

Sweden says dissident will not be tortured if sent back

IranTimes: An Iranian woman's request for asylum for her and her two young daughters has been rejected by Sweden despite her contention she will be persecuted by the Iranian regime for her dissident activism. "I'm afraid



of going back to Iran. I have to stay. There is no other possibility," said Rana Karimzadeh, 46, who came to Sweden in 2005 after fleeing Iran in 2001. Karimzadeh said she first sought asylum in the Netherlands, but her application was rejected. "I fear for my life," she told Agence France Presse. A Swedish

immigration court rejected Karimzadeh's request for asylum August 19 after judging that the Iranian activist was not at risk of persecution if she returned to Iran. "We didn't think that her activism was intense enough for the Iranian regime to be interested in her or to hold anything against her," a court official, Ulrika Sandell, said. But Karimzadeh said her activism on behalf of women and her criticism of the Islamic regime would make her a target if she were deported to Iran. "I have three blogs in which I criticize the Iranian regime and I'm active in several associations that campaign for women's rights and against radical Islam," Karimzadeh said. A support group has been set up in Sweden to push for her right to stay. Last Wednesday, about 100 people demonstrated outside the Swedish parliament. Karimzadeh has appealed the immigration court's ruling and hopes she and her two daughters, aged 10 and 15, will be able to stay. A verdict is expected late this month. In recent years, European courts have become increasingly skeptical of Iranian asylum claimants who regularly assert they will face persecution if deported. Many European embassies have followed up on Iranians who have been deported and say they have found they are generally ignored by the Islamic Republic.

Freed terrorist dating one of his London hostages

IranTimes: The Iranian who attacked the Iranian embassy in London in 1980 and was recently released from prison has now found love with one of the women he took hostage 28 years ago. Fowzi Badavi-nejad, 50, and an unnamed former hostage, whom he had held at gunpoint decades ago, have reportedly been dating. She is one of several hostages who prevented the Special Air Service (SAS) from shooting Badavi-nejad when they stormed the embassy to end the hostage episode in April 1980. Badavi-nejad was granted parole earlier this month after a parole panel concluded that he no longer posed a threat to the public. He had spent more time in prison than is normal in the United Kingdom even for major crimes. Badavi-nejad was the only terrorist to survive the six-day episode in London. For at least five years during his prison sentence, he received regular letters, gifts and visits from a former hostage in what seemed to be a developing love affair between the former hostage-taker and his victim. Psychologists have dubbed the phenomenon the Stockholm Syndrome—in which hostages develop a bond with captors who have not treated them brutally. That syndrome was studied and named after a hostage incident in Stockholm decades ago after which several of the hostages defended their captors when they were charged. A prison source said, "Not only has she forgiven him but she has fallen for him too. She began writing and then agreed



to visit him. Badavi-nejad has been moved around U.K. prisons but she has been happy to travel long distances to see him," adding, "He is goodlooking, clever and charming and they formed a bond." The attackers were trained by Saddam Hussein's secret service, which reportedly threatened to execute their families if they backed out. The attackers advocated independence for the Arab-populated area of southwest Iran.

Iranian actress abandons Iran after making Hollywood film

IranTimes: The Iranian actress who plays Leonardo DiCaprio's love interest in the just-released film "Body of Lies" says despite being "totally in love with Iran," she will not return home where she may face charges for



appearing in the film without government permission. According to The New York Daily News, Golshifteh Farahani, 25, is the first Iran-based actress to appear in a Hollywood film since the 1979 Islamic revolution. Iranian officials reportedly are investigating whether she violated Islamic law by being in the movie, in which some of the scenes show her without hejab. But in the film, which stars DiCaprio and Russell Crowe, Farahani's character, Aisha, is a modest Arab nurse who treats DiCaprio's injuries but is wary of his advances and insists he first meet her family. She won't

even shake hands with DiCaprio as he leaves a lunch date with her. Farahani appeared at the New York red-carpet premiere of the film last month dressed in a sleeveless designer dress and bare curly hair. According to The Washington Post, in the past month there have been heated debates among Iranian bloggers between those who label the Iranian actress as a sell-out and those who support her decision. "When I saw those pictures, I was disgusted," Mahdavi, an Iranian blogger who described himself as a religious student, said. "It was obvious from her frolicking that she had lost all sense of respectability." But Ali, another blogger, wrote, "Everybody is free to live as they like. What's it to you?!" Blogger Behzad wrote, "The hejab is only valuable when it's chosen, and not forced. Learn that we shouldn't be totalitarian. No one can force people to have or not to have hejab. Remember this." Farahani told the Daily News, "I had a lot of problems because of this movie. [Iranian officials] took my passport. The intelligence service interrogated me several times. In the end, the judge said, 'We have to see the movie and then decide what we're going to do with you.'" Farahani said her pass-

Continued on page 45 >>

Germans arrest Iranian for playing it both ways

IranTimes: An Iranian-Canadian businessman appears to have been playing both sides as he was paid by Germany to spy on Iran and paid by Iran to send it goods Germany bans from sale to Iran. The unnamed man was arrested last month on suspicion of illegal exports to Iran despite reportedly being a valued agent of the German Federal Intelligence Service or Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND). German officials reportedly debated at length whether to arrest him as a smuggler or to ignore his illegalities so as to continue to benefit from his espionage. The German news magazine Der Spiegel reported that the detained Iranian national had been providing intelligence to the BND for about a decade and had received 1 million euros (about \$1.4 million) in payment from the spy agency. The accused, code-named Sindbad and aged 61, had reportedly delivered intelligence on Iranian missile production and had provided photographs of tunnel-drilling machinery and secret warehouses in Iran. According to the magazine, information received from Sindbad had been used in several reports prepared for German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier. With the knowledge of the BND, Sindbad set up one company in Canada and another in Germany



to serve as fronts for his travels. But without the BND's approval, he reportedly used one of the companies to ship banned machinery from Germany to Iran's missile program. The prosecution said it knew of two shipments made this year. Der Spiegel said Sindbad's intelligence had been so good that some in the BND questioned whether he might be a double agent working for Tehran. German prosecutors had informed the BND of their impending arrest of Sindbad. He was arrested October 5. Der Spiegel said the BND was not only concerned about losing a spy, but about possible tension with Iran when it was revealed Germany had such a well-placed spy in the country for a decade.

U.S. judge gives Iranian 33 months in prison for:

lying on citizenship application, not paying taxes, violating trade embargo, and so on

IranTimes: A former interrogator for Tehran's Revolutionary Court has lost his U.S. citizenship and been sentenced to nearly three years in prison after being convicted of a laundry list of offenses. Seyed Mahmood Mousavi, 49, of Diamond Bar—located in Los Angeles—was convicted last spring of six felony counts—illegally obtaining U.S. citizenship, lying to federal investigators, filing false tax returns, impeding the administration of a tax and two counts of violating the U.S. trade embargo. He could have gone to prison for 61 years. He was sentenced last month to 33 months in prison, fined \$12,500 and had his U.S. citizenship revoked. According to prosecutors, the case dates back to 2002, when Mousavi contracted with Al-Mal Kuwait Co. to provide consulting services in support of the company's bid for a mobile communication license in Iran and to establish a bank and leasing company there. Both activities are prohibited by the U.S. trade embargo against Iran, Thom Mrozek of the U.S. Attorney's Office said. In addition to violating the trade embargo, Mousavi made more than \$45,000 that year, but failed to report it on his 2002 federal tax return. In 2003 and 2004, Mousavi earned \$500,000 from his caravan travel business, but again failed to report it on his personal or business tax returns, Mrozek said. Mousavi was also found



guilty of lying to U.S. immigration officials in 1998 because he withheld the fact that he had served in the Iranian military and also failed to inform authorities that he was a member of numerous organizations in Iran, including serving as an interrogator in the Tehran Revolutionary Court. U.S. Assistant Attorney Susan J. DeWitt said the revocation of citizenship is expected to be appealed by Mousavi.

Canada finally allows sister to help her sibling

IranTimes: After waiting nearly a year for a visa to Canada, Morvarid Maroufkhani has now been granted permission to come to Canada for a stem-cell transplant that could save her sister's life. Mehrnoush (Mary) Maroufkhani, 53, an Iranian-born Canadian citizen who is battling blood cancer, last month received hope when her younger sister Morvarid, 38, donated about a cup of her matching stem-cells at Vancouver General Hospital (VGH). But it took nearly a year, and more than 30 visits to the embassy in Tehran, for Morvarid to get a Canadian visa because embassy officials in Tehran long refused to grant her a visa—despite letters from doctors explaining why a visa was urgent. "They thought she wouldn't return to Iran once she came here," explained the British Columbia resident as she stood beside Morvarid's hospital bed while her blood was drawn. "But then you pushed them and they changed their mind," Mehrnoush told The Vancouver Sun. After repeated failures by her sister to get a visa, Mehrnoush contacted The Sun last month asking for help. Just hours after The Sun contacted Citizenship and Immigration Canada in Ottawa and the local office of Foreign Affairs Minister David Emerson, the embassy in Iran called Morvarid at her Tehran

home to say she could come and pick up her visa. Dr. Clayton Smith, director of the leukemia and bone marrow transplant program in the province of British Columbia, said he is "grateful to everybody who made this happen." "I'm not going to comment on the politics of it. I'm just very pleased for the patient and her family that her treatment is finally moving forward now. The power of the press is terrific in such matters," he said. Mehrnoush, a mother of two, has been a Canadian citizen for 10 years and a resident for longer. Last year, she was diagnosed with myelodysplastic syndrome, a bone marrow disorder that is akin to a preleukemia condition. Dr. John Shepherd, a hematologist at VGH, wrote to the Canadian consulate in Tehran to explain why Morvarid's visit to Vancouver was urgent. Shepherd said he pleaded with the embassy to expedite the application and when nothing happened, a social worker followed that letter up with another. But for almost a year, nothing happened. That's when Mehrnoush contacted The Sun, which in turn wrote an article and contacted Canadian officials, probing why Morvarid had been denied a visa. Mehrnoush said her sister will be going back to Iran within a week.