

RAJAVI'S HOSTAGES



Massoud Khodabandeh

What lies behind the lawyers' campaign to keep the MKO in Iraq? The MKO is still insisting it be allowed to remain in Iraq because members face torture and execution if they are extradited to Iran. Yet no responsible body is even discussing such a move.

But if, as British MP Win Griffiths fears, the coalition forces "wash their hands of the matter" following handover, would the Iraq Governing Council be in a position to protect the men and women in Ashraf camp from revenge attacks by groups which the MKO helped Saddam Hussein to suppress?

Although considered as terrorist entity by the United States and the European Union, the MKO claims that its legal status must yet be clarified. Clearly, when MKO members are removed to safety in third countries, they will certainly be removed as individuals, not en masse as an organisation. In spite of this, several who already have citizenship or residency rights in third countries, have been denied permission from the MKO to travel to safety.

Since everyone is by now aware that MKO members, through indoctrination and intimidation, will obey only commands which emanate from Massoud Rajavi, these people, indeed all the people at Ashraf camp, must be regarded as his hostages. We should surely look at his interests in taking this line of action. If the MKO remains in or is removed from Ashraf camp as an entity, it would mean that Rajavi has found a buyer for his mercenary military force and he, along with his forces, will be protected and strengthened for re-use as a 'friendly' terrorist outfit. If, however, members are individually removed from Ashraf camp and the MKO infrastructure dismantled, then Rajavi will be left exposed as the leader of a terrorist outfit. As such he, and a small number of his

henchmen, must be held accountable for crimes against humanity and war crimes committed in Iran, Iraq and elsewhere, for which there is ample evidence and witnesses. Since everyone is also now aware that Massoud Rajavi regards his forces as expendable in times of need - that is, whenever a bit of blood is called for to up the ante - then as his personal crisis looms ever closer, with no guarantee of a buyer to save Rajavi from prosecution, then these hostages must be regarded as being in extreme danger. MKO insiders have already spoken about mass suicide. We should not ignore this possibility. Read Iran-Interlink's article 'Rajavi's July 1st Deadline is Fast Approaching' in this issue. ■

EDITORIAL

Welcome to Survivors' Report



In its most simple expression, because the Mojahedin presents a false image of itself based on lies and deceit. In the west the MKO has presented itself as a pro-democratic, pro-women's rights, pro-western political organisation. At the same time, under the protection of Saddam Hussein the MKO has in reality acted with impunity to crush and kill not only Iranians and Iraqis but also its own dissenting members and critics. This false democratic image concocted under the title of the 'National Council of Resistance of Iran' has, we believe, resulted in its being overlooked until very recently as a terrorist threat. The MKO has been, unfortunately, accepted in the west almost without question as a political organisation, and as such, has hindered and deformed the struggle of people inside Iran for greater freedoms and the democratisation of their political systems.

Articles in this publication will go

Survivors' Report has been created to act as a forum for publication of the experiences and knowledge of experts and others on the Mojahedin-e Khalq organization (MKO). The aim of Survivors' Report is to provide a unique source of information, analysis and opinion which we hope will prove valuable and of interest to anyone who has dealings with the Mojahedin. Why do we believe this publication is necessary?

some way to exploding the myths surrounding the Mojahedin and National Council of Resistance of Iran. Why is the publication called Survivors' Report? Survivors' Report is so called because foremost among the contributors to this publication are former members of the MKO. These are disaffected members who refused to accept Rajavi's violent strategy and tactics, who refused to participate in his mercenary activities for Saddam, and who as a result have left the organisation. For most this has not been an easy task. Some have been imprisoned and tortured by the cult for years. Some had been handed over to the Saddam's Security Services and subjected to torture in places like the notorious Abu Ghraib prison. Others had been deliberately forced to cross the border into Iran at gunpoint in a bid to see them shot or captured by Iranian border guards so they could be added to the list of

Mojahedin martyrs. In addition to those who survived, there have also, of course, been the numerous victims who have been killed in prisons, fields or camps and a number of missing people of whom there has not yet been any news.

In this and future editions of Survivor's Report we will print the personal accounts of Rajavi's victims. People who survived the cult. People who still care deeply about those colleagues with whom they lived and worked for many years who remain trapped in the cult. Coming from all walks of life, with diverse social and political views, these former members are working together now, without reference to revenge or personal justice, to rescue as many others as they can from the damage inflicted by Rajavi's cult. ■

CONTEXT OF THE CURRENT MOJAHEDIN SITUATION



The founders could not have anticipated that their organisation would survive over the next four decades, only to become one of the most notorious armed cults in the history of the Middle East. The same organisation which was established to place the rights of people at the top of any agenda, is now labelled a terrorist organisation by the US, UK, European Union, and many other democratic nations across the globe, and in addition is the subject of frequent concern to human rights organisations such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and others who have issued several statements, expressing their deep concern about the maltreatment of members, misuse of children and in particular the treatment of those people who question the actions of Mr and Mrs Rajavi, the leadership of the cult. That concern is in addition to the thousands upon thousands of severe injuries and deaths caused by the blind terror operations carried out by the MKO in Iran, or its military operations against the Kurdish and Shiite uprisings and resistance against Saddam Hussein in Iraq. Massoud Rajavi, one of the few survivors of the imprisoned leading members of the MKO, was freed during

Thirty-odd years ago in Tehran, five graduate students gathered together to determine a way for independence, freedom and democracy to be brought to Iran, ruled then by the late Mohammad Reza Shah. The five young men founded the People's Mojahedin Organisation of Iran (PMOI) or Mojahedin-e Khalq (MEK). The organization was founded on a mixture of Marxist and Islamic fundamentals and belief in armed struggle was at its core.

the 1979 revolution in Iran. It did not take long for him to turn against the same revolutionaries who he and his colleagues had helped in toppling the Shah and establishing the Islamic Republic of Iran. After an unsuccessful coup attempt in 1981, he was the first to run away from Iran, leaving behind masses of unorganised and desperate militia to be arrested and executed by the revolutionary guards. The deaths of all other leading members then opened the way for Rajavi to take complete control of the organisation and appoint himself its sole leader. Although he did not have success in his attempt to seize power in Iran, Rajavi certainly successfully engineered an internal coup by which he changed this armed revolutionary organisation into a mercenary armed cult. With the obedient cult members in place, Rajavi was ready to serve anybody who was, or is, willing to pay the cash. It took very little time for Rajavi's outfit to become "Saddam's Private Army". Serving under the orders of the Intelligence Services of Saddam for two decades, Rajavi had scores of women and children killed, provided intelligence against Iran, co-operated in hiding WMDs, and more...

Once coalition forces toppled Saddam's regime in 2003, all that remained from a popular mass movement was Rajavi and fewer than 4000 unlawful combatants, (as the USA describes such people). The combatants were stopped, disarmed and put under investigation. Rajavi typically ran away again, and is still in hiding. His new, third wife, who divorced her husband (also a high ranking member of the cult) on Rajavi's order so that she could marry him and become co-leader, was discovered hiding in the suburbs of Paris. Maryam Rajavi was arrested by the French police on terrorism charges. Last year has not been a good year for Massoud and Maryam Rajavi. Although the Rajavis are self-appointed and unaccountable cult leaders who have the power to order any member to carry out suicide bombings and or self-immolations anywhere in the world, they have now lost their main benefactor Saddam Hussein and evidence of their crimes against humanity and war crimes are piling up with eye opening acceleration. As if this were not enough, their benefactor had filmed all their meetings and discussions in which they were ordered to perform terrorist killings in Iraq and

Iran for which Saddam would pay the costs in dollars and dinars. They were to sell illegal oil in the black market and provide intelligence to Iraq concerning western countries and Saddam would provide them with tanks, military bases and training for terrorist acts and future suicide bombings. The films surfaced after Iraq's Intelligence Services' buildings were looted during the fall of Baghdad. Now that Rajavi has chosen to stay in hiding and his co-leader and wife Maryam Rajavi is currently facing prosecution on terrorism charges in Europe, the cult's propaganda machine has closed all its normal outlets and dares not even mention these issues. In contrast, its internal Farsi newspapers and media are working overtime churning out misinformation to keep the cult's members and supporters in the dark. Externally, rather than portray itself as reformed organisation, or organisations, the Mojahedin is trying to somehow replicate itself with a new name and identity in the west. The nature of the cult meanwhile remains unchanged, based on the same military and fanatical ideology invented by Rajavi. The personnel, slogans, heads and bases also remain the same. During the past year their hideouts in the UK, Germany, Canada, Italy, USA, Australia and most notably France, have been raided by police. Documents and other evidence were seized. The justification for these raids has been to prevent the cult from transferring its terrorist HQ from Iraq to Europe. It is clear that neither Europe nor America want the cult in their countries, and nor has any other nation shown any willingness to accept them. The Mojahedin however continues to ignore this reality. Rajavi has put his cult on the market and is looking for a new buyer. ■



FACTS ABOUT THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF RESISTANCE OF IRAN

The Mojahedin-e Khalq founded in 1965 is currently led by Massoud Rajavi and his wife Maryam Rajavi. Massoud Rajavi co-founded the National Council of Resistance of Iran in Paris in 1981 with former president Abol Hassan Bani Sadr. Both fled Iran when Rajavi's failed power coup provoked the severe repression in which thousands were imprisoned and killed.

- The NCRI can be described as a council of various groups, organisations and individuals who believe in 'regime change' by means of armed struggle in order to bring democracy to Iran.
- The NCRI is variously described as the political wing of the Mojahedin-e Khalq.
- The Chairman of the NCRI for twenty-three years has been Massoud Rajavi.
- Before 1993 most independent members of the NCRI had rejected Massoud Rajavi's undemocratic methods and had left. Rajavi then expanded the 12 member NCRI to over 550 members by co-opting his own Mojahedin members as individual NCRI members.
- Currently, over 95% of NCRI members are from the Mojahedin and are ideologically and unquestioningly obedient to Massoud Rajavi's leadership. ■

TERRORIST BY DEFINITION



One of the Mojahedin's longer term projects has been centered on efforts to have its name removed from the list of terrorist entities in the USA, UK and the EU. The argument is that they are a legitimate opposition organization which, in its legitimate armed struggle, only targets officials of the Iranian regime who, it says, are responsible for repression.

For individuals who believe Iran's Islamic regime is an evil which must be rooted out by all means, and even for individuals who have deep criticism of Iran's human rights record, this might at first sight appear to be an attractive position to support. On closer examination it is clearly not the whole picture. Even if the MKO relationship with Saddam Hussein could be swept under the carpet of history, events closer to the heart of western democracy should be ringing alarm bells for anyone concerned with security and counter-terrorism. Based on the United Nations' academic consensus definition of terrorism, (see below), how should we assess the self-immolations performed on the orders of Rajavi by a Mojahedin suicide squad in June 2003 in which four

Mojahedin members died? These did not occur in Tehran or Iraq, they took place in Paris, London, Germany. In these actions, French embassies were targeted to force MKO demands on the French government. The extreme and horrifying act of self-burning in a public place in lieu of political or legal protest can only be described as terrorist in nature. In this case the Mojahedin chose intimidation, coercion and propaganda rather than submit to the rule of law.

United Nations Academic Consensus Definition of Terrorism

Terrorism is an anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi-) clandestine individual, group or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal or

political reasons, whereby - in contrast to assassination - the direct targets of violence are not the main targets. The immediate human victims of violence are generally chosen randomly (targets of opportunity) or selectively (representative or symbolic targets) from a target population, and serve as message generators. Threat- and violence-based communication processes between terrorist (organization), (imperilled) victims, and main targets are used to manipulate the main target (audience(s)), turning it into a target of terror, a target of demands, or a target of attention, depending on whether intimidation, coercion, or propaganda is primarily sought (Schmid, 1988).

Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



Mitra Yousefi

THE WOMEN'S ISSUE

Like beholding the pieces of a cracked mirror, reflecting myriad strange pictures, all matching in disgusting ugliness. Pieces sharpened to tear your heart apart any time you touch them. This is my feeling on picking out just one of the Mojahedin-e Khalq's hypocrisies for display. Last year the Mojahedin Pandora's Box burst open and more of its crimes were exposed.

Now, still raving about democracy, peace making, freedom of speech, freedom of the media, women's rights and children's rights, the Mojahedin impudently and shamelessly continues to stage so-called conferences, concerts and gatherings here

and there. The expenses are paid with left over payments from Saddam Hussein, money from illegal sales of Iraqi oil and money from a modern slavery industry where even the families of Massoud Rajavi's slaves are cheated and robbed, money from

fake charities, stealing from people on western streets in the naked light of day using aggressive hard-sell techniques, money donated by good hearted people for Africa diverted to Rajavi's pocket for his lavish and false propaganda.



The self-sacrifice of women is exploited to the maximum in the Mojahedin

The Mojahedin has stained western parliaments with its corruption and exploiting its position for unjustified benefits. Forgetting that this force was first funded by bank and jewellery robberies and business fraud and corruption in Iran. Leading to the arrest of underage boy, Sayeed Motahedin who was caught in a Mojahedin robbery and executed. Lately, news has emerged of drug trafficking. Just a tip of the iceberg hidden by Rajavi's propaganda, which we have to scratch at with a needle compared to the facilities and help the Mojahedin have got almost free. Perhaps it is wisest then for me to select 'women's rights' as the Mojahedin's most controversial issue, the issue pinned to the organisation's notorious mast, blowing in the wind for all to see. An issue of utmost seriousness between them and their antagonists, especially their former members with their tremendous experience of this. Proud and confident as a Humanist from the very beginning of my career as an activist, I always avoided working on and thinking about the women's cause just because I was a woman.. Yet each organization and student body I met with was certain to point me out its Women's Group. I refused to join, saying, for instance, that I would prefer to follow economic problems,

caring for all the people.

In the Mojahedin everything is in the extreme. So this women's issue became the very top issue, but it was actually a shallow and hollow ploy, resulting in a paradox. We were tempted to rise artificially and superficially in the organisational hierarchy as women. Yet we were seduced deep inside ourselves into giving up our total identity. Our priority was to ignore love in its every aspect; even the love I had for a man that I fell in love with and married long before entering the organization, even love and affection for my children who had both been born earlier, even other family members, though fortunately they were too far by distance and situation to feel it, and even friends. Like all other members, I had to deny them all, to deny every feeling and sense, except that is toward the leader, in order to become a good fighter. This problem caused confusion. The burden was to forget myself completely as a human being and to worship a newly cast god, through an object, his wife. We were all ordered to take her as our role model, doing all she had done, ending up to stand as nothing before the leader, who was a man. But this object, the goddess, the role model, the mirror to find yourself in, the door to Rajavi or whatever other descriptions attached

to her, couldn't in all her life even stand up by herself. She had always looked to the support of a man. First her brother, then her first husband who along with their daughter, she decided to leave. Not for any kind of liberty, or to stand on her own two feet. But only to marry a second husband, as his third wife, to obey him. What worthy woman or feminist is she?

In the mid 80s in Paris, after an internal organisational revolution conducted by the use of abuse and mistreatment (leaving many mentally sick, their faces pale with pain, or even committing suicide). We were told to believe this marriage, this conversion of a woman into a goddess, was as a shower of revolutionary light. With zeal and seriousness, they announced their own constitution, in which they set the minimum age for marriage at 21 years. Meanwhile inside the organisation many very young, definitely under 21 years old girls, were allocated to men, some with huge difference in age. These were not even legally registered marriages. But held according to their own religious formula which left a get out so that these innocent brides could be removed from their current husband if he were losing his position in the hierarchy, and she could be awarded to another man who had just achieved a better position, that is by devoting themselves more and giving themselves up to the leader. Things only got worse in the Iraqi desert. Mojahedin members entered the country as Iranians without visas and were unregistered. Poor unfortunate people. They weren't aware of being made into slaves both physically and mentally. They had already been victims of the Mojahedin congregational brain

washing machine. They learned to call themselves Kaniz [female slave] with pride. The first candidate for this example was Nasrin Parsian, killed later in a mysterious car crash in the Iraqi desert. She stood up before a large congregation, achieving her inner revolution before the leader. Rajavi asked her what, according to herself, she deserved to be after all. She answered that she was ready enough to become a Kaniz to Rajavi's wife, so she could lead her forward toward understanding Rajavi's exaltation. Otherwise he was so high and inaccessible to his own subjects. Alas, Rajavi made us Kaniz, or slaves, on the threshold of a new millennium. True to the traditions of slavery, mothers had no right to motherhood for their own children, instead being forced into offering them to Rajavi. It started as a symbolic gesture in Paris. One pregnant woman announced her readiness to burn herself with her child inside simply to prove her inner revolution. Another mother, Mahnaz Bazazi, presented her daughter to the leader in an enthusiastic open letter to Rajavi. In order to isolate children from their parents and indoctrinate them absolutely in the way he aimed, Rajavi founded a secret boarding school in Paris, which, soon after, was run openly in Iraq. In 1991 during the Gulf War, all the children were taken away to different countries to live with strangers. Rajavi expanded a compulsory order he had made earlier for the high ranking members to now cover all members. Sadly a number of the female children were raped and abused by the foster families and their relatives, which to Rajavi's benefit has been ignored by the media. Even before the forced general separation, if a woman found she

had become pregnant by accident, she climbed to the top of the heap for taunting and abuse. For some unknown reason abortion was forbidden. Imagine then what would happen to such women after the forced separations. Poor women, they carried and delivered their babies without receiving any care, in the most overgrown and forsaken corner of the camp. They were treated like dogs. With the fragile mental condition of a new mother, in that strange country, far from all their loved ones, even their husband, the father of the child, couldn't visit. Not even just to look at the mother and his child. Since Rajavi's Fatwa [religious ruling], men and women were forbidden fruits to one another. With the divorce ruling, women were forced to call their former husbands Malun [cursed], a strongly negative religious term used against an evil doer. They in turn had been named Efriteh [female demon], as harsh as the latter term. Women in the Mojahedin have been discriminated against in studying. They have had to leave their schools and universities at the time they joined the organisation. And the children who grew up with the Mojahedin, had only Mojahedin education, and even that only up to the 8th grade, then, nothing at all. In the Mojahedin organisation there are strict rules to separate men and women, including compulsory hejab for women so their hair is covered. Men are not allowed to touch women, even to inflict punishment. This problem has been solved brilliantly in Rajavi's unique way. He has trained all-women punishment squads. Though in fact the men are still in charge of the squads; it is they

who give orders to the women in the attacks. And if during the process of beating the female victim, her head scarf were to slide down, the male commander has to leave the room. Obviously, in their ideology it is acceptable to order and see the physical beating of a woman, but not her hair! After the general order to divorce, Rajavi declared that all Mojahed women belong to him. And his wife confirmed that by saying: 'but he refuses to make use of his own right'. Women do not take part in any decision making at all. Even Rajavi's most senior and high ranking women are given the title Executive Committee. They are only Rajavi's gofers. An Iranian woman intellectual from the USA accepted a Mojahedin invitation in 1989 to perform a mission which required her to stay for two months in Iraq. She then kindly extended her visit to two years. But when, eventually, she said she must leave, one of the women from Rajavi's Executive Committee, rather than expressing appreciation for her help, instead insulted her ferociously as a whore. These are only some brief examples of the truth underlying the Mojahedin's fabled woman's issue. A little of the truth which lies behind the mask they wear to deceive western politicians and the media. Now, some of those who had supported the Mojahedin in good faith have begun listening to, and receiving proof from those like us, former members who have been through the mill. As to the former members themselves, in the end we can say that: 'supporting the Mojahedin was great, yet leaving them was greater'. ■

RAJAVI'S JULY 1ST DEADLINE IS FAST APPROACHING

By Iran-Interlink

Since the Iraqi Governing Council decision on 9 December 2003 to expel the foreign terrorist Mojahedin-e Khalq organization from the country, the Mojahedin has concentrated all its effort on this and a few related issues.

The Mojahedin's propaganda campaign is centred on the spurious claim that the 3,800 remaining in Iraq are all in immediate danger of being extradited to Iran, even though Paul Bremer and others have repeatedly denied any intention of sending anyone to Iran, except when individuals make this request themselves. This behaviour is reminiscent of the situation in 1986 when Massoud Rajavi first sold his organisation to Saddam Hussein.

Rajavi did so using the fictitious pretext that the west, headed by France, had made a deal with Iran to extradite him there. The Mojahedin's second line argument is that the Americans must preserve the Mojahedin intact because it represents the only way to 'stop the spread of Islamic fundamentalism' in Iraq. This exactly echoes Saddam Hussein's use of the Mojahedin during his reign, as a repressive force against Iraq's Shiite population. In particular he used the Mojahedin as a proxy force to massacre Kurds and Marsh Arabs in the March 1991 uprisings. Certainly, this is among the major reasons the IGC wants them removed. The Americans decided to pass this dead body to the UN. The UN passed it to the International Committee of the Red Cross. The ICRC refused to deal with a terrorist organization and will only deal with individuals. The body is now back again in the hands of the US Army. The Mojahedin's problem however is not about being sent to Iran. Since the fall of Saddam, a great deal of fresh evidence has surfaced which exposes the Mojahedin's role as a mercenary fighting force in the pay of

and taking direct orders from Saddam Hussein. The Mojahedin leader Massoud Rajavi and a number of the organization's other leading and executive members now stand accused, with incontrovertible evidence, of:

- participation in the massacre of Kurds and Marsh Arabs during the March 1991 uprisings
- complicity in hiding WMDs for Saddam
- participation in joint terrorist operations with Saddam's Intelligence Services
- involvement in selling illegal oil for Saddam
- receiving millions of dollars in financial support from Saddam
- the torture, imprisonment and murder of disaffected members at its bases and in Iraq's Abu Ghorair political prison.

Documents from the former Iraqi regime's own ministries and videotapes filmed by Iraq's Secret Service itself, have shocked even the members of the Mojahedin since most did not know the full extent of this collusion with and indebtedness to Saddam Hussein. The result has been widespread disaffection inside the organization. Nearly 300 who demanded separation from the Mojahedin have been removed to another part of Ashraf camp by the Americans. Several more have managed to escape and have testified to the imprisonment, torture and executions inside the Mojahedin's camps. Three of the most recent escapees, Alireza Moghadami, Davood Heydari and Gholam Mehdi Gholioghlu, are present-

ly in Soleimanieh in Kurdistan and have taken part in telephone interviews with western media from there. The Mojahedin's supporters in the west are ashamed of even going to their meetings, resulting in rapidly falling numbers at events from thousands to tens of people, even when all the supporters' expenses are paid by the Mojahedin. The Mojahedin's silence on these issues has been deafening! The organization prefers, instead of answering the accusations, to spend the remains of the money from Saddam Hussein on employing a brigade of lawyers to find ways to blackmail, threaten and otherwise denigrate any Iranian, Iraqi, European or anyone else they can in an effort to prevent them pursuing these issues, whether in the media, political circles or through the courts. The Mojahedin's real struggle is not so that they are not extradited to Iran, it is a fight for the survival of Massoud Rajavi and his 'leadership' gang. On July 1st the Iraqi Governing Council will take responsibility for the government of Iraq. The threat that this poses to the Mojahedin cannot be underestimated. If Rajavi and his gang of criminals do not get out of Iraq by July they will be put on trial in Iraq for crimes committed as the closest collaborators of Saddam Hussein. Rajavi has until July to convince someone to buy his organization and either reinstall it as a military force in some other country or to remove it en masse to Europe and reinvent it as a pseudo political force. All the Mojahedin's activities are now focused on this issue. How to escape Iraq. In considering how to approach the

Mojahedin it is vital to focus upon, as paramount, two key facts: The Mojahedin is not an Iranian opposition organization, it is an isolated cult. The Mojahedin has not had any involvement in the Iranian political scene for many years. Rajavi used his propaganda machine in the west to provide proof for Saddam that the Mojahedin was taken seriously in western political circles. It now performs the similar function of advertising his armed cult as a tool for the west to use somewhere in the Middle East. Mojahedin approaches to politicians in western democracies are not based on the politics of Iran but are self-evidently for the purposes of propaganda and selfpreservation. The Mojahedin is not a political organization it is a mercenary militant force. The Mojahedin *raison d'être* is armed force not politics. Armed struggle is the fundamental belief system which governs the organization. It has long passed the point of no return. This is why the Mojahedin, or any of its aliases, cannot denounce terrorism, whether in the form of the 9/11 tragedy or the crimes of Saddam Hussein. Currently the Mojahedin has halted all its English language internet broadcasts and instead opened a rash of Farsi sites which broadcast virulent and aggressive messages in order to keep its Fedayeen forces already in Europe in a state of readiness for terrorist actions. The July 1st deadline for Rajavi is fast approaching. The activities he commands of his organization reveal above all that he has neither principles nor scruples. The Mojahedin is being used as the mouthpiece for sophisticated Intelligence Agencies to exert leverage against Iran with revelations about its nuclear power program. It is not difficult to identify Iran's protagonists within the right wing of Israel and the neocons in the US administration. ■

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES:



Jamshid Tahmasbi

Finding an exceptional opportunity in Baghdad, I took myself to the 'Office of Protection of Italy's Interests' in Baghdad and explained the problem to the head of that office. First they contacted Italy (by letter) for confirmation of my identity (as I did not have any documentary evidence), and when this was confirmed they followed the case through the Foreign Ministry of Iraq.

In the meantime, Mehdi Abrishamchi, Ebrahim Zakeri and Farid Soleimani came to the 'Office of Protection of Italy's Interests' and asked to speak to me. At first I refused. Then, on the insistence of the head of the Office, I accepted to speak with them.

At first they tried to take me with them with promises and psychological manipulation (showing me undue kindness, etc) I did not accept and said that I would only leave the Office if my documents were returned to me. These meetings, following the same pattern, continued over a week and did not elicit any result. On the other hand, I was getting weaker and weaker having started a hunger strike. The head of the Office contacted the office of the United Nations in Baghdad and asked for help. They accepted to transfer me to Jordan and for the Italian Embassy there to arrange to send me

After months of arguments and following-up my case in order to have my documents (ie passport) returned so that I could return to Italy, I got no result. (Massoud Rajavi had by this time announced that from now on nobody would be allowed to leave Iraq toward Europe).

back to Italy. But later, the head of the Office of Protection of Italy's Interests gave in to the pressure exerted by Iraq and the Mojahedin, or he did a deal with them, because he told me 'as the Mojahedin have accepted to send you back to Italy, you have no other choice but to accept this, and since we do not have an Embassy in Iraq we will have to hand you over to the Iraqi authorities'. (The Iraqi Secret Service personnel were there in the Office to take me away, but the head of the Office sent them away.) Under these circumstances I accepted that they [Mojahedin] give me a written guarantee to send me back in a few months (this was signed by Abrishamchi in front of me and given to the head of the Office). They [Mojahedin] proposed that during this time I stay in a hotel which they proposed for security reasons. I didn't think it would be a good idea and we agreed that I stay in one of their bases in Baghdad.

But as Mehdi Abrishamchi, Ebrahim Zakeri, Farid Soleimani and I came out of the Office, I was confronted by the Iraqi Security Services together with Mahmoud Ataiee, Hassan Nezam and Jafar (a false name). They took me to Ashraf Camp. My complaints were answered by swearing and to intimidate

me they used a scarf to blindfold me. In Ashraf Camp, Ebrahim Zakeri and Mahmoud Ataiee tried to talk to me to convince me to return to the Unit I had come from. I said there is nothing more to be said and everything has been talked over in the Italian Interest Office. When they got no result, they left and a man called Hassan Mohassel (Javad) came with the title 'Representative of the Anti-Intelligence Bureau'. He asked me to sign a piece of paper. I took the paper, tore it up and threw it back at him. Following this, Majid Alemzadeh and two more people called Mokhtar and Fereydoun attacked me and tied my hands, blindfolded my eyes and bound my mouth. They placed me under the seat of a landcruiser and took me to a place in the same camp (prison) which nobody knew about. It was run under the guise of a water purification project under the supervision of the Iraqi authorities (near to the old water purification facility of Ashraf Camp). They put me in a cell where someone called Adel and others first took off all my clothes, including my underwear, and when faced with my resistance, started beating me and took my glasses and watch. I was left with some old and dirty Kurdish clothes. After one or two weeks, Mahmoud Ataiee together with Hassan Mohassel came and tried to use kindly, emotive questioning to break my hunger strike. They said that whatever had happened was now finished and that I should come and return to my previous situation. In response, I started eating some washing powder which was there in an attempt to kill myself. This resulted in my stomach bleeding. I was vomiting blood and scratching the floor because of pain, but they refused to take me to a hospital.

In this situation, Mahvash Sepheri (Nasrin) together with Mehdi Abrishamchi and Ebrahim Zakeri came and used every possible way to make me surrender. It didn't work. My condition was getting worse but they wouldn't leave me alone. I felt that they wouldn't mind if I died if I didn't surrender to them, so they could say that I had killed myself because Mehdi Abrishamchi was saying "let me put your mind at rest. You know that Massoud [Rajavi] has emphasised that there is no going back to Europe, and forget the Italian Embassy [Office for Protection of Italy's Interests] and what happened there. What you have done up to now (the political disgrace) is worse than killing ten people." At the end, Ebrahim Zakeri emphasised that you could have gone to Iran and got killed and nobody would question that (a veiled threat to kill me). But since my problem had been exposed outside (to the Office of Protection of Italy's Interests and Italy itself knew about it), it was obvious they couldn't get rid of me or at least they felt the price would be too high because now they had tied me to the bed and connected a serum [injection] to me. When I felt that under no circumstance whatsoever, considering all that had happened, would they let me go, and with the intention of finding a way to escape and run away, I decided to accept to come out of prison. I therefore started to accept things little by little and stopped my hunger strike. After that, Mahvash Sepheri brought a message from Rajavi saying that 'I heard the news with great surprise and I ask you please to forget everything and act in a manner that would credit me'. But Mahvash Sepheri asked me to sign

a letter to the head of the Office for Protection of Italy's Interests in Baghdad saying that I had changed my mind and do not want to go to Italy. I refused to sign, even though they promised to send me later. I came out after six months, but was not allowed to leave Ashraf Camp. A team, headed by Hossein Esfahani was watching me the whole time. One night, under cover of darkness, I approached a water tanker whose driver was Iraqi (Estekhbarat - Iraqi Security Services) and climbed into the water tank. I knew that this tanker would take water on a daily basis for the Iraqi Security units surrounding the camp. I stayed in the water tank until morning in the hope of running away from the camp. But when they started filling the tank I was forced to lift my head out a little and I was seen. I was arrested and taken back to the same prison, but this time with much greater violence. After this, the so-called court case and the judiciary system started. First the interrogations were carried out by a team headed by Hassan Mohassel in the presence of Ahmad Hanif Nejad. Again, after all the allegations of being a mercenary, they asked me to sign the letter to the Italian Office in Baghdad. I did not sign. After all the efforts of this team, a man called Nader Rafiee Nejad, came under the title of Head of the Judiciary System. From the beginning he started acting like the 'lumpen' [prole] people from the lowest parts of Tehran in a way that they couldn't do themselves. He started swearing and when I would not listen or answer or get angry, Majid Alemzadeh and another man who were behind the door, would come in and beat me up. After a few weeks of this, they

announced that I have a court hearing. They took me to a room they called a court (of course always with bound hands and eyes). In there, when they unbound my eyes, I faced these people: a woman called Shahin Hayeri, Head of the Court; another woman called Marzieh, the First Deputy; Mahmoud Ghaemshahr, the Second Deputy; Farshid, the Prosecutor; Majid Alemzadeh, Secretary; and two other people.

First, the so-called Prosecutor said things as before such as that I am a mercenary and was attempting to run away etc. He asked me to answer, but I remained silent. When this persistence, together with the worst kind of swearing, continued, I said, you are mercenaries yourselves. I said I didn't want to run away, and pretended I had lost my mind and had got into the water tanker without knowing what I was doing. They announced a recess and then came back (Mahvash Sepheri was behind the scenes) and announced that the verdict is execution. But since Massoud Rajavi opposes that, the verdict would be life imprisonment. They returned me to the same cell. With the intention of escape, I started to act as though I was sorry and after a while asked to be permitted to return to my old job. After about one year, I was released from prison and transferred to a camp called Anzali which is situated near Jalula in Iraq near the Iran-Iraq border where I couldn't easily get to Baghdad and the Italian Interests Office.

One night, when there was a 'high alert' practice, I took advantage of the chaotic situation and escaped from my guards. But I was arrested in the security zone outside the camp which was run jointly by the Mojahedin and the Iraqis.

My head was split open because of being hit with the butt of their guns and I fell unconscious with the bleeding. The next thing I knew, I was in hospital in an Iraqi military camp. They had stitched my head wound without any anaesthetic, painkillers or even the minimum of sanitary facilities. They returned me to Ashraf Camp with a beating, even though I was fainting and vomiting all the time. They sent me back to the same cell.

I was left without any medical attention and I even had to remove my own stitches with great pain and difficulty. The scars are still visible and I suffer continuous headaches and loss of balance.

The story of interrogations and court appearances didn't stop. This time I was condemned to execution but told that because Rajavi is against it, unfortunately we cannot execute you and you will be waiting stay of execution until after the victory [when the Islamic Republic of Iran is toppled]. Again, I remained about two years in solitary confinement, but in the worst condition. Projectors [floodlights] were on 24 hours a day and there was a horrifying atmosphere to prevent me from sleeping.

One day, in the year 1379 [1998], Batoul Rajaei came and told me that the only way for you to be released is for you to go to Iran. At first I didn't accept and told them that if the regime is going to kill me, you may as well kill me. They said that 'if you are not armed and lead a quiet life, nothing will happen.'

I insisted that they send me to an Iraqi prison, but they didn't accept. However, using the Estekhbarat forces (Iraqi Security Services) they took me over the Alavand river together with an Iraqi who spoke good Farsi. On the

other side of the river they left me and started shooting at me. The Iranian border patrol forces started shooting at the same point in response. I saved my own life by taking advantage of the darkness and hiding in the bushes. I spent the night in the bushes with the wild pigs and when it became light, I approached a village. From there I made my way to Khoramshahr and contacted my family. With their help and the help of a trafficker I left Iran.

The scars from torture, the broken head and surgery which was carried out under my stomach are visible.

A brief description of the prison

As far as I remember, this place was built in 1370-1371 [1990] under the name of a water purification project (this is what was written over it then) and was carried out by an Iraqi Army Engineering unit. To cover the true nature of the mechanisms and facilities, they first placed barbed wire around it and then a huge dyke and after that a high wall. As I was blindfolded when they moved me around inside it, I don't know much about it. But as a general view, they have made about twenty cells inside it with the following specifications. In an area of 10 x 15 [meters] which is surrounded by walls of about 4 meters, they have made a room of 3 x 3 [meters] in concrete with a toilet. Surrounding these cells is empty space. After some time (several months) they would open the cell door now and then so that I could walk in the 10 x 15 area.

The light inside the cell and the projectors [floodlights] outside were on all night. The work and the security of the place was carried out by people like Ahmad Hanif Nejad, Davood, Adel,

Mahmoud Ataiee, Hassan Mohassel, Nader Rafiee Nejad, Majid Alemian and etc. Generally, the people from the Mojahedin's former polit-bureau or similar.

Entry or leaving would only take place between 3 and 4 am. First they would take the victim to another place and then at night they would transfer him or her to this place.

You could more than often hear the crying, swearing, beating and shouting etc which would reveal the resistance of the victim and the reaction of the other side.

The subject of being sent to Iran

About three months after my last escape attempt, Batoul Rajaee (member of the Leadership Council and Head of Personnel) came and said, the only chance you have not to rot in this cell is to accept the offer to go to Iran. We will solve all your problems. I did not accept and said that if I am supposed to be lost like this, I would rather this happen here. Ebrahim Zakeri had threatened me in the past and said that that you could have gone to Iran and what happened to you there would be none of our business. Let me put your mind at ease, the Italians would never follow your case either. Because I felt that they wanted to be rid of me without a trace, I said I would go to Iran as long as it was part of an [military] operation (my aim was to get out and try to run away again). In the end, Mahvash Sepheri (Nasrin) came out and said:

"look, you cannot fool us any more.

We know you are thinking of running away again.

Let me put your mind at rest, this time we will ask the Iraqi Estekhbarat to enter and if you move they will shoot you. Even though you are not worth

trusting, if you sign to say that you have gone to Iran, then we are willing to let you participate in a patrol operation to prove yourself. When you come back you will be worth talking to." I accepted.

Later, Fazli came as the Representative of the Internal [Iran] Division and briefed me on what subjects were in Tehran for intelligence gathering and the radio and telephone communications, how to get to Abadan with false documents (a driving licence and a work card from a company), with the name of Javad Taghavi (I have these documents).

At the end, under the strict security of the Iraqi Estekhbarat and under the command of an Iraqi officer and the Mojahedin security team, including Fazli, Farshid and Hossein Esfahani, we went first to Basra and then to the border city of Fav, then from an Iraqi military camp situated on the river 'Shatt-al-Arab' in a boat with an Iranian Arab (from Khuzestan), who was working for the Iraqis, we were sent to Iran.

Up to this point I couldn't run away because of the amount of security. I thought that the smuggler didn't know anything and that he must think I am with the Mojahedin.

Before reaching the end of the river, I threw my bag into the water. When I was getting out of the boat, I told the smuggler that I had lost my bag and must go back to pick it up. He was alone and I thought I could easily lose him. At first he said, I will fish it out for you and told the boat to leave. In the end he told me, I know you did that deliberately so you would not have to go to Iran. I have been told that under no circumstances should you reach Iraqi soil. In these circumstances, we came under fire from the

Iranian border guards and had to run into the bushes.

When I discovered that he knew my situation, I said, OK you are with me and whatever happens to me will happen to you also. I will not leave you unless you take me back to Iraq. I will not go to the Mojahedin or the Iraqis and you will not have a problem. In the end he became anxious and accepted. But he said that since we don't have a boat to return, we have to go and hire a boat in Iran. I said, let's go along the shore to Khoramshahr. But he said it was full of mines and he didn't know the way. In the end we agreed to go to Abadan and hire a boat from someone he knew. But unfortunately he cheated me and ran away. I contacted my brother in Kerman and got the address of one of our family in Abadan. I told him my story and that I had to leave Iran as soon as possible. The family were also afraid that something might happen to me, so they found a smuggler and sent me out. After a month I arrived in Turkey and from there came to Germany. ■

SURVIVORS' REPORT

Association for the Support of Victims of Mojahedin-e Khalq ©2004

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