

IRANIAN DOMESTIC MEDIA MONITORING REPORT 27 JUNE – 3 JULY 2011

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES

(State-facilitated media source: Tabnak news website, in Persian 0701 GMT, 3 July 2011)

- Tehran MP Esma'il Kosar confirmed that 26 American officials will be tried in absentia by Iranian courts, Tabnak news agency reported on 3 July.
- "The plan for arresting and punishing 26 American officials will be discussed in the Majlis' open session after the parliamentary recess and following the approval of parliamentarians. Those American officials will be judged in absentia by Iranian courts and will be presented to the competent international courts," Esma'il Kosar, deputy secretary of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, said.
- Kosar added that "the Islamic Republic of Iran is serious about putting those people on trial and supports the legal human rights of the oppressed nations across the world."

(State-facilitated media source: Keyhan website, Tehran, in Persian 02 July 2011)

Direct excerpts as published by Keyhan:

- "BBC Persian formally acknowledged the opposition and the reformists' inadequacy to resist the Islamic Republic. This is while one of the spectrums of the opposition abroad has blamed the BBC for its full support to the reformers."
- "In its comparison of the green movement's failure and the success of Egypt and Tunisia's revolutions, the BBC Persian website, without acknowledging the US, UK and Israeli failures against the Islamic Republic and their support to Egypt and Tunisia's dependent regimes, blamed the old opposition and reformists for their failure in Iran!"
- "The BBC, in its cunning report, did not acknowledge the fact that unlike the counter-revolution movement and seditions aligned with the US, the opposition in Egypt were anti-US, UK, Israel and anti-[Husni] Mubarak's dependent regime. According to the surveys, 80 to 95 per cent of the opposition in Egypt were anti-US and pro-Islamic law implementation and only 10 to 11 per cent called on Iran not as a friend but a threat against Egypt."
- "Consequently with the BBC's report, accusing the one-sided performance of the BBC in promoting the movement of the reformists, the counter-revolutionary Iran Global website wrote: Nearly three years since the establishment of the BBC Persian TV have passed and despite repeated emphasis of their management on neutrality and respecting the steadiness of the network and the repeated stress on the fact that the BBC Persian is not the spokesmen for any group, the network's performance is completely contrary to this.
- The BBC Persian's clear biased performance has made it attain titles such as reformer's public relation [office], reformer's cheerleader and the speaker for 2nd Khordad and...[ellipses as published]."

(State-facilitated media source: Fars News Agency website, Tehran, in Persian 0825 GMT, 27 June 2011)

- "If reports to this end are confirmed, we will definitely make efforts on our part to confront this ugly action," [Iran's] Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Mohammad Hoseyni told a Fars reporter while speaking about measures taken by his ministry to stand against a dubious decision by the BBC to produce a documentary against the Great Prophet (peace be upon Him).

- He then referred to reactions to the Koran burning in the USA. "On the issue of Koran burning, we acted seriously and took measures in this regard. If the BBC acts this way [makes the documentary], reactions will not definitely be limited to Iran only, but all Muslim countries will react," Hoseyni added.
- "Of course, one cannot rule out such an unpleasant action by European and Western countries, which have set Islamophobia on their agenda, as they had committed such actions like drawing Prophet's (peace be upon Him) caricatures and etc. in the past. Of course, they will face serious reactions of the Islamic world," Hoseyni stressed.
- He said that the condemnation of such an act is only a part of the reaction against the unpleasant moves of westerners. "We should do more in order to promote the Prophet of Islam. Although, the production of films, serials and publication of books with the relevant content is part of our agenda and we should speed up these activities," he added.

DOMESTIC HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES

(State-facilitated media source: Mehr news agency, Tehran, in Persian 0346 GMT, 02 July 2011)

- Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokesman Ramin Mehmanparast stressed the importance of Mehr news agency and described it as an "influential medium", Mehr reported on 2 July.
- At the ceremony to mark the anniversary of Mehr news agency foundation, Mehmanparast commented on the services provided by the agency in various language, saying "When a medium covers news and information in various languages, it has more influence", Mehr said.
- He also emphasized the significance of public diplomacy for countries and added: "Public diplomacy means people of the world should be made aware of other countries' foreign policy and ambiguities should be removed. Issues that are not true should be wiped from people's mind".

(State-facilitated media source: Islamic Republic News Agency website, Tehran, in English 2110 GMT, 30 June 2011)

- Addressing the conference on Inter Faith Harmony organized by "Idara Taqreeb-e Mazahib, Pakistan, as a chief guest Ayatollah Mohammad Ali Taskhiri, said that main challenge the Muslims are facing today is that they are divided. The conference was organized at the evening of Eyd-e Ma'bas. 'Unity is the only weapon which can prove useful in countering the conspiracies against Islam,' Ayatollah Taskhiri added. He said that enemies of Islam would fail to accomplish their evil designs. He further claimed that Islamic Republic of Iran is making all-out efforts to unite Muslims of the world.
- Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan on the occasion said Pakistan has no ambiguity in its policies regarding war against terror and peace in the region. She said that government was committed to solving all the problems relating to interfaith harmony and also committed to eradicate the religious extremism in the country. Ashiq Awan extended her support in this regard and said that this conference should be result oriented to promote interfaith harmony. She also praised efforts by Iran in promoting interfaith harmony in the Muslim world.

(State-facilitated media source: Iranian news website Hrana, in English 1615 GMT, 30 June 2011)

- Iranian Supreme Court confirmed Yusef Nadarkhani's death penalty and refused his objection to the sentence issued by the lower court.
- According to a report by Human Rights Activists News Agency (HRANA), Yusef Nadarkhani has been charged with apostasy at the age of nineteen and converting to Christianity. Iranian judicial authorities also state that Yusef Nadarkhani has preached Christianity for years.

- Accordingly, Gilan Province Court, Branch 11, has sentenced Yusef Nadarkhani to death penalty on charges of apostasy and preaching Christianity.
- Yusef Nadarkhani has been locked up in Rasht Prison since 12 October 2009. If the death penalty is carried out, it will be the first official hanging for apostasy and conversation to Christianity in the last twenty years.
- On 3 December, 1990, Pastor Hoseyn Sodmand was hanged in Mashhad Prison for refusing to give up his Christian faith. Pastor Sodmand is the only priest who has been officially executed by the Islamic Judiciary Branch for apostasy and conversion to Christianity.

(State-facilitated media source: Fars News Agency website, Tehran, in Persian 0818 GMT, 29 June 2011)

- The Iranian president called the recent arrest of state officials a political action and warned that if this process continued, he would perform his legal duties and put these issues up for a public discussion.
- According to Fars news agency, Iranian President Mahmud Ahmadinezhad said that "the government's position is quiet thus far, despite pressure it is receiving, because the country is in need of unity and concord. However, the cabinet is red line and overall these actions could be considered a political action pressuring the government."
- He added: "Our position has been calm and is calm now. Even if they continue this process, I will put these issues up for a public discussion and I will perform my legal duties in this regard."

(State-facilitated media source: Fars News Agency website, Tehran, in Persian 1346 GMT, 28 June 2011)

- Tehran prosecutor Abbas Ja'fari-Dowlatabadi said that "about 80 per cent of sentences" handed down for cases related to Iran's 2009 post-election protests have been "declared and finalized", Fars News Agency reported on 28 June.
- According to Fars, Ja'fari-Dowlatabadi said: "All the perpetrators involved in the sedition [2009 protests] have been arrested and the majority of them have been put on trial; there are only a few who await their trial. This is while a number of [the protesters] whose sentences were finalized are currently in prison waiting for the end of their [jail] terms."
- The Tehran prosecutor then said that "about 80 per cent of sentences" handed down for cases related to 1388 (2009) have been "declared and finalized". He added: "We hope the cases of all the individuals linked with the 88 sedition will be investigated by the end of Shahrivar [mid-September]. Of course by investigation I mean holding trials at all levels including appeals by the Supreme Court."

(State-facilitated media source: Iranian news website Hrana, in English 1838 GMT, 27 June 2011)

- Three Kurdish political prisoners, Alnur Khaziri, Kamran Shakhi and Seyyed Ebrahim Seyyedi, have been on hunger strike in Raja'ishahr Prison for 24 days, the Iranian human rights website, Hrana, reported on 27 June.
- The report said that "prison officials refused to pay any attention to these prisoners' demands and have failed to take the necessary steps to meet their needs to end this hunger strike."
- The report added that the three Kurdish prisoners have been on hunger strike for 24 days in protest to being locked up amongst ordinary criminals such as rapists, murderers and drug traffickers. Meanwhile, prison officials remain indifferent towards these Kurdish activists and refuse to transfer them to the political prisoners cell block.

(State-facilitated media source: Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Tehran, in Persian 1015 GMT, 27 June 2011)

- Iranian state radio started to broadcast a recording of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamene'i's address to a gathering of judicial officials on the occasion of the anniversary of 28 June 1981, when the then Judiciary Chief Ayatollah Mohammad Beheshti and several other Iranian officials were killed in an explosion.
- Khamene'i stressed that the Iranian nation and the Islamic system had proudly resisted the Western arrogance since the revolution.
- The leader stressed the importance of judicial officials performing their duties and said the judiciary needed power and the trust of the people in order to perform its duties. He said the current technical infrastructures had provided the necessary power for the judiciary but the judiciary also needed to gain strength from innovation, progressive techniques, adequate training and use of modern methods and competent individuals.
- He said administration of justice was the way to earn the trust of the people in the judiciary. When people see that justice is done, they will trust the judiciary, he said. Khamene'i said piety was the factor which ensured that the administration of justice was sustained. The leader warned against those who constantly criticized the system, and urged the media not to call into question the conduct of the judiciary for baseless claims. He said such behavior would undermine the trust of the people. He said criticism should be considered but biased publicity and unreal statistics should be avoided.
- Khamene'i also asked judicial officials to avoid publicizing court cases before they went to trial to safeguard the accused and their families. He praised the judiciary for the progress it had made and congratulated officials for their effort and enthusiasm.