from taking courses on nuclear science. According to the Dutch daily De Volkskrant, dozens of Iranian-Dutch scholars held a demonstration at the University of Amsterdam September 1 over the July 1 decision prohibiting Iranians living in the Netherlands—even those with dual citizenship or those who are of Iranian decent but do not hold an Iranian passport—from enrolling in nine degree programs related to nuclear science. During the demonstration, protesters handed Dutch Education Minister Ronald Plasterk—who was speaking at the opening of the academic year—a copy of Article 11 of the constitution. "The ban violates the Dutch Constitution and various international treaties," an Iran Students' Action Group statement read, calling the ban a breach of the right to education. Amsterdam claims the decision was made in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1737, which requires countries to prevent the spread of nuclear technology to Iran. Behnam Taebi, spokesman for the Iranian students, criticized the Netherlands for putting its own interpretation on the UN resolutions. "It's not the resolutions we object to. It's the Dutch government's interpretation. I would like to point out that the [first] resolution dates from almost two years ago and says nothing about excluding students or about a master's degree. The cabinet is assuming that students here intend to pass on information to Iran and that the type of information in a master's course—fairly fundamental basic information—could be of use to the Iranian nuclear program. These are two assumptions the cabinet will have to defend." The students are relying on Article 11 of the Dutch constitution, which outlaws all forms of discrimination and applies to education as well. But according to Dick Leurlijk, of the Clingendael Institute for International Rela-

tions, the Netherlands is not alone in its interpretation of the resolution, adding that around 90 countries have responded to the UN call. "Here in the Netherlands we have a principle that international law always prevails over national legislation, and Paragraph 17 of UN Resolution 1737 clearly states that member states are expected to prevent Iranian students from receiving specialized training. I think in this case the Dutch government's decision is the result of extremely careful consideration. It's not a question of the fact that you come from Iran, but that you come from Iran and also express an interest in certain studies available at certain universities and polytechnics. It's not about access to Dutch education as such; that is an entirely different issue." Paragraph 17 states in full that the UN: "Calls upon all States to exercise vigilance and prevent specialized teaching or training of Iranian nationals, within their territories or by their nationals, of disciplines which would contribute to Iran's proliferation of sensitive nuclear activities and development of nuclear weapon delivery systems." But Taebi said that in recent months when he was doing research at the U.S.-based Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) he was subject to no restrictions whatever. "There I was at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, which has a reputation as one of the world's most distinguished universities, and I can tell you there were hundreds of Iranian students wandering around. They are happy to go there, they are happy to have them and they are made very welcome. At that institute it is not at all important what your nationality is. They look at you and the results of what you do. That is a mentality that is sadly lacking here in the Netherlands." Furthermore, legal experts such as Joyce Schiferli of the Rotterdam collective Article 11 pointed out that UN resolutions are not simply accepted as exceptions to the Constitution—separate legislation is needed for that.

U.S. judge rules mistrial in case of goggles

A federal judge in Florida ruled a mistrial last month in the second trial of an Iranian woman charged for her role in illegal exports of U.S. night vision goggles to Iran; a third trial is set for mid-October. U.S. District Judge James Cohn made the ruling after jurors could not agree on a verdict following almost eight hours of deliberations. The majority of the panel wanted to convict Shahrazad Mir Gholikhan, 30, on some charges, but one juror could not be swayed, said the jury foreman, Alan Gordon. Prosecutors accused Gholikhan of participating in a scheme to export thousands of pairs of military-grade goggles to Iran. But Gholikhan's attorney, Bill Barzee, said his client was brought in at the last minute and merely acted as a translator for her then-husband, Mahmoud Seif, who does not speak English. Gholikhan and Seif were arrested in 2004 in Vienna, Austria, after a meeting with two undercover agents working for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). ICE was acting on a tip that Tehran was looking for

goggles. The pair spent about a month in an Austrian jail. When they were released, Gholikhan returned to Iran; U.S. efforts to extradite the pair failed and Seif remains at large. But last year, Gholikhan voluntarily returned to the United States and surrendered. Gholikhan had initially pleaded guilty to one charge in exchange for a "time served" sentence. But days after her April 25 plea and subsequent time-served sentence, federal prosecutors said a mistake had been made in calculating her sentence and that federal sentencing guidelines required her to serve between 30 and 37 months. Gholikhan then retracted her guilty plea. Gholikhan's five-day trial this month centered on whether she made phone calls and sent e-mails and faxes about the goggles before the Vienna meeting using the alias Farideh Fahimi. Prosecutor Michael Walleisa said Gholikhan's phone records corresponded to calls placed by Fahimi and faxes sent from Fahimi came from Gholikhan's fax number. If found guilty, Gholikhan could face up to 20 years in prison.



Adult and Community Education Citizenship Classes

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ESL/Citizenship Preparation Class, for those students who are at an intermediate level of English proficiency.

Citizenship Preparation Class, for students who are advanced English speakers.

Both of these are on Monday and Wednesday evenings and starts on Monday, October 27, 2008. The ESL/Citizenship class is from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m., meets in Room 82 at Fremont High School, and ends on Wednesday, January 7, 2009. The Citizenship class meets from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., is held in room 83 at Fremont High School, and finishes on December 17, 2008. In these classes, students will learn about American history and government, fill out the N-400 application, and practice for their oral interview. Also there will be several speakers who will talk about the naturalization process, local government, and voting.

For all of the classes, Student should register in class.

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