



International Liberty Association Newsletter

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EDITORIAL

While preparing this month's newsletter, Summer has turned to Autumn, the traditional harvest time, and our hearts fill with gratitude as we reflect on the bounty of this year's harvest, reaped from seeds sown over many years. It is so encouraging to see the collective efforts and perseverance of all who have made commitment to this noble cause bearing fruit and we are delighted to be able to thank you for your contributions with a bulletin containing much positive news.

Our lead articles bear witness to the continuing successful progress of the advocacy campaign for the more than 30,000 victims of the 1988 massacre of political prisoners in Iran. Denied and suppressed completely by the regime and the appeasing Western world for so many years, it seems a dream come true that a former Iranian regime official now stands trial in a Swedish court for his prominent part in those atrocities and that the UN Special Rapporteur for Iran was emboldened enough to include the massacre, and continuing attempts by the regime to cover it up, in his recent report to the UN General Assembly. In addition, when Raisi became President of Iran, media outlets across the globe published articles accurately describing his involvement in the 1988 massacre. It is such a testament to years of dedicated effort that the events of 1988 are now accepted as a reality, providing a solid base of truth on which to build.

As well as the repression and abuse inside Iran, the latest news from Afghanistan with its rapid return to Taliban control, prompted us ... *continued on p.2*

SWEDEN PROSECUTES FORMER IRANIAN OFFICIAL FOR MASS EXECUTIONS IN 1988



Swedish public prosecutors have charged an Iranian citizen with participating in mass executions and war crimes for his role in the mass execution of prisoners in the summer of 1988.

The suspect, Hamid Nouri, worked in July–August 1988 as an assistant to the deputy prosecutor in the Gohardasht prison outside the city of Karaj, northwest of Tehran. He is accused of taking part in severe atrocities there.

Prosecutor **Kristina Lindhoff Carleson** accused Nouri of “intentionally taking the life of a very large number of prisoners”.

The case against Hamid Nouri, 60, who was arrested in 2019 after he went to Stockholm to visit relatives, is an important test case for the principle of extraterritorial jurisdiction.

Tens of thousands of prisoners from Evin and Gohardasht ... *continued on p.2*

UN SPECIAL RAPPOREUR PUBLISHES HIS LATEST REPORT ON IRAN'S HUMAN RIGHTS

The Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran submitted his report to the 76th session of UN's General Assembly on 23 August.

Javaid Rehman, the UN Special Rapporteur for Iran, issued his report to the 76th session of the General Assembly. Of course the regime of Iran has not allowed him, or any previous UN Human Rights Rapporteurs, to visit Iran and has always covered up its human rights abuses with propaganda and threats and intimidations. But the actions of activists and human rights organisations such as ours have helped him to collect and compile the information needed to keep up-to-date with regards to human rights violations in the country. We draw your



attention to a few highlights of his report.

In the report, Javaid Rehman called the high number of executions alarming and expressed deep concern for the lack of accountability as well as for the actions of the Iranian regime in trying to eliminate evidence of the crimes ... *continued on p.2*



Sweden prosecutes former Iranian official for mass executions in 1988 *continued from p.1*

prisons were brought before these “death commissions” and had their fates determined in just a few minutes. In one case, a 28-year-old man named Mahmoud was brought before a death squad around 7:00 p.m. on July 30, 1988. According to a witness, Mahmoud said he told the death commission “I am a supporter of the MEK.” Around 9:00 p.m., he and a large number of other prisoners were taken to the “death corridor,” where they were lined up and led into execution halls. Mahmoud was hanged that night.

Hamid Nouri, a former assistant prosecutor in Iran, is now in Sweden facing criminal charges for his role in the 1988 “killing machine.”

Many of Iran’s current senior officials were also part of the 1988 massacre, according to witnesses. These include Iran’s new President Ebrahim Raisi, who was a member of the Death Commission in Tehran in 1988; prominent Sharia Judge Hossein Ali Nayyeri; Tehran Prosecutor Morteza Eshraqi; Deputy Minister of Intelligence Mostafa Pour-Mohammadi and several other ruling mullahs such as Ali Mobasher, Mohammad Moghese, Esmail Shushtari, and Ali Razini.



UN Special Rapporteur on Iran’s Human Rights publishes latest report *continued from p.1*

committed in 1988, the mass execution of prisoners of conscience. We can read in his report that:

The Special Rapporteur notes the Government’s lack of compliance with its international obligations concerning investigations into serious human rights violations; weak accountability frameworks, resulting in a climate of impunity; and intimidation of those seeking justice. The absence of domestic remedies highlights the international community’s important role in ensuring accountability for gross human rights violations in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

He continues:

The continued impunity in relation to the disproportionate force used during the countrywide November 2019 protests, and the shooting down of Ukraine Airlines flight PS752, remains emblematic

of the state of impunity. The continued harassment and targeting of families calling for justice for both events remains a deep concern.

Regarding the 1988 massacre, the Special Rapporteur reported:

The Special Rapporteur is concerned at reported attempts by the authorities to continue to destroy evidence of past violations, including the reported mass extrajudicial executions of political dissidents in 1988.

And after explaining how the regime is plotting to force the Bahai community to bury their dead in Khavaran mass grave, the burial site of many of the victims of 1988 executions, he says:

The latter site is believed to contain the remains of victims of enforced disappearances and summary executions perpetrated in 1988. This order is the latest of the attempts to interfere with evidence of the executions, which have included bulldozing gravesites and the

harassment of relatives, such as **Maryam Akbari Monfared**, who are seeking truth and accountability. The Special Rapporteur reiterates his predecessor’s call that families be able to exercise the rights to remedy, to reparation and to know the truth concerning these events, including the fate of their relatives (A/HRC/37/68, para. 22).

By “his predecessor”, he means the late **Asma Jahangir** who was the first UN rapporteur brave enough to highlight the issue of the 1988 mass executions in her report of March 2018.



Editorial *continued from p.1*

to underline the fact that the fundamentalism that is the scourge of our time, with its misogyny, religious intolerance and brutal suppression of minorities, human rights activists and environmentalists, has its centre firmly rooted in Iran, in the hands of the clerical rulers, from where, for the last 40 years, it has spread throughout the Middle East and beyond.

The campaigns we are supporting to bring the perpetrators of the 1988

massacre to justice will, therefore, also have a positive impact throughout the region.

Despite the regime’s savage and overt suppression, brave women and men in Iran continue to take great risks to collect and disseminate news of human rights abuses. On our side, collective efforts have succeeded in applying pressure on Western countries, increasingly forced by public opinion to consider human rights abuses in any negotiations with

the Iranian regime. This has played a significant role in the stay of execution and release of a number of prisoners, one of whom tells his story in this bulletin, uplifting and motivational for us all.

There is much still to do, but before us lies a route to justice based on clear evidence of truth to support the people in Iran and the region in their determination to live in peace, free from repression. We thank you for being with us on this journey.



DISTURBING FOOTAGE FROM EVIN PRISON FURTHER DOCUMENTS SYSTEMIC TORTURE

Leaked footage from Iran's Evin prison in northern Tehran, primarily used for political prisoners, shows disturbing images of human rights violations.

The **Associated Press** reported on 23 August that it had received surveillance footage of Evin Prison from an anonymous hacking collective, along with a message explaining the intended purpose of the leak. Among the footage were images that showed guards in Evin's control room reacting to the cyber-attack through which the hackers obtained access to the facility's cameras and computer data. According to the communications received by the AP, the hackers copied data that amounts to hundreds of gigabytes and sat on much of it for months before releasing large quantities to the media in the wake of Ebrahim Raisi's swearing-in as the regime's new president earlier this month.

The Evin footage was described as part of an effort to bring attention to the grim prison conditions in Iran, especially for political prisoners.

Raisi has a history of abuses including high-level participation in the massacre of 30,000 political prisoners during the summer of 1988.

The footage covers a period when Raisi was still in charge of



A guard in Evin prison strikes a prisoner

the judiciary, before being confirmed as the regime's president. He was designated as the regime's top law enforcement official in 2018 by the mullahs' Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, officially taking office in March 2019. In November of that year, he was given a unique opportunity to compound his legacy of human rights abuses by overseeing key aspects of the crackdown on a nationwide uprising that broke out across nearly 200 cities and towns. Some 12,000 protesters were detained and tortured.

Video releases from the Evin Prison hack further document that human rights abuses are perennial features of Iranian regime's prisons that must be stopped.

We call on the United Nations Secretary General and the UN Human Rights Commissioner to condemn this practice publicly and call for accountability for the perpetrators of such abuses.

FORMER PRISONER WHO SURVIVED 1988 MASSACRE SPEAKS OUT

When Ebrahim Raisi was selected by the supreme leader to be the next president of the Iranian regime, back in June, the media across the globe published articles about his role in the 1988 massacre of prisoners. Following are excerpts from an article on The Independent website covering an interview with a survivor of that massacre:

Ahmad Ebrahimi, 60, told me that he came face-to-face with judge Ebrahim Raisi when he was an inmate in Tehran that year, when Raisi was one of four people on the prosecution committee responsible for the execution of thousands of political prisoners. The group was known as the "death committee" by opponents of the regime.

He said he suffered physical and emotional torture, describing how he would be thrown into solitary confinement for days on end, made to stand for hours while blindfolded and denied sleep.

He recalled how Raisi had visited his prison in August, 1988. "It was a Tuesday, I and 60 other people were

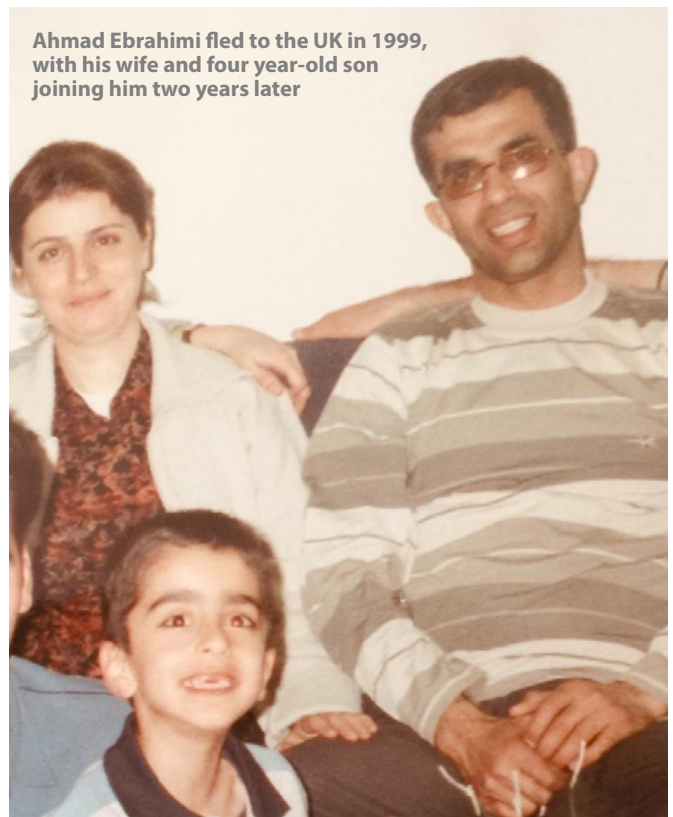
taken to a corridor and one by one taken to a room with Raisi and others in there. At that time, I wasn't strong enough to defend PMOI because I was scared. I knew that they were killing people."

Mr Ebrahimi watched helplessly as 70 of 150 inmates in one section of the prison were executed. In another section, which held hardline opponents of the regime, only 13 of more than 200 prisoners survived.

"Prison is hard enough for anybody to be in, but after that it was hell," he said. "I couldn't imagine that these people were not with us anymore. Once people are in prison they spend day and night together, sharing stories – when you see that this is happening, it's shocking, I can't put it into words."

Mr Ebrahimi was released from prison in 1991 and fled to the UK in 1999. His

Ahmad Ebrahimi fled to the UK in 1999, with his wife and four year-old son joining him two years later



wife and son, who was then four years old, joined him in London in 2001.

He spoke of his optimism that the people of Iran "know this regime is the number one enemy", adding that he was happy that more people are becoming aware of human rights abuses in the country.



HOW IRAN'S SUPREME LEADER SACRIFICED HUMANS FOR A FAILED DISPLAY OF POWER

In December 2020, the first coronavirus vaccines were introduced by the United States; “Pfizer” and “Moderna”. In January of 2021, the Supreme Leader of the Iranian regime, Ali Khamenei, banned the import of “western vaccines”, a decision he stood by for nearly a year and after tens of thousands of Iranians died. The communities that were waiting for treatment, and were happy that the world had found a way to prevent further deaths, were left in shock.

The **Iranian Red Crescent** announced that the arrival of more than 100,000 doses of Pfizer, which was supposed to save Iranians, had been cancelled and even the voluntary team of **Doctors Without Borders**, which had gone to Iran to help, were sent away.

The regime even refused to accept donated vaccines, and, at the behest of Khamenei, tens of thousands of Iranians died, just for a display of power. Iran announced that it was developing several vaccines and, most importantly, introduced the Iranian “Barakat” vaccine, the nature of which no one is aware of yet, and which has not been approved by the **World Health Organization**. Following the recklessness of Ali Khamenei, the then Minister of Health, with contradictory statements and acts of negligence, left the medical community, patients, and citizens with a shortage of medicine and necessary equipment in pharmacies and hospitals.

The Iranian regime was so high on its unattained achievements that the following sentence was published in the ninth-grade school book “Social Sciences”: “The Islamic Republic of Iran, with its advanced health facilities and equipment as well as specialised, compassionate and hard-working medical staff, was able to be one of the top countries in the world in the fight against the coronavirus.”

However, based on official and global statistics, Iran has the highest Covid infection and mortality rate in the Middle East. On August 16, 2021, the highest daily death toll from Covid-19 of 655 people was announced by Iran's government. This prompted the Human Rights Defenders to send a letter to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Physical and Mental Health, informing the UN about the “deplorable state of health of the Iranian people” and urging the government to hold Iran accountable for its negligent actions and also work to vaccinate the Iranian people.

Two days before the letter was sent, however, seven lawyers and civil rights activists were arrested by Iran's security forces. They sought to sue the government for decisions that cost people their lives and, according to lawyers, their detention is illegal as the reason for detention, filing a lawsuit against officials of the Islamic Republic, even against Ali Khamenei, is completely legal according to the laws of the current regime.



Exhausted medical staff in Iran are severely underpaid too



When a vaccine is not allowed to save lives



The mullahs ruling Iran have only been efficient in making graves



A FAILED POLICY VIS-À-VIS EXTREMISM



The regime of murderers and terror sponsors (from left to right): Ali Khamenei (Supreme Leader), Ebrahim Raisi (President), Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf (Head of Legislative) and Gholam Hossein Ejeii (Head of Judiciary). The appointment of major human rights violators to the key positions of power in Iran reflects the regime's new aggressive and repressive posture.

The Taliban took over Afghanistan on 14 August 2021, almost 20 years after they were forced out of the government of Afghanistan by a coalition of Western allies angry at their involvement with Al-Qaida, the terrorist group that brought down the twin towers of the World Trade Centre in New York on 11 September 2001.

At the time Mullah Omar, the then leader of the Taliban, refused to hand over Bin Laden, the leader of Al-Qaida, accused of the terrorist act.

After 20 years, thousands of lives, and trillions of dollars, the United States and its allies decided to make peace with the extremist Taliban, even though they were not keeping their side of the bargain, as is customary with such deceitful fanatics, and forcefully took over the country while the existing government abdicated in fear of extreme bloodshed.

The events that followed and the terrorist bombing of the crowd near Kabul's airport, with 72 killed and hundreds injured, showed once again how flawed the policy of dealing with Islamist extremists in the Middle East has been, in particular because the role of the Iranian regime in fanning the flames of hatred and extremism has been consistently ignored.

While it is true that fanatical Islamists are not a new phenomenon, it is important to remember that, after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the early 20th Century, extremist Muslims lost all ground and were marginalised, particularly in the major Muslim countries of the Middle East.

However, with the Iranian revolution of 1979, when the ayatollahs hijacked

the democratic aspirations of the Iranian people and presided over the wealth of Iran, Khomeini's dream of a global Islamist empire became an achievable objective worthy of pursuit. The mullahs ruling Iran rapidly created the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) with the objective of pursuing Khomeini's dream. The IRGC and its extraterritorial branch called the Qods (Jerusalem) Force, started meddling in the affairs of their neighbouring countries like Iraq, Lebanon, Yemen, Syria, and many others, including in North and Central Africa and Asia.

The world paid little attention to this and, as the mullahs of Iran used proxy forces such as Hezbollah to terrorise the people in those countries and to act against Western interests in them, the leaders in the West were duped into thinking that there was a moderate faction in the regime of ayatollahs that they could deal with.

So instead of holding the murderers to account they decided to appease the entire regime in the vain hope that the "moderates" would emerge as the next leaders and doing business with such "moderates" would be profitable. Even when Rafsanjani and Khatami, as successive so-called moderate presidents of Iran, proved to be in cohorts with the de-facto hard-line supreme leader of the country that had absolute control over the affairs of the nation, the Western leaders refused to hold them to account for their atrocities both inside and outside of Iran.

When the 9/11 commission report came out clear reference was made to Iran. The Al-Qaida operatives, who were mainly Arabs, were trained in camps in

Iran or travelled via Iran to Afghanistan with their Hezbollah handlers. But the American intelligence officers, fearful of jeopardising their "good" relations with the "moderate" President Khatami, refused to acknowledge this and pushed the information under the rug by claiming it could be just a coincidence.

There is ample information easily obtainable from media sources in the West like the New York Times, The Sunday Times and The Times as well as many other sources that indicate the close tie between Tehran and the Taliban and Al-Qaida leaders, many of whom took refuge in Iran. In 2012 the New York Times reported that Tehran is paying the Taliban for killing Americans. Yet this information too, like much else, was pushed under the rug in order to justify rapprochement with Iran.

Obviously, failing to hold the Iranian regime to account for its atrocities inside and outside of Iran, sends a clear signal to torturers and terrorists.

On 19 June 2021, responding to the announcement declaring Ebrahim Raisi as Iran's next president, Amnesty International's Secretary General **Agnès Callamard** said:

"That Ebrahim Raisi has risen to the presidency instead of being investigated for the crimes against humanity of murder, enforced disappearance and torture, is a grim reminder that impunity reigns supreme in Iran."

To hold the Iranian officials to account for their heinous actions is long overdue. Islamist extremism that is devastating our world will not subside unless the hydra is challenged at its head in Tehran. Unless the epicentre is confronted, the world will not be saved from this vicious mindset.



ENCOURAGING LETTER FROM PRISON



Hello dear friends,

My name is **Saeed**. I have been in prison for one and a half years. I am a PhD student in sociology. I am married and have a seven year-old daughter.

I spent the first year of prison in solitary confinement. It was so difficult and breath-taking. Your voice reaches no one. Even to the prison guard you have to whisper or you would be flogged and tortured further.

Repeating days that are similar, having no news of your family and beating and lashes every now and then, are all meant to fill your whole existence with despair and hopelessness and with that lost hope you fear you will lose mental balance. They hope in this way you will give them what they are after, a forced confession and giving the names of your friends so that the same fate falls on them. Then you will be responsible for their lost life.

If I wanted to write on those days I would have to start with tribute to those who heard my voice, to people unknown. But today I am happy to know who I am writing to. To those who have the conscience of humanity, with a heart and soul that can bear and carry the pain of others.

Even after all this time I remember clearly, they took me for interrogation one to three times a week. In the last interrogation in solitary, the guard told me that we will keep you here until you forget who you were. But a week later another guard told me you will have visitors tomorrow. I asked who? He said I don't know, maybe your wife and daughter. I did not believe it and thought it was just another form of torture. I thought they were trying to give me false hope so that they could ask for cooperation before letting me see my daughter. But I was surprised to see that night that they brought me nice clothes and asked me to take a shower. They said the clothes were given by my family. Gradually the dream that had died in me was becoming alive. I was thinking will I see my daughter

tomorrow? I could not sleep all that night and was thinking about seeing my family. The next morning they came after me and told me you are going to another prison.

When I was walking the corridor with blindfolds the interrogators whispered in my ears that you are lucky; if it was left to me only your bones would leave here, but it seems that your presence here has attracted a lot of attention and they think that we have killed you here. You are also lucky that you have survived under my interrogations.

That day I was transferred to the general ward. Even though I was still in prison it felt like I had been moved from hell to heaven. After one year I could see at least 35 other prisoners with whom I could talk about our common pains. After one hour they told me to go for the visit.

I cannot tell you what I felt during those 20 minutes. My daughter would not stop hugging me and my wife was looking at us and crying. Then I was returned to the ward and a few prisoners who knew me surrounded me and welcomed me. I asked what was going on. I was not supposed to leave the solitary cell alive!

They told me that in the past year

more and more the news of prisoners is going out and activists out there have built such a solid bridge between here and the rest of the world that the regime cannot stop this wave that has been created. The society is in such turmoil that even the oppressive forces have become frustrated and fatigued and have distanced themselves from the regime. Many dissatisfied prison guards are helping us take news from inside prisons to the outside world via our family members who come for visits. Their inspections are superficial and deliberately careless so that our notes can go out. Many mobile phones have entered the ward.

Today, as I was writing this note to you, I received news that this morning the appeal court has ruled to free me in two months. That's how I realised that every step you take however small comes together like drops that make a flood. I am sure this flood of humanity will overcome the oppression and wipe it out.

I have words to tell you that fills a book but I need to end here by letting you know how indebted we are for what you do. I hope you appreciate the value of your work and the impact of your campaigns. I and many of my fellow prisoners who have been or will be freed owe our lives and our freedom to you and your actions. The future looks bright and we see the change coming closer every passing day as the regime becomes weaker in oppressing the voices that they have tried to shout out for 40 years. Hail to all of you!



The placards read: Students don't belong in prison. Free our classmates.



NEWS IN BRIEF

AT LEAST A THIRD OF IRANIANS LIVE IN ABSOLUTE POVERTY



According to a report published by Iran's Ministry of Cooperatives, Labour, and Social Welfare, about 26.5 million people, **a third of Iran's population**, were living in absolute poverty in 2020. This official figure reflects a 38% increase compared to 2019. The actual figures are much worse.

In 2020, the average inflation rate reached 36.4%, but last month inflation passed 44%, reaching a new high.

DETAINED ACTIVIST DENIED RIGHT TO MAKE PHONE CALLS



Civil and children's rights activist **Atena Daemi**, is being denied the right to make phone calls in Lakan Prison of Rasht.

Ensieh Daemi, Atena's sister, said on her social media page, "They have taken Atena's phone card, and they have deprived her of the right to contact us."

Atena has been an outspoken critic of the regime even in prison.

FOUR MORE CHRISTIANS CHARGED WITH PROPAGANDA AGAINST THE REGIME

Four Christian converts from the south-western city of Dezful are the latest Iranian Christians to be officially charged with "propaganda against the Islamic Republic".



The charge was read out to **Esmail Narimanpour, Alireza Varak-Shah, Mohammad Ali (Davoud) Torabi, and Mohammad Kayidgap** at the 4th branch of the prosecutor's office of the Civil and Revolutionary Court of Dezful on 3 August.

LAWYERS DISCUSSING THE POSSIBILITY OF SUING THE SUPREME LEADER FOR COVID DEATHS WERE ARRESTED

Several prominent lawyers and human rights activists were arrested in Iran as they prepared to file a lawsuit against the Iranian government for failings during the coronavirus pandemic and against Khamenei for his ban on importing vaccines.

The lawyers have been speculating the possibility of suing the supreme leader for crimes against the Iranian people for his order last January banning import of Covid vaccines that had been approved by the World Health Organisation on the grounds that the vaccines were produced in the USA and UK.



The rising death toll in Iran due to coronavirus has been alarming and the vaccination rate in Iran, at about 4% of the population, is the lowest in the Middle East region. It is evident that the Supreme Leader's ban on vaccine import had financial motives since billions of dollars were given to a subsidiary of his financial conglomerate to produce some sort of Iranian vaccine, a scheme that proved futile for the people but financially fruitful for Khamenei and his family and cohorts in the IRGC (the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps).

SHAHBAZ JADIDI SECRETLY EXECUTED IN PRISON



A prisoner named **Shahbaz Jadidi** was secretly executed in Yasuj Prison on 18 July. He was sentenced to death for killing a driving instructor during a fight.

However, more than a month since his execution no news of it being carried out has been reported by domestic media or officials in Iran.

PSYCHOLOGICAL TORTURE OF PRISONER AND HIS FAMILY



The interrogators and torturers of the Ahvaz Intelligence Department have been torturing and harassing political prisoner **Mehran Qareh Baghi** for information about his friends despite the fact that he has been in prison in Behbahan since 2019.

They have also been telling him, "We will send you to exile in Sistan so that no one would hear your voice. There will be no news of you and everyone will forget you. We will detain you so long that you will lose your sanity."

It is also reported that agents of the clerical regime's Judiciary and the Intelligence Department of Behbahan had psychologically tortured his family by telling them that their son had been sentenced to death before the court convenes.

Mr Qareh Baghi has been sentenced to three years in prison for "insulting the supreme leader" and "propaganda against the state."



IRAN'S CULTURAL HERITAGE: FERDOWSI



Statue of Ferdowsi in Tus

Abul-Qâsem Ferdowsi Tusi, simply known as just **Ferdowsi** meaning 'paradisiac', was a Persian poet and the author of *Shahnameh* (*Book of Kings*), which is one of the world's longest epic poems created by a single poet, and the national epic of Greater Iran. Ferdowsi is celebrated as one of the most influential figures of Persian literature and one of the greatest in the history of literature.

Ferdowsi was born into a family of Iranian farmers in 940 in a village near the city of Tus, in the present-day Khorasan Razavi Province of north-eastern Iran. He had a son who died at the age of 37, and was mourned by the poet in an elegy which he inserted into the *Shahnameh*.

The Islamic conquests of the 7th century brought gradual linguistic and cultural changes to the Iranian Plateau.

According to legend, **Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni** offered Ferdowsi a gold piece for every couplet of the *Shahnameh* he wrote. The poet agreed to receive the money as a lump sum when he had completed the epic. He planned to use it to rebuild the dykes in his native

Tus. After thirty years of work, Ferdowsi finished his masterpiece. The sultan prepared to give him 60,000 gold pieces, one for every couplet, as agreed.

However, the courtier whom Mahmud had entrusted with the money replaced the gold coins with silver. Ferdowsi was in the bath house when he received the reward. Finding it was silver and not gold, he gave the money away to the bath keeper, a refreshment seller, and the slave who had carried the coins. When the courtier told the sultan about Ferdowsi's behaviour, he was furious and threatened to execute him. Ferdowsi fled Khorasan, having first written a satire on Mahmud, and then spent most of the remainder of his life in exile. Mahmud eventually learned the truth about the courtier's deception and had him either banished or executed. By this time, the aged Ferdowsi had returned



One of Ferdowsi's poems written on the wall of a school in Iran:

*Think for the Lord's gratification
Be intellectual and truthful*



The marble tomb of Ferdowsi in Tus

to Tus. The sultan sent him a new gift of 60,000 gold pieces, but just as the caravan bearing the money entered the gates of Tus, a funeral procession exited the gates on the opposite side: the poet had died from a heart attack.

Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* is the most popular and influential national epic in Iran and other Persian-speaking nations. The *Shahnameh* is the only surviving work by Ferdowsi regarded as indisputably genuine. He may have written poems earlier in his life but they no longer exist.

Ferdowsi has a unique place in Persian history because of the strides he made in reviving and regenerating the Persian language and cultural traditions. His works are cited as a crucial component in the persistence of the Persian language, allowing the tongue to remain codified and intact.



Statue in Ferdowsi Square in Tehran

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