



Analysis of Iran Tribunal Communication Activity

19 October – 15 November 2012

Prepared by The Communication Group plc



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1) Overview

The Communication Group plc (TCG) was commissioned to build on its previous communication activity supporting the Truth Commission with a more detailed programme of activity to raise the profile of the Tribunal that took place in The Hague, 25-28 October 2012. This document outlines the what was undertaken and, includes a digest of the coverage achieved and an analysis of its impact.

2) Strategic approach

We recommended the following strategy to raise the profile of the Tribunal:

- Distribute announcement that the Tribunal is taking place to build anticipation
- Distribute announcement of the Truth Commission's findings
- Engage with high profile press that have covered Iran human rights
- Engage with the Iranian Diaspora through key press in US, New York, France, UK and Sweden
- Use social media to mirror the grass root movement and capitalise on existing networks to raise the profile of the Tribunal

3) Summary of activity

In the course of our programme we carried out the following:

a) Drafted detailed briefing materials

To ensure that consistent and correct information is disseminated, we prepared a Question and Answer document (see Appendix 2) and also a Key Messages document (see Appendix 3), which provides detailed information on the history of the Iran Tribunal, the proceedings and the outcome.

b) Created compelling media announcements

We wrote and distributed the releases included in Appendix 1 that covered:

- Explanation of the Iran Tribunal taking place in the Peace Palace in The Hague and a history of the treatment of Iranian political prisoners
- The findings of the Truth Commission - notably the core conclusion that the Islamic Republic of Iran is solely responsible
- Quote from eminent QCs involved with the process
- Closing statement immediately following the trial and interim judgement

c) Engage with Iranian communities and their social networks

Critical to gaining the attention of the Iranian Diaspora and influential press outside London was undertaking effective social media engagement. Using the Facebook page and twitter feed to both drive the number of followers and also to use the channel to communicate.

When we began our activity the Twitter feed only had 23 followers and was not connected to the Iran Tribunal Facebook page, which had 2,459 members. We developed a list of key influential twitter users to further the profile of the campaign. In the run up to the Tribunal we also contacted a series of Persian groups that would be beneficial (see Appendix 4).



d) Secure coverage with high-profile press

Through the media relations activity we undertook before and during the Truth Commission (including arranging activity in The Hague for journalists who attended the trial) we secured the following coverage:

Publication	Date	Online readership	Print readership
International print publications			
The Guardian	19/10/2012	8,000,000	204,937
The Guardian	19/10/2012	8,000,000	204,937
The Guardian	05/11/2012	8,000,000	204,937
Irish Times	24/10/2012	2,314,196	92,565
The Toronto Star	30/10/2012	2,700,000	252,000
Trouw	30/10/2012	637,000	105,000
The Australian	26/10/2012	600,000	133,000
The Gulf Daily News	16/10/2012	585,000	11,500
The Gulf Daily News	25/10/2012	585,000	11,500
The Gulf Daily News	26/10/2012	585,000	11,500
Boston Globe	26/10/2012	1,840,000	313,395
Perth Now	26/10/2012	855,000	527,000
Macleans	31/10/2012	2,400,000	330,203
Total readership		6,850,000	2,402,474
International news wires			
CBN	30/10/2012	360,000,000	N/A
AFP	26/10/2012	450,000	N/A
Total readership		360,450,000	N/A
International broadcast			



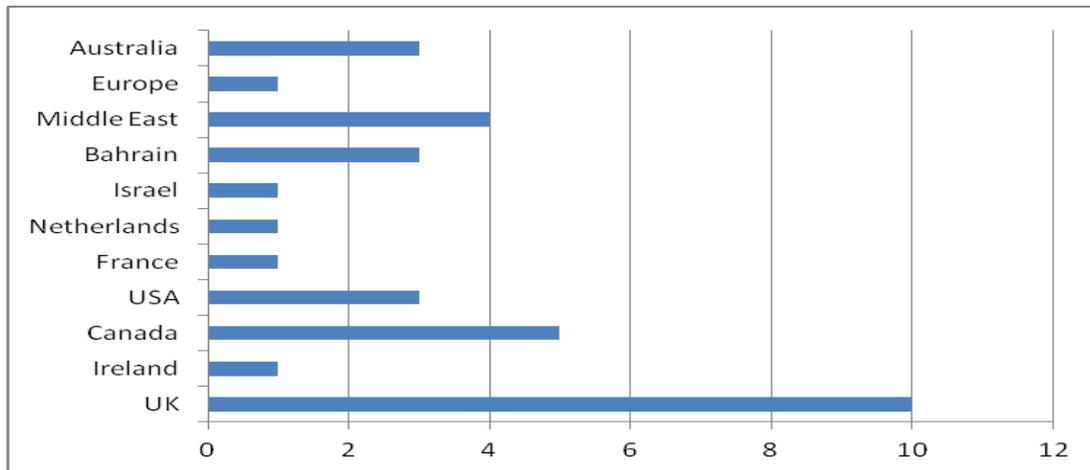
BBC Persia	26/10/2012	12,000,000	N/A
Voice of America	30/10/2012	141,000,000	N/A
Total readership		153,000,000	N/A
Publication	Date	Online readership	Print readership
International online			
The Guardian	19/10/2012	8,000,000	N/A
The Guardian	19/10/2012	8,000,000	N/A
The Economist	30/10/2012	3,500,000	N/A
Sky News	25/10/2012	9,000,000	N/A
Vancouver Observer	26/10/2012	155,000	N/A
The Jerusalem Post	01/11/2012	2,500,000	N/A
Huffington Post UK	25/10/2012	3,500,000	N/A
Huffington Post Canada	25/10/2012	1,900,000	N/A
Huffington Post Canada	26/10/2012	1,900,000	N/A
Your Middle East	25/10/2012	50,000	N/A
Iranian	26/10/2012	360,000	N/A
Iranian	01/11/2012	360,000	N/A
Euronews	27/10/2012	265,000	N/A
News.com.au	26/10/2012	2,600,000	N/A
Before it's news	17/10/2012	3,000,000	N/A
Big Pond News	26/10/2012	700,000	N/A
Shahrzad News	23/10/2012	10,000	N/A
UNPO	31/10/2012	10,000	N/A
FPA	17/10/2012	50,000	N/A
Iran Press News	23/10/2012	50,100	N/A
Total readership		29,800,000	N/A

Publication	Date	Online readership	Print readership
Blogs			
Watching the Law	30/10/2012	N/A	N/A
Politicus	27/10/2012	N/A	N/A
The Justice Gap	23/10/2012	N/A	N/A
Why We Protest	27/10/2012	N/A	N/A
Variant Perception	17/10/2012	N/A	N/A
Total readership across all publications listed above		550,100,000	2,402,474

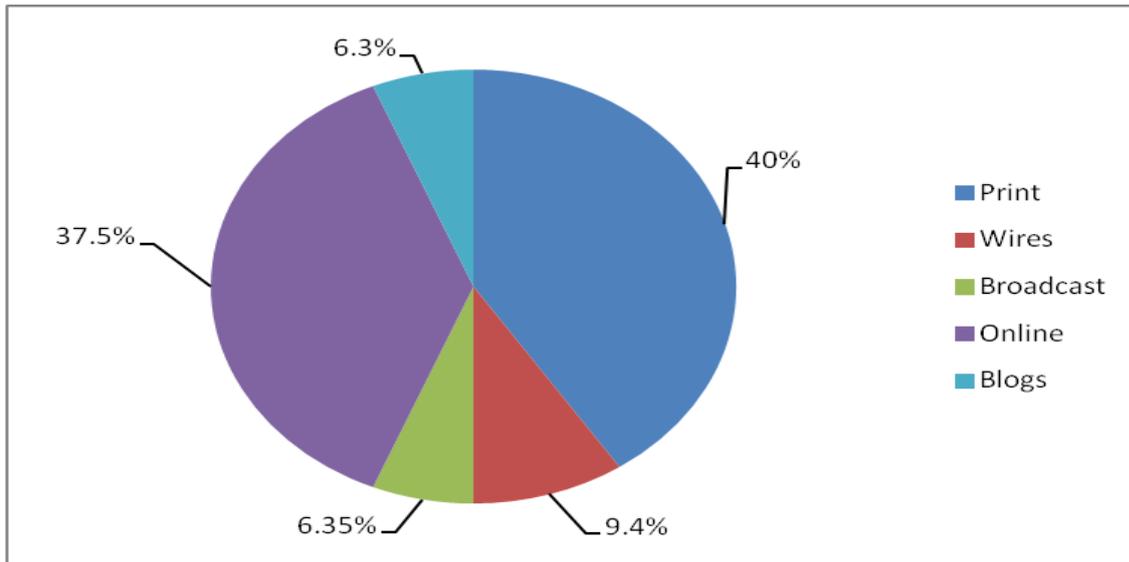
Appendix 5 provides a full digest of the media coverage achieved for the Iran Tribunal. The online and newswire coverage across global publications was seen by **550,100,000** people with the print coverage across UK, European, North American, Australasia and Middle East publications being seen by **2,402,474** people.

4) Evaluation of the coverage

The global nature of this campaign is demonstrated by the widespread international media that covered the story:



In addition to the international nature of the coverage the aim of the media activity was to gain profile across a broad range of types of media. The coverage was split across the following:



In addition to the media coverage we have evaluated the impact of the Twitter account by using the social media influence monitor, Klout. This online tool provides social media analytics to measure a user's influence across social networks and gives each account a score based on number and quality of followers, activity levels and how much of their content is amplified.

Each score is out of one hundred to indicate how much influence they exert. The average score of users is 20 and anything above 40 is regarded as being a strong score. Starting in October when TCG first became involved in the Iran Tribunal twitter account the Klout score was 13.91, through and after the Tribunal it has risen to 40.91.



In summary, the impact of the communication activity that has been supporting the Iran Tribunal has been significant. High profile media including The Guardian, AFP, The Economist and the BBC have covered the Tribunal and in addition, the social media engagement has made a major difference.



Appendix 1: Press Releases



Iran massacre survivors to recall horrors at Tribunal in The Hague

- Report published from the Truth Commission shows Islamic Republic of Iran was responsible for mass-killing -

15 October 2012 LONDON: Today the Iran Tribunal announces the second phase of the People's Court process, the Tribunal, which will be held at the Peace Palace in The Hague between 25-27 October 2012.

The Iran Tribunal seeks to investigate the crimes committed by the Islamic Republic of Iran against the country's political prisoners during the 1980s, when between 5,000 and 30,000 citizens were tortured and executed under the power of the Khomeini's Fatwa for holding beliefs that conflicted with the regime. The Tribunal will see eight experienced human rights judges convene to hear firsthand accounts of the atrocities committed against Iranian citizens. The Islamic Republic of Iran has been invited to participate in the trial but has to date refused to engage with the Tribunal process.

Witnesses will be travelling from across the Iranian Diaspora, which spans North American and Europe, to shine the light on the humanitarian crimes committed by a regime that is still in power.

The precursor to the Tribunal was a Truth Commission, held in London in June 2012, which documented and assembled witness statements and compiled a report, which concluded that "These violations of human rights were, devised, instigated and executed (or caused to be executed) by a single authority and as such the Islamic Republic of Iran is the only authority responsible for these acts."

This is the first hearing of its kind to address the crimes committed by a sitting government and will bring to the fore information that has been suppressed by the Islamic Republic of Iran for more than two decades. It will be an historic investigation into the crimes committed against the people of Iran.

The Truth Commission and the People's Court do not represent any state power and therefore cannot compel the accused to stand before the court. To date there has been no investigation into these crimes and no international pressure on Iran to launch such an investigation. In the absence of any formal accountability through the legal system in Iran, survivors and relatives of the massacred people have taken matters in their own hands.

The Iran Tribunal Campaign is a grass root movement that has gained momentum, funding, support over the last twenty five years. It seeks to bring recognition for the victims who were intellectuals, students, leftists, members of opposition parties and ethnic and religious minorities, many whose crime was as innocuous as leaflet distribution but resulted in being sentenced to execution by the Death Commission. The prisoners killed were from across the political and religious spectrum.

Prof John Cooper QC, Chairman of the Iran Tribunal's Steering Committee said "This Tribunal will allow victims and their relatives to have their grievances aired for legal consideration for the very first time. People have worked tirelessly against a repressive regime for twenty five years to bring this Tribunal to fruition. Following the due process of the Tribunal many people will be eagerly awaiting the final ruling of the Tribunal in October."



The Chief Prosecutor, Professor Payam Akhavan said; "This Tribunal is a seminal moment in establishing the historical truth about a decade of mass-atrocities that the Islamic Republic of Iran has suppressed for so long. It is a unique opportunity for the Iranian people to hold those in power accountable for past injustices in order to build a better future based on the rule of law. Instead of being punished, the perpetrators of these heinous crimes have been promoted to senior positions in Government; members of the Death Commission sit on the Iranian Supreme Court, in its Parliaments and in its Cabinets. Without speaking truth to power, without accountability for past crimes, it will be difficult to build a culture of human rights in Iran and to move beyond the present culture of impunity."

Iran Tribunal Completes Three Day Hearing at The Hague

27th October, 2012 THE HAGUE: Today, on the completion of its three day Iran Tribunal hearing, the Court has released a statement at the close of the session ahead of the full judgement in November.

The Iran Tribunal heard statements from expert and fact witnesses about the crimes committed by the Islamic Republic of Iran against the country's political, religious and ethnic minority prisoners during the 1980s, when approximately 20,000 citizens were executed. Some 5,000 political prisoners were executed pursuant to Khomeini's Fatwa in 1988 solely because of their beliefs.

Professor John Cooper QC, Chairman of the Legal Steering Committee and member of the prosecuting team, said today: "We have heard the accounts of many who had crimes committed against them by the Islamic Republic of Iran. The experienced panel of judges will now adjourn to consider the wealth of information that witnesses have provided about their experiences of the Iranian prisons and the treatment of political as well as religious and ethnic minority prisoners between 1980 – 1988. It is a real credit to the wives, sisters, and mothers of those who were executed and victims of atrocities who have persevered for twenty five years to have their voices heard in a court for the first time. The Tribunal will be issuing its verdict on the Islamic Republic of Iran and the crimes against humanity that have been described here shortly."

Professor Payam Akhavan the Chief Prosecutor said, "This is an important step forward in the struggle of the Iranian people for justice. There can be no democratic future in Iran without addressing the horrific crimes of the past.

Since neither the courts of Iran nor the international courts are available the survivors and families of the victims have established this People's Tribunal with the most distinguished judges, who will base their judgment on the evidence and international law.

Those responsible for Crimes Against Humanity must understand that their deeds will never be forgotten and that they will one day be held accountable for what they have done.

- ENDS -

Media contacts:

Tom Nutt/Bethan Halls

The Communication Group plc

+44 (0)20 7630 1411/+44(0)7775 686 706

TNutt@TheCommunicationGroup.co.uk

Notes to editors:

Additional first hand witness statements from victims' families and survivors and interviews are available on request.

About the Iran Tribunal Movement

The Iran Tribunal is an apolitical movement, particularly focused on the decade of human rights abuses perpetrated against political prisoners throughout the 1980s, culminating in the political massacres in the summer of 1988. The stated aim of the Tribunal is to hold the Islamic Republic of Iran to account for these massacres. This campaign is the culmination of a grassroots movement in Iran over the past 25 years, originated by the mothers, wives and sisters of victims.

The Tribunal will comprise of two stages: a 'Truth Commission' and the 'Tribunal'. The Commission (June 2012) collected statements, witness documents and dossiers and produced a report on extensive executions in the early years of 1980s as well as mass execution of political prisoners in 1988. Subsequently, the Iran Tribunal will investigate the findings of the Truth Commission and will issue a judgements based on this and will take place in The Hague on 25-27 October 2012 at the Peace Palace. The Peace Palace houses the International Court of Justice, a body of the United Nations, the Permanent Court of Arbitration and the Hague Academy of International Law.

About the Tribunal

A Press Conference will be held on the day before the proceedings, the 24th October at 2:30pm. It will be hosted by Professor John Cooper QC, head of the Steering Committee, at the Peace Palace. There is a Press Gallery at the Peace Palace for those who are able to attend at The Hague. Proceedings will be streamed live at '**Hotbird 11471 ver 27500 5/6**' throughout the hearings and there will be regular updates via the website www.irantribunal.com and @IranTribunal Twitter feed.



Appendix 2: Question and Answer document

1. The Movement

What is the Iran Tribunal Campaign?

It is a grass root movement that was begun by families of Iran's political prisoners and has grown to include activists from human rights organisations representing many sections of society; women, children, lawyers etc. They have been holding regular, formal meetings since 2007 with a view to holding the People's Republic of Iran accountable for its crimes against humanity through a two-stage tribunal, consisting of the Truth Commission and The Tribunal.

Who is behind this grass root movement?

Survivors and relatives of those who were tortured and massacred. In the absence of any formal retribution through the legal system in Iran, people have taken matters in their own hands to the international court. The grass root movement has gained momentum, funding, support over five years.

2. The Court and the proceedings

What is the format of the tribunal?

The second stage, the Tribunal, will be heard in the Peace Palace in The Hague, composed of international judges who will hear the submissions of the prosecuting team (consisting of Professor Payam Akhavan, Sir Geoffrey Nice QC, Professor John Cooper QC, Dr. Nancy Hormachea, Mojdeh Shahriari, Kaveh Shahrooz and Gissu Nia) on charges of crimes against humanity by the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Islamic Republic of Iran will be formally invited to attend the hearings which will take place 25-27 October 2012.

The tribunal is comprised of 8 judges from a variety of international jurisdictions. It will be led by Justice Cooper QC, an experienced human rights legal practitioner.

What are they trying to achieve?

The court wishes to investigate the mass executions of Iran's prison population in the 1980s and to hold the Islamic Republic of Iran accountable to the crimes against humanity. This is the first hearing of its kind that is addressing the crimes committed by a sitting government and will reveal much information that has been suppressed by the regime for over two decades.

What powers does the tribunal hold?

The Truth Commission and the People's Court do not represent any state power and therefore cannot compel the accused to stand before the court. It will be an historic investigation into the crimes committed against the people of Iran. The precedent for this style of court procedure was set up during hearings into atrocities committed during the Vietnam War founded by Bertrand Russell and Jean Paul Sartre, the so-called 'Russell Tribunal'.

What is the procedure?

The Steering Committee, after much deliberation decided to hold the proceedings in two parts. Firstly a Truth Commission held in June 2012, which documented and compiled witness statements and secondly a Tribunal, which will be held in The Hague in front of a number of international judges between 25th and 27th October.

What happened at the Commission?

The Commission collected statements, witness documents and dossiers over the course of five days from more than 80 witnesses. The report included a detailed account of all of the atrocities with a particular focus on the mass execution that took place in the summer of 1988. The witness statements corroborate with each other and with what is known to have happened at the time. The lead jurist compiled a report, which will be submitted to the Tribunal that will take place between 25th and 27th October.

What was the outcome of the Commission?

The conclusion states, "These violations of human rights were, devised, instigated and executed (or caused to be executed) by a single authority and as such the Islamic Republic of Iran is the only authority responsible for these acts."

What will happen at the Tribunal

The Tribunal will investigate the findings of the Truth Commission and will issue a judgement based on this and will take place in The Hague on 24-27 October 2012. The Tribunal would consist of seven to ten judges who are eminent jurists from various countries. It has no legal standing but will seek to shed light on the atrocities that were committed and then hidden from the world.

Is the Iranian Government going to attend the hearings?

The Iranian Ambassador has been invited to attend the trial.

What will this achieve?

To date there has been no investigation into these crimes and no international pressure on Iran to launch such an investigation. Many of the perpetrators are still in post and assisting in the repression of information. This tribunal will seek to put global attention on the plight of Iranians still constrained by a regime that allowed and instigated a massacre of its people.

3. History**What is the court investigating?**

During the 1980s the Islamic Republic of Iran arrested, imprisoned and tortured many Iranian citizens for holding beliefs that conflicted with the regime. Between July and September 1988 many thousands of prisoners were executed as a result of the Khomeini's Fatwa. Their trial consisted of being asked a few questions by the so-called Death Commission before being sentenced to death.



How many people died?

Due to the suppressive nature of the regime the exact number of those tortured and executed are not known. However families, political parties and human rights organisations have documented the cases of 5,000 known executed prisoners. In reality the number who disappeared 1980 – 1988 is more likely 20 000.

Who was imprisoned?

The prisoners that were subject to torture and execution were political prisoners who held views that were contrary to the regime. Some had been held for crimes as innocuous as leaflet distribution. Some of the witness statements seem to indicate that there were a large number of prisoners that were due to be released after the end of the Iran Iraq war. The victims were intellectuals, students, leftists, members of opposition parties and ethnic and religious minorities.

Were the prisoners in Iran tried?

A makeshift court was established where prisoners were asked a few basic questions that resulted in the execution judgment. These were known as the “death commission”



Appendix 3: Key messages



- The Iran Tribunal Campaign is a grass root movement that was begun by families of Iran's political prisoners and has grown to include activists from human rights organisations representing many sections of society
- The Steering Committee of the Tribunal Campaign, founded in 2007, organised a two stage hearing. The first stage, the Truth Commission was held in London between 18-22 June 2012 and the second stage the Tribunal will be set up in The Hague
- The Iran Tribunal will investigate the findings of the Truth Commission (published in September 2012). The Truth Commission report will be submitted to a panel of judges who will issue judgements based on it
- The Truth Commission concluded that: "These violations of human rights were, devised, instigated and executed (or caused to be executed) by a single authority and as such the Islamic Republic of Iran is the only authority responsible for these acts."
- The court wishes to investigate the mass executions of Iran's prison population in the 1980s and to hold the Islamic Republic of Iran accountable to the crimes against humanity
- The Iranian Government killed between 5,000 and 30, 000 political prisoners
- The killing was ordered by a fatwa issued by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, known as the Khomeini fatwa
- The majority of the prisoners killed were supporters of the People's Mujahedin of Iran
- Iran is still ruled by the same Government that reigned when the massacres happened in 1988, when the revolution was nearly a decade old
- The Truth Commission and the People's Court do not represent any state power and therefore cannot compel the accused to stand before the court. It will be an historic investigation into the crimes committed against the people of Iran.



Appendix 4: Influential Twitter users and interest groups

1) Twitter Users

Charles Onians	AFP
John Moore	A Better People (Human Rights Online Community)
Artin Afkhami	The New York Times
S. Nazarova	Radio Zamaneh
Gissou Nia	Iran Human Rights Documentation Centre (Organisation)
Jasmine Ramsay	Lobe Log (blog)
Sanam Dolatshahi	BBC News
Kristen McTighe	The New York Times
Ali A. Rizvi	Freelance
Sima Sahar Zerehi	Shahzadnews.com
Maryam Nayeb Yazdi	Freelance
Negar Josephi	Freelance
Allan Sørensen	Kristeligt Dagblad
Ramita Navai	Freelance
Kasra Naji	BBC News
Holly Dages	Freelance
Golnaz Esfandiari	Persian Letters (blog)
Jounama Nammour	Al Jazeera
Layla Anwar	Arab Woman Blues (Blog)
Jason Rezaian	The Washington Post
Barak Ravid	Haaretz
Borzou Daragahi	The Financial Times
Roxana Saberi	Freelance
Peter Salisbury	Freelance
Kenneth Roth	Human Rights Watch (organisation)
Benjamin Weinthal	The Jerusalem Post
Claudia Hernández	Freelance/ Guest Columnist
Michael Deibert	Freelance
Hosam El Sakkari	Yahoo Middle East

2) Interest Groups

The Public Affairs Alliance of Iranian Americans	USA
Iranian American Political Action Committee	USA
Iranian Alliances Across Borders	USA
Farhang Foundation	USA



Iranian Student Alliance in America	USA
Iranian American Society of New York	USA
The Iran Society	UK
Iran Liberty Association	UK



Appendix 5: Coverage



1. National print coverage

International

Tribunal aims to uncover truth of Iran's forgotten massacre

Independent hearing to investigate 20,000 deaths

Prisoners killed for beliefs, according to exiled lawyer

Owen Bowcott
Legal affairs correspondent

It is a massacre that ranks alongside some of the worst excesses of the 20th century: at least 20,000 Iranians executed in prison in the 1980s.

Yet it received scant attention. Unlike the carnage of Srebrenica or the purges in Chile, there was little worldwide outrage, and no opportunity for redress. But this month the killings will be examined by an independent tribunal at the Peace Palace in The Hague.

The hearing highlights the selective nature of what goes before the UN's courts and special tribunals. Founded in 2007 because no official judicial body would investigate complaints against Iran, it is a cross between a truth commission and a formal legal indictment.

The focus is the mass executions from 1981-89 of political prisoners. About 4,500 people, many teenagers and from leftwing groups, died in summer 1988 alone, according to Amnesty International. Iranian exiles claim 20,000-30,000 prisoners died in total - victims of a fatwa issued by Ruhollah Khomeini, then head of state.

British lawyers on the legal steering committee include Sir Geoffrey Nice, a former prosecutor at the international criminal court. All are unpaid.

In a recent lecture, Nice drew attention to the gaps in international justice. "War crimes courts and tribunals established over the last 20 years have changed the way the world citizen can think," he said. "As a result the world citizen may assume that they, like national courts, are part of a coherent, judicial crime and punishment system that happens to be international. Nothing could be further from the truth."

The choice of conflicts was highly selective, he said. "The ICC suffers a further, significant ... defect ... The treaty-based permanent court has been ratified by only 121 of approximately 200 countries. The

'The pain never heals'

Every fortnight six-year-old Sahar Mohammadi left home in the Iranian city of Kermanshah with her grandmother and made a 600-mile round trip to Evin prison in north Tehran.

There, her mother, Sussan Amiri, was being held with fellow activists, mainly leftwingers. "We were going to Evin in the hope they would let us in," said Mohammadi, now 33. "But she was not allowed visitors and I didn't get to see my mother at the end."

When Amiri was executed after refusing to repent, the family was told she had been taken to Khavaran cemetery near Tehran, where there is a piece of unmarked land, a mass grave for the massacre victims including Amiri, her two brothers, and thousands of others.

"When we went to Khavaran for first time, it wasn't like a cemetery at all, just piles of soil and crowds of mourning mothers," recalled Mohammadi. She returned many times, although she did not know her mother's exact burial site. "Imagine how a six-year-old girl could ever cope with this cruelty," she said. "This pain never heals."

Lawdan Bazargan's brother, Bijan, was executed between 1988 and 1989, and buried in Khavaran. "Every time the families were going to Khavaran, [the cemetery guards] would beat them, insult them and kick them out of the cemetery," she said.

Bazargan said the survivors were looking for the truth. "But grief of losing our loved ones will never go away and the endless bitterness of their death will stay with us for ever."

Saeed Kamali Dehghan

US, Russia and China in particular are not members. The court is not good enough for their citizens ... Yet they are happy to send citizens of other non-ratifying countries like Sudan or Libya to the court for trial through a security council resolution." Iran has also failed to ratify it.

The tribunal, Nice said, was a two-stage process to leave a record and hold the regime accountable for its crimes against humanity. "The informal tribunal - that may be matched by others and by other

internet and computer-assisted processes yet to be imagined - shows that the world citizen can hope courts will serve him well, but can easily find the means to do much of the job himself if they don't."

The first hearings took place in London this summer at Amnesty International. About 75 witnesses, many surviving detainees, gave evidence - some in person, others via video. The final sessions will be from 25-27 October.

Hamid Sabi, a lawyer who fled Tehran in 1979 and one of the organisers, has not had a response to his invitation to the Iranian government to attend the sessions. "Until a few months ago no one spoke about this in Iran but as a result of [the tribunal] so many Iranian papers began talking about it. [The government] response was: 'Yes, we did kill them in prison but we were entitled to under international law.'

"In some cases families were simply told to come and collect their bodies. We have around 17,000 names. The fatwa in 1988 ordered that all those fighting the regime, such as the mujahideen, were apostates. If they did not embrace Islam, as he [Khomeini] believed it, they should be killed."

Thousands of prisoners were brought before committees and asked whether they renounced their political organisations, were Muslims, prayed, believed in the Islamic republic and were prepared to walk through Iraqi minefields. A negative answer resulted in their being hanged or shot. Women were reportedly raped before execution. Bodies were often dumped in mass graves.

"It took years for the families to put their forces together," Sabi said. "They wrote to the UN rapporteur on human rights in Iran, they wrote to the UN human rights committee. No one was interested. So they set up the tribunal."

Most of the funds, he said, came from the families. "We have had witnesses from extreme Muslim groups through to Maoists. Half of them were former prisoners. One woman lost four brothers."

The London sessions were broadcast online and on the last day, thousands were watching. "It will be a people's court in The Hague," Sabi said. "We have no power or jurisdiction but we have moral authority. Perhaps it will remind everybody that one day they may have to answer for crimes they have committed."

guardian.co.uk

Guardian.co.uk, October 19 2012

Circulation: 8,000,000 monthly users

Remembering the massacre in Iran in the 1980s: 'the pain never heals'

A woman tells of her hopes that a Hague tribunal will unearth the truth about those who died, including three of her relatives

Saeed Kamali Dehghan



An inmate peers round a wall as a guard walks by in the female section of the Evin jail, north Tehran, in 2006. Photograph: Atta Kenare/AFP/Getty Images

Every fortnight six-year-old Sahar Mohammadi left home in the southern Iranian city of Kermanshah with her grandmother and made a 600-mile round trip to Evin prison in north Tehran.

There, her mother, Sussan Amiri, was being held with fellow activists, mainly leftwingers, who later became victims of an unpublicised massacre of thousands of political prisoners in the 1980s. "We were going to Evin in the hope they would let us in," said Mohammadi, now 33. "But she was not allowed visitors and I didn't get to see my mother at the end."

When Amiri was executed after refusing to repent, the family was told she had been taken to Khavaran cemetery near Tehran, where members of Iran's religious minorities, such as Christians or Baha'is, are buried separately from Muslims. Within Khavaran, there is a piece of unmarked land, a mass grave for the massacre victims including Amiri, her two brothers, and thousands of others killed in those dark days.

"When we went to Khavaran for first time, it wasn't like a cemetery at all, just piles of soil and crowds of mourning mothers," recalled Mohammadi.

She returned to Khavaran many times a year although she did not know her mother's exact burial site. There was also pressure from the authorities, who did not let families gather at the cemetery or hold anniversaries.



Mohammadi is hopeful the Iran tribunal will unearth the truth about those bleak years. "Imagine how a six-year-old girl could ever cope with this cruelty, hoping that these nightmares would end someday," she said. "At my age today, I can honestly say that it has got worse, this pain never heals."

Lawdan Bazargan, is another Iranian who also lost a loved one in the massacre. Her brother, Bijan, was arrested in 1982 and executed along with thousands of other political prisoners between August 1988 and February 1989, although he initially only had a prison sentence.

Bijan was buried in Khavaran. "Iranian officials did not give the bodies of the families, they did not show them their grave or their wills," she said. "Sometimes the cemetery guards would protest why we were there. They would tell us no one was buried there, that we were going for nothing.

"Every time the families were going to Khavaran, they would beat them, insult them and kick them out of the cemetery."

Bazargan said the survivors were looking for the truth. "But grief of losing our loved ones will never go away and the endless bitterness of their death will stay with us for ever. Nothing will fill their absence in our lives."

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/oct/19/iran-tribunal-families-ordeal?INTCMP=SRCH>

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Guardian.co.uk, October 19 2012

Tribunal to investigate 1980s massacre of political prisoners in Iran

Hearing in The Hague aims to uncover truth about death of 20,000 people, including many teenagers

Owen Bowcott



Iranian exiles stage a mock hanging by Ayatollah Khomeini in Place de la Bastille, Paris, on 1 May 1982 in a protest at executions of prisoners. Photograph: Roger Viollet Collection/Getty Images

As political liquidations go, it is a massacre that ranks alongside some of the worst excesses of the 20th century: at least 20,000 Iranians executed in prison in the 1980s.

Yet it received scant international attention. Unlike the carnage of Srebrenica or the purges of General Pinochet's coup in Chile, there was little worldwide outrage, and no opportunity for justice and legal redress.

But this month the killings, perpetrated by then-Ayatollah Khomeini's regime, will be examined by an independent tribunal in The Hague in a process that exposes the shortcomings of the international justice system.

The hearing, aimed at uncovering the truth of what occurred in Iran's jails, highlights the selective nature of what goes before the UN's courts and special tribunals. Founded in 2007 because no official judicial body would investigate complaints against Iran, it is a cross between a people's truth commission and a formal legal indictment.

It is based on the model developed by a private international war crimes tribunal established in 1966 by Bertrand Russell and Jean-Paul Sartre to investigate the US war record in Vietnam.

The focus of the Iran tribunal is the mass executions carried out inside the country's jails from 1981-89 of political prisoners, men and women. About 4,500 people, many teenagers and from leftwing groups, died in summer 1988 alone, according to Amnesty International.

Iranian exiles claim 20,000-30,000 prisoners died in total – victims of a fatwa issued by Ruhollah Khomeini, then head of state. The extent of the killings has been largely ignored by the west.

British lawyers on the tribunal's legal steering committee include Prof John Cooper QC and Sir Geoffrey Nice, a former prosecutor at the international criminal court (ICC) and Gresham professor of law. Other founders were the former South African minister Kader Asmal, who has since died, and the UN rapporteur on Palestinian human rights, Prof Richard Falk. All are unpaid.

In a recent lecture, Nice drew attention to the gaps in international justice. "War crimes courts and tribunals established over the last 20 years have changed the way the world citizen can think," he said. "As a result the world citizen may assume that they, like national courts, are part of a coherent, judicial crime and punishment system that happens to be international. Nothing could be further from the truth."

The choice of conflicts for judicial intervention was highly selective, he said. "The ICC suffers a further, significant and probably irremediable defect ... The treaty-based permanent court has been ratified by only 121 of the approximately 200 countries of the world.

"The US, Russia and China in particular are not members. The court is not good enough for their citizens, it would appear. Yet they are happy to send citizens of other non-ratifying countries like Sudan or Libya to the court for trial through a security council resolution." Iran has also failed to ratify it.

The tribunal, Nice said, was a two-stage process intended not just to leave a record but to hold the regime accountable for its crimes against humanity.

"This is a conflict that would never be selected for international attention despite its gravity. The informal tribunal – that may be matched by others and by other internet and computer-assisted processes yet to be imagined – shows that the world citizen can hope courts will serve him well, but can easily find the means to do much of the job himself if they don't."

The first stage of hearings took place in London this summer at Amnesty International's premises. About 75 witnesses, many surviving detainees, gave evidence – some in person, others via video.

By choosing the Peace Palace, home to the UN's international court of justice, the Iran tribunal hopes to acquire some of the authority of its surroundings. The final sessions will be from 25-27 October.

Hamid Sabi, a London-based lawyer who fled Tehran in 1979 and one of the organisers, has not had a response to his invitation to the Iranian government to attend the sessions.

"Until a few months ago no one spoke about this in Iran but as a result of [the tribunal] so many Iranian papers began talking about it. [The government] response was: 'Yes, we did kill them in prison but we were entitled to under international law.'

"It's known as the 'bloody decade'. Thousands of people were murdered and tortured. In some cases families were simply told to come and collect their bodies. We have around 17,000 names. The fatwa in 1988 ordered that all those fighting the regime, such as the mujahideen, were apostates. If they did not embrace Islam, as he [Khomeini] believed it, they should be killed. It resulted in the mass liquidation of the prison population."

Thousands of prisoners were brought before committees and asked whether they renounced their political organisations, were Muslims, prayed, believed in the Islamic republic and were prepared to walk through Iraqi minefields.



According to evidence given to the tribunal they were given a few minutes to consider. A negative answer resulted in their being taken out and hanged on cranes or shot. Women were reportedly raped before execution. Bodies were often dumped in mass graves; many have never been recovered.

"Most of the prisoners didn't know what was happening," Sabi said. "It took years for the families to put their forces together. They wrote to the UN rapporteur on human rights in Iran, they wrote to the UN human rights committee. No one was interested. So they set up the tribunal."

Most of the funds, he said, came from the families. "We have not taken money from any corporation or government. We have had witnesses from extreme Muslim groups through to Maoists. Half of them were former prisoners. One woman lost four brothers."

The London sessions were broadcast online and on the last day, thousands and thousands of people were watching around the world.

Some leftwing groups have criticised the tribunal for stoking resentment against Tehran at a time when Israel threatens a strike at its nuclear facilities.

"It will be a people's court in The Hague," Sabi said. "We have no power or jurisdiction but we have moral authority. Perhaps it will remind everybody that one day they may have to answer for crimes they have committed."

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/oct/18/iran-tribunal-investigates-massacre?INTCMP=SRCH>

THE IRISH TIMES

The Irish Times, October 24, 2012

Tribunal to hear claims of atrocities in Iran

PETER CLUSKEY, in The Hague

EVIDENCE OF atrocities allegedly committed in Iran during the 1980s, when at least 20,000 opponents of the regime of Ayatollah Khomeini are believed to have been executed, will be heard at a three-day sitting of a special international tribunal in The Hague, starting tomorrow.

The Iran tribunal was set up in 2007 by survivors and relatives of victims of the regime that seized power after the fall of the shah in 1979. Among its founders was the late Prof Kadar Asmal, a human rights lawyer, anti-apartheid campaigner and lecturer at Trinity College Dublin for almost 30 years.

Nineteen witnesses are expected to give evidence to the hearings at the Peace Palace – home of the International Court of Justice – which will be overseen by eight experienced human rights judges, chaired by Prof John Cooper QC, and including Michael Mansfield QC.

A truth commission held in London in June heard 75 witnesses testify to a state-sponsored campaign of torture and political liquidation on a scale comparable to the massacre of 8,000 Muslim men and boys by Bosnian Serb forces in Srebrenica in 1995, or the purges which followed Gen Pinochet's coup in Chile in 1973.

The 359-page report of the truth commission concluded: "These violations of human rights were devised, instigated and executed (or caused to be executed) by a single central authority, and, as such, the Islamic Republic of Iran is the only authority responsible for these acts."

Iran has refused to co-operate with the tribunal – despite being invited to take part.

After the hearing in The Hague, the commission will consider whether the alleged abuses, to the extent that they constitute a pattern between 1980 and 1988, amount to crimes against humanity as defined by article seven of the Statute of the International Criminal Court.

As well as allowing eye-witness accounts to be aired in public for the first time, the tribunal – set up independently in the absence of an "official" judicial investigation – also aims to highlight the selective nature of what goes before the UN's courts and special tribunals.

"It is what I would characterise – based on my past work with the UN in Bosnia – as 'Iran's Srebrenica', a monumental atrocity which cannot remain unanswered," said the tribunal's chief prosecutor, Payam Akhavan, professor of international law at McGill University and formerly legal adviser to the prosecutor at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

"This tribunal is a seminal moment in establishing the historical truth about a decade of mass atrocities," he added.



“Instead of being punished, the perpetrators of these heinous crimes have been promoted to senior positions in government and on the supreme court.

“Without speaking truth to power, without accountability for past crimes, it will be difficult to move beyond the present culture of impunity and build a culture of human rights in Iran.”

According to Amnesty International, Iran executed 5,000 political prisoners during the summer of 1988 alone, following a fatwa issued by Ayatollah Khomeini.

The killings were “relentless and efficient”, it says, and included women and teenagers. “It is incredible that torture survivors and families of murder victims have managed to bring the tribunal to this stage, virtually on their own,” said John Cooper QC. “Equally, it is shocking that they have been forced to do it on their own. The UN did nothing.”

Sir Geoffrey Nice QC, a former prosecutor at the ICC and a member of the tribunal steering committee, agrees. “War crimes courts and tribunals established over the last 20 years have changed the way the world citizen thinks. That citizen may assume that, like national courts, they are part of a coherent judicial system that happens to be international. Nothing could be further from the truth . . . This is a conflict that would never be selected for international attention, despite its gravity. This informal tribunal shows what while the world citizen may hope that his courts will serve him well, he can find the means to do much of the job himself if they don’t.”

<http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/world/2012/1024/1224325622914.html>



The Economist, October 30 2012
Iran 1988: Judgment time

FOLLOWING a harrowing three-day hearing at the Peace Palace in The Hague, the Iran Tribunal delivered its interim judgment on October 27th. According to the tribunal, which has no legal standing, the Islamic Republic of Iran committed crimes against humanity and gross violations of human rights against its citizens during “the bloody decade” of 1980s.

The tribunal was set up in 2007 by survivors and families of victims living in exile and comprises leading jurists from around the world. It heard statements from experts and witnesses on how the Islamic Republic systematically crushed political and religious dissent in the decade following the 1979 revolution, executing 20,000 of its citizens. During the summer of 1988 alone, 5,000 political prisoners were hanged from cranes or shot by firing squad under a direct *fatwa* issued by Ayatollah Khomeini, the supreme leader. The victims were leftists, students, members of opposition parties and ethnic and religious minorities—many originally sentenced for non-violent offences, such as distributing leaflets or taking part in demonstrations.

The tribunal’s ruling builds on “a formidable corpus of evidence”, which includes the report of a [Truth Commission held in London in June](#). The Commission heard 75 witnesses, who were either tortured and imprisoned themselves or are the family of executed prisoners. Around 100 witnesses in total [submitted evidence](#) describing the same pattern of arbitrary arrest and detention without trial, of rape, death sentences issued by kangaroo courts, children as young as 11 being executed, families made to pay for the bullets used to kill their relatives. They recalled how torture was routinely used to break prisoners, make them recant their religious or political beliefs, or denounce others: they described flogging, beating, being suspended in the air by their arms twisted behind their backs, made to sit blindfolded for months in tiny boxes known as “coffins” and being tortured in front of their children or spouses. “The evidence speaks for itself. It constitutes overwhelming proof that systemic, systematic and widespread abuses of human rights were committed by and on behalf of the Islamic Republic of Iran,” the judges said.

The Iran Tribunal is now calling for the Iranian regime and the Human Rights Council of the United Nations to investigate these crimes and bring the perpetrators to justice. That is unlikely to happen. But for the survivors and the bereaved, the tribunal is a victory in itself: it has allowed their voices to be officially recorded and heard in court for the first time in 25 years.

Bits of the proceedings were seen inside Iran, despite the government’s attempts to block foreign broadcasts. “We have been inundated with calls from people in Iran saying they wanted to record the deaths of loved ones, which they had never told anyone about,” says Pardis Shafafi, a legal assistant with the tribunal.

“For the first time, people in Iran—especially the younger generations—are finding out what happened in the ‘80s and can see how the past still informs the present,” says Shokoufeh Sakhi, who testified at the hearing. She was arrested while still in secondary school, spent six years in prison



where she was tortured and survived the 1988 massacre. She is now a PhD student in Canada.

“What happened in the '80s doesn't belong to the people of the '80s. It laid down the foundations of where these young people were born: they were born in a climate of fear and oppression, and they are used to it and accept it, but the roots for the present situation have to be found in the massacres of the '80s.” The judges are expected to deliver a full judgment in November.

official biographer, Martin Gilbert. "The book laid out in crystal clear form that Churchill throughout his life was a passionate believer in the cause of Zionism," said Antony Rosenfelder, a British trustee of the foundation.

He said that it was "astounding" how little recognition there had been in Israel "for a man who, over half a century, did so much not just to ensure Israel's survival but actually to help the development of the state. This is just a small way of thanking someone for something I think is fairly central to Israel today."

The ceremony was attended by the former prime minister's great grandson, Randolph Churchill. "It means a huge amount to our family," he said.

The Israeli historian Tom Segev said that, for some Jews, Churchill's failure to bomb the Nazi death camp at Auschwitz outweighed his support for the Jewish people. "Accepted opinion today is that he was a friend of Zionism and the state of Israel. But he did not have an emotional attachment. He regarded the whole thing as political," Segev said.

Harriet Sherwood Jerusalem

Iran

Khomeini regime guilty of human rights abuses

An independent inquiry has called on the United Nations to investigate the "systematic and widespread" murder of political opponents by Ayatollah Khomeini's regime in Iran in the 1980s.

At the end of a three-day session in The Hague, the Iran tribunal found that the Islamic regime had committed "gross human rights abuses" including torture, sexual violence, extra-judicial executions and unjust imprisonment.

The tribunal was based on the model developed by a private international war crimes tribunal established in 1966 by Bertrand Russell and Jean-Paul Sartre to investigate the US war record in Vietnam.

In his closing speech, the British international lawyer Sir Geoffrey Nice QC, the tribunal's prosecutor, said the graves of the executed stretched "as

far as the eye can see; the gravedigger of Shiraz reported the delivery of 60 bodies on a single occasion, of victims at most 20 years old.

"Men were arrested at 10 in the morning and were dead by 11; entire families were eliminated and whole wards purged; rows of prisoners were shot by firing squad, still breathing until they were finished off by coup de grâce."

One of the most chilling accounts was given by a man who admitted that as a child he was forced to shoot any survivors in the head. Nice added: "Truckloads of bodies were tipped into mass graves ... In no case was an execution ordered in accordance with due process.

In its judgment, the Iran tribunal found that the Islamic Republic of Iran bears absolute responsibility for gross violations of human rights against its citizens and "crimes against humanity under customary international law as applicable to Iran in the 1980s".

Among its recommendations, the tribunal called on the human rights council of the United Nations to establish a commission of inquiry to investigate "these atrocities".

The tribunal was composed of six judges including the UK barrister Michael Mansfield QC, John Dugard, a South African professor of international law, and professor Patricia Sellers, a former UN adviser on human rights.

Owen Bowcott

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United States

'Drunk ashore' captain and officers sacked

The captain of a US navy frigate and three officers have been sacked after an investigation found they had engaged in drunken behaviour and misconduct during a recent port visit in Russia.

Commander Joseph R Darlak was relieved of command of the USS Vandegrift in Guam after the investigation determined that several of the ship's officers had been drunk and disorderly during a trip to Vladivostok in September, Commander Tamsen Reese, a navy spokeswoman, said.

"The officers demonstrated poor judgment, including some officers being drunk [and] disorderly, and not adhering to established liberty policies,"

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The Guardian, November 4 2012

Khomeini regime committed gross human rights abuses, finds tribunal

Iran tribunal in The Hague urges UN to investigate 'systematic and widespread' murder of political prisoners in 1980s

Owen Bowcott, legal affairs correspondent



Iranian Anti-Shah protesters hold a up a poster of Ayatollah Khomeini in 1979. The Iran tribunal at The Hague says the Khomeini regime committed human rights abuses in the 1980s. Photograph: - /AFP/Getty Images

An independent inquiry has called on the United Nations to investigate the "systematic and widespread" murder of political opponents by Ayatollah Khomeini's regime in Iran during the 1980s. In its judgment at the end of a three-day session in The Hague, the Iran tribunal found that the Islamic regime had committed "gross human rights abuses" including torture, sexual violence, extra-judicial executions and unjust imprisonment.

The ruling is the culmination of a five-year co-operation between international human rights lawyers, exiled Iranians and relatives of the victims. As many as 20,000 people, mainly youths, are believed to have been killed in the state's prisons during that decade.

The first stage of hearings took place in London this summer at Amnesty International's premises. About 75 witnesses, many surviving detainees, gave evidence – some in person, others via videolink.

The final stage was held in the Peace Palace, home to the UN's international court of justice in The Hague. Proceedings were broadcast live online. The Iranian government was invited to participate but declined to reply or attend.

The tribunal was based on the model developed by a private international war crimes tribunal established in 1966 by Bertrand Russell and Jean-Paul Sartre to investigate the US war record in Vietnam.

In his closing speech, the British international lawyer Sir Geoffrey Nice QC, the tribunal's prosecutor, said the graves of the executed stretched "as far as the eye can see; the gravedigger of Shiraz reported the delivery of 60 bodies on a single occasion, of victims at most 20 years old.

"Men were arrested at 10 in the morning and were dead by 11; entire families were eliminated and whole wards purged; rows of prisoners were shot by firing squad, still breathing until they were finished off by coup de grâce."

One of the most chilling accounts was given by a man who admitted that as a child he was forced to shoot any survivors in the head. Nice added: "Truckloads of bodies were tipped into mass graves ... In no case was an execution ordered in accordance with due process.

"There has been not one witness who was not tortured in prison, both physically and mentally. Prisoners were hanged from the ceiling by their arms, flogged on the soles of their feet, beaten, deprived of sleep, kept in solitary confinement, subjected to mock executions and forced to watch other prisoners being tortured – or were tortured in the presence of their children.

"Shokufeh Sakhi told the tribunal how she was subjected to sensory deprivation in a dark box (the 'coffin') for hours on end, month after month. The general effect was to turn prisoners into zombies by destroying their senses of self and dignity.

"Another witness told the tribunal of the psychological rape that turned him into a puppet, who would shoot his fellow prisoners as member of a firing squad of *tavabeen* (repenters)." Prisoners' families were forced to pay for the bullets used to shoot their loved ones and assaulted when they tried to hold mourning services, the tribunal heard. Gravestones were smashed; mothers were refused the right to recover their children's bodies.

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<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/nov/04/khomeini-regime-human-rights-abuses?INTCMP=SRCH>



The Toronto Star, October 30 2012

Human Rights Victims In Iran Must Not Be Forgotten

Regret and remorse often grip the international community when it comes to matters of human rights abuses. Rwanda occurred, and we stood by. Srebrenica occurred, and the international community tried, but still thousands were killed. But before all of this, Iran saw the massacre of thousands of political prisoners throughout the 1980s: killings on an enormous scale that went almost unnoticed, and have been forgotten by the world — until now.

Last month we came one step closer to justice. In the absence of an official trial for crimes against humanity, some of the world's leading international law experts, including Canada's Payam Akhavan, came together to hold the Iran Tribunal from Oct. 25-27 in The Hague, the seat of international law.

For three days Iranians and non-Iranians alike gathered for this symbolic event. It acted as a truth and reconciliation platform for the victims of what has come to be known as the Bloody Decade. Since then, no official body has brought the perpetrators to account.

The tone of the proceedings was heavy and the stories of victims were harrowing for those forced to relive them. Watching Mehdi Memarpouri break down as he described to a room full of people his experience of having his hand placed on the trigger of a gun to fire down on fellow inmates was searing. Listening to Chowra Makaremi recount her mother's memories as a tortured and imprisoned inmate of Evin prison for eight years was humbling.

Most chilling were the dramatic allegations against Sadegh Khalkali, who oversaw executions of men, women and children of Kurdish activists throughout Iran. He would later acquire the name "the Butcher of Kurdistan." When a father pleaded to him for his son's life, he would allegedly explain, "Well this is Islam, the verdict of the Qur'an. If your kids were guilty then they will go to hell, and if they were innocent they will go to heaven."

While not every Iranian has suffered directly because of the Bloody Decade, it is a mark of disgrace upon our global community that the survivors and victims of this period have not had their losses recognized. Instead, Iran makes headlines mainly for fears about its nuclear ambitions.

In a year rife with abrasive talk of sanctions and military intervention against Iran, the horrifying testimonies at The Hague have raised few eyebrows of concern. Meanwhile, the posturing toward war with Iran continues, with rippling implications that will see an already chaotic Middle East laid to waste; and an already crumbling world economy deteriorate into oil-driven disarray. War is certainly not the answer.



The lives of too many Iranians have already been treated as disposable commodities by their own regime to suffer again from a military threat from outside their borders.

While the world is no stranger to the wretched nature of Iran, the tribunal was a plea to take note of the suffering the Iranian people have endured for the past 33 years under the Islamic Republic. Yes, the world is listening to news of rial riots, tightening sanctions and the barbaric rhetoric of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. But where was the world when these slaughterhouses devastated so many lives across Iran?

Rather than focusing solely on Iran as a danger to the rest of the world, we need to take a closer look at the malice and hatred it directs against its own people, and has done from the beginnings of the regime. This was painfully illustrated by the tribunal, which shone a light on the systematic execution of so many thousands of Iranians under Ayatollah Khomeini and his cadre. They were men and women who had fought alongside the regime for the revolution but were imprisoned and executed for their leftist or ethnic political affiliations. Many of their killers are still in power today.

At the end of the proceedings, the tribunal's judges determined that the Islamic Republic of Iran has a "strong case to answer for the crimes committed against humanity." The international community must take note of its conclusions, and make human rights, and not geopolitical issues, the focus when dealing with Iran. The tribunal illustrated the enduring energy and spirit of freedom of the Iranian people, even after events of crushing horror, which continue today. Their suffering should not be in vain.

deVerdieping **Trouw**

vijf vragen

‘Het Iran van Khomeini moordde’

Niemand is ooit berecht voor de massa-executies van politieke gevangenen in het Iran van de jaren tachtig. Maar de wereld moet op zijn minst weten welke misdaden er zijn gepleegd, zegt de Britse advocaat John Cooper. Daarom treedt hij de komende dagen op als aanklager bij het Iran-tribunaal in het Haagse Vredespaleis.

1 Wie klaagt u aan?

“De Islamitische Republiek van Iran. Nadat ayatollah Khomeini in 1979 aan de macht kwam, begon het regime met het systematisch vervolgen van politieke tegenstanders en andere mensen die op een of andere manier niet aan de normen voldeden, zoals homo's. In de jaren tachtig zijn naar schatting 20.000 mensen vermoord. Ze moesten trouw zweren aan het regime. Deden ze dat niet, dan werden ze geëxecuteerd. Vaak waren

ze dan al op een vreselijke manier gemarteld. Anders dan bijvoorbeeld het Joegoslavië-tribunaal heeft dit tribunaal geen internationaal mandaat. Het heeft geen juridische macht. Het is als het ware een 'vrijwilligers'-initiatief.

2 Waarom?

“Mensen die het hebben overleefd en familieleden van mensen die zijn geëxecuteerd, zijn jaren bezig geweest om via de VN aandacht te vragen voor deze misdaden. Waar er voor de misdaden in Joegoslavië wel aandacht kwam, hebben zij echter nooit gehoor gekregen. Maar ze willen niet dat wat gebeurd is, vergeten wordt. Daarom heeft een groep overlevenden mij twee jaar geleden benaderd. Ik was in 2009 in Groot-Brittannië genomineerd als mensenrechtenadvocaat van het jaar. Mij werd toen gevraagd te werken aan het opzetten

van een tribunaal zoals Bertrand Russell dat in de jaren zestig heeft gedaan om oorlogsmisdaden in Vietnam te onderzoeken.”

3 Wat gaat er gebeuren?

“Eerder dit jaar hebben we bij Amnesty International in Londen een bijeenkomst gehad waar betrokkenen hebben getuigd over wat er destijds is gebeurd. Dat materiaal ga ik, als hoofdaanklager, de komende dagen presenteren aan een groep onafhankelijke rechters, afkomstig van over de hele wereld. Een van de mensen die mij bijstaat is Geoffrey Nice, die aanklager was in het proces tegen Slobodan Milosevic.”

4 Is de aangeldagde er ook?

“Nee. Ik heb wel een brief geschreven waarin ze werden uitgenodigd. Maar daar is nooit op gereageerd.

Dat betekent ook dat de komende dagen de verdediging ontbreekt. Maar daar zijn we ons zeer van bewust. We doen er alles aan om te zorgen dat dit een eerlijk proces wordt. Het wordt geen show-proces. Ik heb geen politieke motieven. Er zijn wel suggesties geweest dat dit tribunaal een door de VS aangestuurde poging is het Iraanse regime verder te ondermijnen, maar dat is echt onzin.”

5 Wat hoopt u te bereiken?

“Er wordt nu een heleboel bewijsmateriaal verzameld en opgeslagen. Niemand kan deze misdaden meer ontkennen of beweren dat hij het niet heeft geweten. Bovendien hebben de slachtoffers nu een stem gekregen. En wie weet wordt dat bewijsmateriaal in de toekomst dan toch nog gebruikt.”

Nicole Lucas

The Boston Globe

The Boston Globe, October 26 2012

Iran's crimes, real and hypothetical

By Farah Stockman | Globe Columnist

It has become fashionable in certain circles to call for the president of Iran to be charged with genocide incitement because of his virulently anti-Israel remarks.

During Monday's president's debate, Mitt Romney vowed that if he gets to the White House, he will "make sure that [Mahmoud] Ahmadinejad is indicted under the Genocide Convention," a campaign promise Romney has made since 2007.

It's an easy bandwagon to get on. For the past five years, bipartisan voices in Congress have filed resolutions declaring Ahmadinejad's remarks an international crime. This fall, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand of New York garnered bipartisan support for a bill that calls on the United Nations Security Council to ask the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court to investigate.

But there are a lot of reasons to view these calls as empty political posturing. If Congress really wanted to indict Ahmadinejad, it would change the American law that makes it difficult to file such charges right here in the United States.

Genocide, defined as the "intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group," is a crime of universal jurisdiction. It can be tried in courts around the world. But American law sets a high bar: Charges can only be brought if someone has tried to eliminate a "substantial part" of a group. A few deaths won't cut it. Incitement can only be charged if someone has "directly and publicly" incited another person to commit genocide.

A genocide prosecution for Ahmadinejad would likely disintegrate under the weight of the following questions: Have his words caused any deaths? Are they likely to cause them in the future? Did he really say Israel should be wiped off the map or was it just a bad translation? Did he directly threaten Israel, or simply predict its collapse? Is he advocating for Israel's military destruction, or for the Jewish homeland to be changed into a homeland for Muslims, Christians, and non-immigrant Jews?

Ironically, while American politicians are raising questions about hypothetical hearings and potential massacres, they are ignoring the very real crimes the Iranian regime has already committed and actual hearings that are already taking place.

Today, an historic event is unfolding: Survivors are giving testimony about a wave of executions carried out in Iran between 1981 to 1988.

More than 10,000 leftists, communists, and other opponents of the regime were executed for their political beliefs, a crime against humanity under international law. After a fatwa by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khomeini, the killings accelerated. Prisoners were woken in their jail cells in the middle of the night, hastily sentenced to death, and executed moments later. Children as young as 11 were hanged or sent to firing squads. The sound of women being tortured was broadcast on prison loudspeakers.



These crimes might have been erased from our collective memory had a group of courageous survivors and family members of the dead not fought to bring them to light. Five years ago, they approached Payam Akhavan, an Iranian-born human rights lawyer, about charging the Iranian regime in the International Criminal Court. He told them it would be nearly impossible: The prosecutor can't just start investigating the deaths, because Iran has not signed on to the court. (Neither has the United States.) The United Nations Security Council has the power to set up a special tribunal, but it would be nearly impossible to get it to do that.

But Akhavan, who has spent his career trying to bring justice after mass crimes in Rwanda, Cambodia, and the former Yugoslavia, didn't want to give up on his own native land. He encouraged another idea: establishing a "people's court" where survivors present evidence before a respected international panel of judges.

"One of the most important aspects of justice is not punishing individual leaders, but exposing the historical truth with the view of creating a culture of human rights and accountability," Akhavan said in a telephone interview from The Hague, where the hearings are being held.

So what does Akhavan think of Mitt Romney's vow to indict Ahmadinejad?

"Presidential candidates may make their own statements for domestic political consumption," he said. "That is not my concern. My clients are the victims of those atrocities, and I know what they want. They don't want political games by either American political leaders or Iranian political leaders. They want justice."

Farah Stockman can be reached at fstockman@globe.com. Follow her on Twitter @fstockman

THE AUSTRALIAN

The Australian, October 26 2012

Hague tribunal judges Iran killings

A TRIBUNAL set up by victims of political crimes committed after Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution has begun hearings in a bid to highlight killings ignored by international justice.

Top judges and lawyers are taking part in the tribunal, which has no judicial authority, to judge those responsible for killing thousands of political prisoners after Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini came to power.

The hope is that the tribunal, held in the library of the Peace Palace in The Hague, will force the United Nations to set up a commission of inquiry into the killings of more than 20,000 people that have gone unpunished for over 25 years.

"The world doesn't investigate what it doesn't want to investigate," said Geoffrey Nice, a member of the tribunal and former prosecutor at the UN's International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

"The most important thing is to leave a record."

"What we want is to force the UN to set up an inquiry commission because once such a commission says 'there have been horrible crimes', they can't go back and they have to do something," he said.

"But the (UN) Security Council, and especially Russia would veto that," he said.

The tribunal's prosecutor, Payam Akhavan, who also worked for the ICTY, said more than 20,000 political prisoners - men, women and children - were executed in Iranian prisons in the 1980s after the Islamic Revolution.

"In 1988, more than 5000 apolitical prisoners were executed in a short time throughout Iran," Akhavan said.

"We say it's Iran's Srebrenica (the massacre of almost 8000 Bosnians in 1995), but here, no one investigates even though families and victims still suffer and cannot forget what happened, even after that time."

Mehdi Ashough was among the first witnesses to testify on Thursday, recounting the time he spent in Iranian cells between 1981 and 1983.



"There were 60 different forms of torture; they used everything they could think of to torture us," Ashough said, relating how he witnessed from his cell 44 people, including a 15-year-old boy, being executed on one night in 1981.

Iran acknowledges people were executed in its prisons after the Islamic Revolution but says the killings were carried out legally in the eyes of international law.

Hearings are to last until Saturday, with 19 witnesses to testify before the judges deliver their unenforceable verdict on Saturday.

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/breaking-news/hague-tribunal-judges-iran-killings/story-fn3dxix6-1226503541554>

GULF Daily News The voice of Bahrain

Gulf Daily News, October 16, 2012 Hague tribunal to investigate Iran's crimes

CRIMES committed by Iran against political prisoners in the 1980s will be investigated during a landmark tribunal in The Hague later this month.

The Iran Tribunal will take place from October 25 to 27 and will hear firsthand accounts of atrocities committed against Iranian citizens under a fatwa issued by Ayatollah Khomeini, which is said to have resulted in between 5,000 and 30,000 citizens being tortured and executed for holding beliefs that conflicted with the regime.

Eight experienced human rights judges will oversee the hearings, although Iran has so far refused to co-operate with the tribunal despite being invited to take part.

Witnesses will be travelling from across the world, including North America and Europe, to describe humanitarian crimes committed by a regime that is still in power.

It follows a Truth Commission, held in London in June, which documented and assembled witness statements and compiled a report that concluded: "These violations of human rights were devised, instigated and executed (or caused to be executed) by a single authority and as such the Islamic Republic of Iran is the only authority responsible for these acts."

This is described as the first hearing of its kind to address crimes committed by a sitting government and is expected to bring to light information suppressed by Iran for more than two decades.

The hearings will take place at the Peace Palace, which houses the International Court of Justice, although those accused of wrongdoing cannot be compelled to attend.

Victims

The Iran Tribunal Campaign is an initiative launched by survivors and relatives of victims of the current regime, which seized power following a revolution in Iran that saw the former Shah overthrown.

It describes itself as a grassroots movement that seeks to bring recognition for intellectuals, students, leftists, members of opposition parties and ethnic and religious minorities who were victims of the current regime.

The movement says many of those executed, from across the political and religious spectrum, had simply distributed leaflets.

"This tribunal will allow victims and their relatives to have their grievances aired for legal consideration for the very first time," said chairman of the Iran Tribunal's steering committee Professor John Cooper QC.

"People have worked tirelessly against a repressive regime for 25 years to bring this tribunal to fruition."

Chief prosecutor Professor Payam Akhavan said it was time the Iranian government was made to answer for crimes against its own people.

"This tribunal is a seminal moment in establishing the historical truth about a decade of mass atrocities," he added.



"It is a unique opportunity for the Iranian people to hold those in power accountable for past injustices to build a better future based on the rule of law.

"Instead of being punished, the perpetrators of these heinous crimes have been promoted to senior positions in government; members of the Death Commission sit on the Iranian Supreme Court, in its parliaments and in its Cabinets. "Without speaking truth to power, without accountability for past crimes, it will be difficult to build a culture of human rights in Iran and to move beyond the present culture of impunity."



Gulf Daily News, October 25, 2012
Tribunal to reach final judgement in Iran crimes probe

A TRIBUNAL investigating crimes committed by the current Iranian regime against political prisoners in the 1980s will reach a full judgement in a matter of weeks.

The Iran Tribunal, in The Hague, took place from Thursday to Saturday and heard witness statements detailing persecution of Iran's political, religious and ethnic minority prisoners during a decade when approximately 20,000 were executed.

Some 5,000 political prisoners were executed in 1988 alone for having beliefs that conflicted with the regime, based on a fatwa issued by Ayatollah Khomeini, the tribunal heard.

"We have heard the accounts of many who had crimes committed against them by the Islamic Republic of Iran," prosecutor Professor John Cooper QC said.

"The experienced panel of judges will now adjourn to consider the wealth of information that witnesses have provided - about their experiences in the Iranian prisons and the treatment of political as well as religious and ethnic minority prisoners between 1980 and 1988.

"It is a real credit to the wives, sisters, and mothers of those who were executed and victims of atrocities who have persevered for 25 years to have their voices heard in a court for the first time.

"The Tribunal will be issuing its verdict on the Islamic Republic of Iran and the crimes against humanity that have been described here, shortly."

The Iran Tribunal Campaign is an initiative launched by survivors and relatives of victims of the current regime, which seized power following a revolution in Iran that saw the former Shah overthrown.

Since neither the courts of Iran nor the international courts are available for survivors and families of the victims, they established a People's Tribunal overseen by distinguished judges, who will base their judgement on the evidence presented and international law.

"This is an important step forward in the struggles of the Iranian people for justice," said chief prosecutor Professor Payam Akhavan.

"There can be no democratic future in Iran without addressing the horrific crimes of the past."

GULF Daily News The voice of Bahrain

Gulf Daily News, October 25, 2012

Iran atrocities probe begins

A LANDMARK tribunal investigating crimes committed by the current Iranian regime against political prisoners in the 1980s starts in The Hague today.

The Iran Tribunal will hear firsthand accounts of atrocities committed against Iranian citizens under a fatwa issued by Ayatollah Khomeini, which is said to have resulted in between 5,000 and 30,000 citizens being tortured and executed for holding beliefs that conflicted with the regime.

Prosecutor John Cooper QC will describe how people were tied to a bed with a dirty sock stuffed in their mouth and had the soles of their feet whipped with electric cables; flogged and beaten; forced to squat in small boxes known as "the grave"; deprived of sleep; made to stand for days on end; sexually abused; and suspended in the air by their arms, which were twisted behind their back, for hours until their shoulders snapped.

He will also tell judges that inmates were forced to watch fellow prisoners being tortured, were tortured in the presence of their own children and were executed by hanging or firing squad, while others died from the torture itself.

The tribunal will hear how children were imprisoned with their parents and were even executed as political prisoners, the youngest being just 11 years old, while Death Commissions grilled prisoners about their religious faith and hanged more than 5,000 in the space of a few months.

"It is a stain on the collective conscience of humanity to deny these scars a way to heal and these nightmares a means to subside," Mr Cooper says in his opening submission.

"This is why the prosecution now moves at this phase to prove that responsibility for these grave, widespread and systematic violations of human rights lies with the highest echelons of the Islamic Republic of Iran, on whose express orders they were carried out."

Hearings: Eight human rights judges will oversee the hearings, although Iran has refused to cooperate with the Tribunal despite being invited to participate.

Witnesses will be travelling from across the world, including North America and Europe, to describe humanitarian crimes committed by the current regime.

It follows a Truth Commission held in London in June, which documented and assembled witness statements, and is described as the first hearing of its kind to address crimes committed by a sitting government.

The hearings will take place at the Peace Palace, which houses the International Court of Justice, today, tomorrow and on Saturday, although those accused of wrongdoing cannot be compelled to attend.



The Iran Tribunal Campaign is an initiative launched by survivors and relatives of victims of the current regime, which seized power following a revolution in Iran that saw the former Shah overthrown.

<http://www.gulf-daily-news.com/NewsDetails.aspx?storyid=340402>



Perth Now, October 26 2012
Hague tribunal judges Iran killings

by: Maude Brulard From: AAP October 26, 2012 1:54AM

A TRIBUNAL set up by victims of political crimes committed after Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution has begun hearings in a bid to highlight killings ignored by international justice.

Top judges and lawyers are taking part in the tribunal, which has no judicial authority, to judge those responsible for killing thousands of political prisoners after Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini came to power.

The hope is that the tribunal, held in the library of the Peace Palace in The Hague, will force the United Nations to set up a commission of inquiry into the killings of more than 20,000 people that have gone unpunished for over 25 years.

"The world doesn't investigate what it doesn't want to investigate," said Geoffrey Nice, a member of the tribunal and former prosecutor at the UN's International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

"The most important thing is to leave a record."

"What we want is to force the UN to set up an inquiry commission because once such a commission says 'there have been horrible crimes', they can't go back and they have to do something," he said.

"But the (UN) Security Council, and especially Russia would veto that," he said.

The tribunal's prosecutor, Payam Akhavan, who also worked for the ICTY, said more than 20,000 political prisoners - men, women and children - were executed in Iranian prisons in the 1980s after the Islamic Revolution.

"In 1988, more than 5000 apolitical prisoners were executed in a short time throughout Iran," Akhavan said.

"We say it's Iran's Srebrenica (the massacre of almost 8000 Bosnians in 1995), but here, no one investigates even though families and victims still suffer and cannot forget what happened, even after that time."

Mehdi Ashough was among the first witnesses to testify on Thursday, recounting the time he spent in Iranian cells between 1981 and 1983.

"There were 60 different forms of torture; they used everything they could think of to torture us," Ashough said, relating how he witnessed from his cell 44 people, including a 15-year-old boy, being executed on one night in 1981.



Iran acknowledges people were executed in its prisons after the Islamic Revolution but says the killings were carried out legally in the eyes of international law.

Hearings are to last until Saturday, with 19 witnesses to testify before the judges deliver their unenforceable verdict on Saturday.

<http://m.perthnow.com.au/news/breaking-news/hague-tribunal-judges-iran-killings/story-e6frg13l-1226503541554>



Macleans, October 31 2012

Iran's 1980s massacre of political prisoners exposed

The Iran Tribunal — a sort of people's truth commission that doesn't have any legal standing — has released an interim judgment following its investigation into the massacre of political prisoners by the new Islamic Republic of Iran during the 1980s.

Conceived by victims of the Iranian regime and their relatives, the tribunal was established in 2007 and heard from its final witnesses this month in The Hague. Iran was invited to take part but did not respond.

The interim report concludes:

There are six forms of gross human rights abuses to which the evidence presented to the Truth Commission and this Tribunal point incontrovertibly: murder; torture, unjust imprisonment; sexual violence; persecution and enforced disappearance.

Quoting the prosecutor's closing submissions, the interim report continues:

Firstly, the Islamic Republic of Iran committed murder. Nima Sarvestani's documentary showed graves of executed prisoners stretching out as far as the eye can see; the gravedigger of Shiraz reported the delivery of sixty bodies on a single occasion, of victims at most twenty years old. Men were arrested at ten in the morning and dead by eleven; entire families were eliminated and whole wards purged; rows of prisoners were shot by firing squad, still breathing until they were finished off by coups de grâce; and we heard from this morning's witness of how child prisoners were required to administer these coups de grâce; truckloads of bodies were tipped into mass graves. The Tribunal heard extensive evidence of the murder of minors. In no case was an execution ordered in accordance with due process. In 1988, pursuant to a fatwa issued by Ayatollah Khomeini, over 5,000 political prisoners were killed (most were hanging) over the space of a few months.

Secondly, there has been not one witness who was not tortured in prison, both physically and mentally. Prisoners were hanged from the ceiling by their arms, flogged on the soles of their feet, beaten, deprived of sleep, kept in solitary confinement, subjected to mock executions and forced to watch other prisoners being tortured – or were tortured in the presence of their children. Shokufeh Sakhi told the Tribunal how she was subjected to sensory deprivation in a dark box (the "coffin") for hours on end, month after month. The general effect was to turn prisoners into zombies" by destroying their senses of self and dignity. Another witness told the Tribunal of the "psychological rape" that turned him into a "puppet", who would shoot his fellow prisoners as member of a firing squad of tavabeen (repenters).

There is something that at first glance seems Quixotic about this whole process. Eventually the tribunal will issue a full judgment, which will likely come to a similar conclusion as does this one. And



then ... nothing. There will be no punishment — nor, for that matter, will there be any reconciliation, as no one is asked for forgiveness.

And yet investigations like these, and those undertaken by the Iran Human Rights Documentation Center, serve a practical purpose, beyond committing cruel truths to the historical record, so that they will be more difficult to later deny. They remind Iran's current leaders — its torturers and its executioners — that they too are being watched. One day their regime of lies will collapse, and they will be held to account. Knowing this may just stay a bully's hand, or perhaps rob him of sleep.



2. International news agencies and newswires



AFP, October 26 2012

Hague tribunal judges killings in wake of Islamic revolution

THE HAGUE — A tribunal set up by victims of political crimes committed in the wake of Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution began hearings Thursday in a bid to highlight killings ignored by international justice.

Top judges and lawyers are taking part in the tribunal, which has no judicial authority, to judge those responsible for killing thousands of political prisoners after Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini came to power.

The hope is that the tribunal, held in the library of the Peace Palace in The Hague, will force the United Nations to set up a commission of enquiry into the killings of over 20,000 people that have gone unpunished for over 25 years.

"The world doesn't investigate what it doesn't want to investigate," said Geoffrey Nice, a member of the tribunal and former prosecutor at the UN's International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

"The most important thing is to leave a record."

"What we want is to force the UN to set up an enquiry commission because once such a commission says 'there have been horrible crimes', they can't go back and they have to do something," he said.

"But the (UN) Security Council, and especially Russia would veto that," he said.

The tribunal's prosecutor, Payam Akhavan, who also worked for the ICTY, said more than 20,000 political prisoners -- men, women and children -- were executed in Iranian prisons in the 1980s after the Islamic Revolution.

"In 1988, more than 5,000 apolitical prisoners were executed in a short time throughout Iran," Akhavan said.

"We say it's Iran's Srebrenica (the massacre of almost 8,000 Bosnians in 1995), but here, no one investigates even though families and victims still suffer and cannot forget what happened, even after that time."

Mehdi Ashough was among the first witnesses to testify on Thursday, recounting the time he spent in Iranian cells between 1981 and 1983.

"There were 60 different forms of torture, they used everything they could think of to torture us," Ashough said, relating how he witnessed from his cell 44 people, including a 15-year-old boy, being executed on one night in 1981.

The 1979 revolution toppled the monarchy of shah Mohammad Reza, a key US ally in the region, and set up a fundamentalist Islamic republic with little tolerance for opponents.



The tribunal says it was set up through donations from relatives of victims or survivors who live today in exile. The current Iranian regime has been invited to attend the hearings but declined, the tribunal said.

Iran acknowledges people were executed in its prisons after the Islamic Revolution but says the killings were carried out legally in the eyes of international law.

Hearings are to last until Saturday, with 19 witnesses to testify before the judges deliver their unenforceable verdict on Saturday.

http://bigpondnews.com/articles/World/2012/10/26/Hague_tribunal_judges_Iran_killings_809658.html?cid=ZBP_NEWS_L_L2-2_HaguetribunaljudgesIrankillings_RSS_251012



CBN News, October 30 2012
Iran's Crimes Against Humanity



With news of the devastation from Hurricane Sandy and the upcoming presidential election dominating headlines here in the U.S., the media is giving little attention to an historic report about Iranian human rights atrocities coming out of the Hague.

In an interim judgment released on Oct. 27, the Iran Tribunal--a team of internationally renowned lawyers concluded that the Islamic Republic of Iran has committed "crimes against humanity" and "gross violation of human rights."

The Iran Tribunal has no legal standing, but it brings to light credible evidence of the crushing of political dissent through tactics of arbitrary arrest, rape, imprisonment, and execution. Some 20,000 Iranian citizens--including children as young as 11--were executed in the decade immediately following the Iranian Revolution.

While the tribunal examined human rights violations and crimes against humanity committed during the 1980s, we know the leopard hasn't changed it's spots; the same tactics are still being used today against anyone who is deemed a threat to the regime. We've reported extensively about the targeting of Christians like Pastors Youcef Nadarkhani and Benham Irani.



Nasrin Sotoudeh

Among the persecuted is human rights lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh. She defended many of the protestors who took to the streets during the Green Revolution in 2009. She's also an outspoken advocate for the rights of women and children.

The European Parliament recently awarded Sotoudeh and Iranian filmmaker Jafar Panahi the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought. While not currently imprisoned, the Iranian government banned the award-winning filmmaker from movie making and international travel.

As for Sotoudeh, she still sits in Tehran's notorious Evin Prison. The regime sent her there in September 2010 on charges of "acting against national security" and for "collusion and propagation against the Islamic Republic."



She received a 6-year sentence (reduced from 11-years) and is prohibited from practicing law for 20 years. Ms.Sotoudeh is now on a hunger strike (her second one) because she says authorities are harrassing her family members and denying her husband and two children the right to hug her during prison visits.

It's not only the pursuit of nuclear weapons by Ahmadinejad and the Ayatollah that should concern us. Christians and others like lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh who stand for freedom in Iran--despite the known consequences--deserve our prayers and support.



3. International broadcast outlets



متهم



پرزگ رجمشید

سی بی بی سی در ایران امور تحلیلی لنگر

1391 آبان 04 - 2012 اک 25 شنبه پنج - گ ری نوید چ 16:26 : شده روز به



شصت دهه در سیاسی زندان یان اعدام مساله به رسیدگی دادگاه

و خورشیدی شصت دهه در سیاسی زندان یا اعدام مساله به است قرار که دادگاهی مرحله آخرین و دومین صلح کاخ در را خود کاراک ۲۵ پ نجشده به امروز از پ پردازد، ۱۳۶۷ سال گ سه ترده های اعدام مخصوصا کرد آغاز هلدند در لاهه شهر

اعدام زندان یان های خانواده از تعدادی اب تکار به به لکه موجود، حقوقی و رسمی مراجع سوی از نه دادگاه، این " است گرفت ته شکل را سل دادگاه از پ نیری الگو با و پ یشین سیاسی ان یان زندو شده

زندانی خودی که شاهان، از دیدگری شمار انجامید، خواهد طول به روز سه که دادگاه این جریان در است قرار الامالی بین قضات از ن فره شش هیئتی مقابل در هس تند، قربان یان خانواده از ی او اندب وده سیاسی کندب یان را سیاسی زندان یان اعدام روند از خود ای ترو

محل در امسال تیرماه اوایل که شصت دهه های اعدام به رسیدگی دادگاه اول مرحله روزه پنج هلی نشدست در به شدگان اعدام به ستگان و شاهان از تن ۸۰ شد، برگ زار ل نندن در الاملب بین ع فو سازمان مرکزی دف تر دادند قرار یاب حقیقت کم یس یون اخ تیار در را خود مس تندات و خ تندپ ردا روی دادها روایت

م تحدملل سازمان پيشدين ويژه گ زار شد گراکاپي تورن موريس را آن ريد است که ياب، حقيقتي کميسديون مبنای گ زارش هين وک ردت هيه گ زار شى اظهارات اساس بر داشت، عهده بر ايران به شر حقوق امور در . شد ارايه داوران هيئت به دادستاني تيم سوي از لاهه در دادگاه دوم مرحله در که است شده که يفرخواستي که شد تاره، اين بر گ داشت تن سرپوش و ش بر اي تلاش و آمار ارايه از اسلامي جمهوري خودداري دل بيل به چنده گيرپي سياسي فعالان و پژوهشگران از برخي اماندارد، وجود حاضر حال در دقيق ک املا آمار ارايه امکان توان ميگرفت ته صورت تحقيقات و موجود اسناد به توجه باگوي ندمي سياسي زندان بيان اعدام پرونده اند به اخته جان اسلامي جمهوري منتهقان و مخالفان از تن هزار ۲۰ حدود در مجموع در شصت دهه در که گفنت «۱۳۶۷ تا به ستان هاي اعدام در ب رنگان به جان از و شصت دهه سياسي زندان بيان از مصداقي، ايرجگفته به تا ۱۳۶۰ هلي سال در ها اعدام دامنه . شد آغاز ۱۳۶۰ خرداد ۳۰ شامگاه از شصت دهه در سياسي زندان بيان اعدام ب اريدي گر، ۱۳۶۷ سال بهار از اما کرد، پيدا کاهش ۱۳۶۷ تا ۱۳۶۴ سال از به عدوب و دگ سترده به سپار ۱۳۶۳ از سابقه کم اي نمونه و ر سيد خود اوج به که سال اين ماه هيد ورش و مرداد تا يافت افزايش ها اعدام شمار .» گ داشت جاي به تاريخ در را سياسي زندان بيان عام قتل

حقوقی؟ ر سيدگي راه ت نهاي اولين مردمی، دادگاه

پرونده به ر سيدگي بر اي حقوقی حرکت اولين شود، مي شناخته ت ريد بونال ايران عنوان به اکه دادگاهي . شود مي محسوب اسلامي جمهوري در سياسي يان زندان ک شد تار

هاي خانواده از تعدادي اب تکار به به لکه موجود، حقوقی و رسمي مراجع سوي از نه دادگاه، اين هه، اين با است گرفت ته شکل را سل دادگاه از پ ذيري الگو با و پيشدين سياسي زندان بيان و شده اعدام زندان بيان در اروپا چپ گراي عمدتاً سياسي فعالان و روشنفکران از شماری سوي زاميلادی ۶۰ دهه در را سل دادگاه که دادگاه آن در . شد بر گ زاروي تنام در جنگي جنايت اتهام به آمريکا ک ردن دادگاهي بر اي سوئد و دانمارک نداشت تندر حضوروي تنام جنگ قربانان بيان و وي تنامي شهود شد، بر گ زار نيز ديگر موارد برخي بر اي به عده را دادگاه اين که به و دند در اسل بر تر راند و سارت رپل ژان مانند جنگ ضد فعالان و روشنفکران اين و عنوان به سياسي زندان بيان و ها خانواده اب تکار با و حضور با ت ريد بونال ايران آنکه حال، دادند سازمان است شده بر پا ها اعدام شاهان

رغم به که که ندمي قلمداد مردمی دادگاهي را دادگاه اين دل بيل، هين به ت ريد بونال، ايران ک زندگان بر گ زار و عمومي افکار به ر ساني آگاهي حوادث، ثبت در عمدتاً قشيت و اندمي احکامش، اجراي بر اي ضمانت نبود . باشد داشت ته آي نده در حقوقی هاي پيگيري بر اي سازي زمينه



4. Online publications



Huffington Post UK, 25 October 2012

Tribunal Probes Execution of 20,000 Political Prisoners in Iran

The final session of the Iran Tribunal investigation into the execution of 20,000 political prisoners in the 1980s opens today in The Hague.

The charges against Iran include crimes against humanity.

In one very bloody seven month period, from August 1988 to February 1989, at least 4,500 people, some of them teenagers, were executed, according to Amnesty International. This works out at an average execution rate of one person almost every hour for over 200 days.

The current regime of President Ahmadinejad refuses to acknowledge these mass killings or provide any redress.

The Iran Tribunal, inaugurated in 2007, comprises leading judges and lawyers from around the world, including former prosecutors at the International Criminal Court (ICC) and at the special tribunals on Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia.

British legal experts on the tribunal's legal steering committee include Prof John Cooper QC and Sir Geoffrey Nice, Gresham professor of law and a former prosecutor at the ICC.

The tribunal was set up after past attempts to get the United Nations to investigate the killings were blocked by Iran's allies in the Human Rights Council.

Most of the people executed were democrats, secularists, liberals, students and left-wingers. They were shot by firing squads or hanged from cranes, usually after prolonged torture and unfair, summary trials. Some women were raped before their execution. The victims were buried in mass graves. Many of the bodies have never been recovered.

The previous session of the tribunal, the Truth Commission in June 2012, heard witness testimonies of floggings, burnings, slashings, nerve constriction, suspension from ceilings and mock executions. The sexual abuse of detainees was commonplace. Prisoners were often kept in solitary confinement in tiny two-square metre cells; and subjected to sleep deprivation and starvation rations. Many were stripped naked and exposed to prolonged extreme heat or cold. Children as young as 11 years old were among those tortured and hanged.

A member of the Iran Tribunal, Professor Payam Akhavan, observed:

"It (the tribunal) is a unique opportunity for the Iranian people to hold those in power accountable for past injustices to build a better future based on the rule of law.

"Instead of being punished, the perpetrators of these heinous crimes have been promoted to senior positions in government; members of the Death Commission sit on the Iranian Supreme Court, in its

parliaments and in its Cabinets....without accountability for past crimes, it will be difficult to build a culture of human rights in Iran and to move beyond the present culture of impunity," he said.

Unlike the massacres in apartheid South Africa, Darfur, Srebrenica and General Pinochet's Chile, there has never been any international outrage at the mass killings in Iran. The victims and their loved ones have never had any opportunity for justice and legal redress.

This tribunal is the first time the full scale of the executions and the suffering of the victims has been subjected to authoritative judicial investigation and documentation. For the loved ones of those who were murdered, documenting these horrendous crimes is the first step towards exposing the perpetrators and hopefully one day bringing them to justice.

Repression continues in Iran today, with frequent arbitrary arrests, sham trials, torture, forced confessions and the incarceration and execution of political prisoners.

Since the fraudulent presidential elections in 2009, Amnesty International has documented an intensifying crack down by the Tehran regime. Its alarming report, published this year, is entitled: We Are Ordered To Crush You: Expanding Repression of Dissent in Iran.

Within the last week, three campaigners from the persecuted Baluch ethnic minority community have been hanged, after unfair trials and confessions extracted under torture.

In June, four Ahwazi Arab men, members of another victimised minority nationality, were executed for "enmity against God and corruption on earth." Their families say they were tortured into confessing to the killing of a law enforcement official.

A further nine Arab political prisoners are on death row, awaiting execution. Already seven Arab activists have been killed extra-judicially under torture this year.

The UN special rapporteur on human rights in Iran, Ahmad Shaheed, a former foreign minister of the Maldives, this week presented a report that warned of worsening discrimination against religious and ethnic minorities, women and gay people.

He noted that there had been more than 300 officially reported executions in the first eight months of this year but that the real figure is probably much higher because Iran is now less open about the number of people it puts to death.

Shaheed said that 670 people were executed in 2011, making Iran the country with the world's highest per capita use of the death penalty.

Aside from executions, the Iranian regime stands accused of persecuting political and ethnic dissidents, Sunni Muslims and other religious minorities, trade unionists, students, journalists, lawyers, women's rights activists and LGBT people.

http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/peter-g-tatchell/iran-tribunal-political-prisoners-probes-execution_b_2014071.html



Sky News, October 25 2012

Iran: Opposition TV Channel Raha Launched

In London, a new Iranian opposition TV channel called Raha was launched.

In Tehran, on the same day, Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, took to the airwaves of state TV to denounce "corrupt American, Nato and Zionist agents" in his annual message to Iranians who have gone to Saudi Arabia for the Haj pilgrimage.

And therein lies one of many problems for Raha; few people in or outside Iran will hear about Raha which will have its signal and internet feed blocked by the Iranian government.

Even if it can occasionally circumvent the restrictions, it is up against the vastly influential state TV and radio which broadcasts into just about every home in a country of 80 million people.

The man putting up the money for Raha is Amir Hossein Jahanchahi, a businessmen whose father was a finance minister in the late Shah's government.

If you believe what he says, he will play a major role in bringing down a regime he likens to Nazi Germany. If you believe his critics, Raha TV is a rich man's plaything which will have minimal effect.

I asked him to explain how Raha could have any influence given that it will be blocked inside Iran. "They cannot block everything all the time," he told me. "People on the inside will be able to see it."

Mr Jahanchahi believes he is on the right side of history. He says that, within a few months, we will again see unrest breaking out on the streets in Iran. That may be true. The international sanctions against Iran are beginning to bite, currency reserves are low, ordinary people are feeling the effects.

For Mr Jahanchahi, the time is right to launch an opposition station to give voice to an alternative view to that of the state. He is also concerned about the possibility of an Israeli air strike against Iran within nine months.

He is "100% sure" that Iran will have a nuclear weapon within months. "There is a risk Israel will strike my country ... the only way to avoid the war is to change the regime."

And his part in its downfall? To broadcast for four hours each evening on the Eutelsat satellite and the Iranian website GLWIZ.

Meanwhile, over on state TV, the Supreme Leader was explaining his remarks about "Zionist agents".

His basic premise is that that "the Jews" control the USA and Nato et al, and that they have hijacked what he calls the "Islamic Awakening" which is known elsewhere as the "Arab Spring".



The Supreme Leader says the Zionists are trying to mislead "Muslim youth and bring them into confrontation with one another.... They are trying to turn the jihad against colonialism and Zionism into blind terrorism in the streets ... so that Muslims shed each other's blood."

This is partial code for blaming the Syrian uprising on Israel. Iran is the main supporter of President Assad in his war against the FSA, and the FSA is backed by Iran's enemy, Saudi Arabia.

What he didn't mention in his views on Muslims shedding each other's blood was that the day also saw the opening of the final session of the Iran Tribunal investigation into the execution of 20,000 political prisoners in the 1980s when the Supreme Leader was President of the Islamic Republic.

Raha TV might have a view on that, but few will hear it.

<http://news.sky.com/story/1002765/iran-opposition-tv-channel-raha-launched>



Vancouver Observer, October 26 2012

Hague tribunal to investigate Iran massacre of political prisoners

Mahsa Alimardani: The world's seat of international law, the Peace Palace in The Hague is host to a historic even this week – an investigation into the massacres of Iran's political prisoners throughout the 1980s.

While this is the home of the International Court of Justice, this tribunal is a symbolic event underway through the voluntary efforts of human rights lawyers, judges, academics, and activists.

The event is modeled after Bertrand Russell's tribunals for war crimes committed by the United States in Vietnam throughout the 1960s.

Amnesty International in London hosted the first session of the tribunal this past July. This session resulted in a report of details from over 30 prisoners, and 75 witnesses, with testimonies from officials and experts on Iranian law and punishment.

The legal team leading the second session this week includes key figures in international law. Sir Geoffrey Nice, the former prosecutor on the trial of Slobodan Milosevic at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY); and South African constitutional judge Johann Kriegler who helped transition the South African government out of Apartheid are amongst those participating.

The tribunals only hold a symbolic truth and reconciliation platform for the victims of the massacres.

In his opening statement, the chairman of the steering committee, Payam Akhavan stated the Tribunals mean to prove that, "despite the lack of rightful rule of law, there is a way to find peace. There may never be justice and retribution for those responsible for these crimes, but a future democratic Iran will use this information for tangible justice."

These crimes involve the execution of over 20, 000 Iranians on the orders of the leader of the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini.

The commissioners and executioners of these crimes are still at large within the Iranian government, and the victims of these massacres have had no opportunity for redress in Iran or within the international community. These tribunals have become the first platform for them to have their stories and voices heard.

The massacres have been likened to the Rwandan genocide, and murders of Srebrenica, yet the United Nations and the international community at large have remained silent.

Canadians on the committee's steering committee include McGill Professor of International Law, Payam Akhavan, and Toronto-based human rights lawyer Kaveh Shahrooz. Witness testimonies



included that of Dr. Maurice Copithorne, a Canadian who formerly held the position of UN human rights rapporteur in Iran.

Throughout the 1980s Canada held diplomatic posts within Iran, yet never acknowledged or reacted to these events.

Canada has yet to recognize these massacres as a historical event despite the fact that they have recently become vocal supporters of human rights in Iran.

This past September, upon ending diplomatic ties with Iran, Minister of Foreign Affairs, John Baird explained the closure to be in part because Iran is amongst “the world’s worst violators of human rights.”

“The Iranian regime would hate any efforts by any governments to highlight its human rights. But the Iranian people would be incredibly pleased by the recognition of what they’ve suffered in one of the darkest periods of contemporary history,” said Shahrooz of Canada’s role.

<http://www.vancouverobserver.com/politics/hague-tribunal-investigate-iran-massacre-political-prisoners>

**The Jerusalem Post, November 1 2012
Hague tribunal slams Iran for mass murder**

By Benjamin Weinthal, Jerusalem Post Correspondent

A non-binding legal tribunal accuses Tehran leaders for massive human rights violations done during 1980s regime.



BERLIN – A non-binding legal tribunal in The Hague consisting of political victims of Iran’s regime in the 1980s issued an interim report in late October slamming Tehran’s clerical leaders for massive human rights violations.

“There are six forms of gross human rights abuses to which the evidence presented to the Truth Commission and this tribunal point incontrovertibly: murder, torture, unjust imprisonment, sexual violence, persecution and enforced disappearance,” the report stated.

“The Iran tribunal in The Hague marks a uniquely historic moment for Iran’s civil society. For the first time in world history, a society is coming to terms with its past while a totalitarian dictatorship is still in its last days of power,” Saba Farzan, a Berlinbased expert on Iran’s human rights record, told *The Jerusalem Post* via email on Thursday.

“The criminals who committed all these barbaric crimes against humanity are still alive, and so this undertaking sends a very strong signal: Judgment Day will come for them and all those who are still torturing and killing the innocent sons and daughters of a whole nation.”

Farzan, who is a German- Iranian journalist and has published widely on Iran’s repression of its population, added that the tribunal was “a process very necessary to speed up the downfall of this Islamist dictatorship and one to finally heal the soul of Iran’s civil society. [The fact] that nothing short of a change of the regime will work for the future of Iran has become once more evident

through this historic step.”

Geoffrey Nice, one of the authors of the interim report and a former prosecutor at the UN’s International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, told AFP, “The world doesn’t investigate what it doesn’t want to investigate.”

“The most important thing is to leave a record. What we want is to force the UN to set up an inquiry commission because once such a commission says, ‘There have been horrible crimes,’ they can’t go back and they have to do something. But the Security Council, and especially Russia, would veto that,” Nice added.

The Islamic Republic chose not to participate in The Hague proceeding. The tribunal judges said a full report is slated to appear at a later point. The lawyers and judges examined the wave of executions and the violent period of repression after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, in which over 20,000 people were executed, according to the tribunal.

The report restricted its inquiry to reported atrocities committed during the period between 1981 and 1988.

According to the tribunal, the lawyers took evidence from 19 witnesses and documents.

Testimony was translated from Farsi into English.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran committed murder. Nima Sarvestani’s documentary showed graves of executed prisoners stretching out as far as the eye can see; the gravedigger of Shiraz reported the delivery of 60 bodies on a single occasion, of victims at most 20 years old,” the report stated.

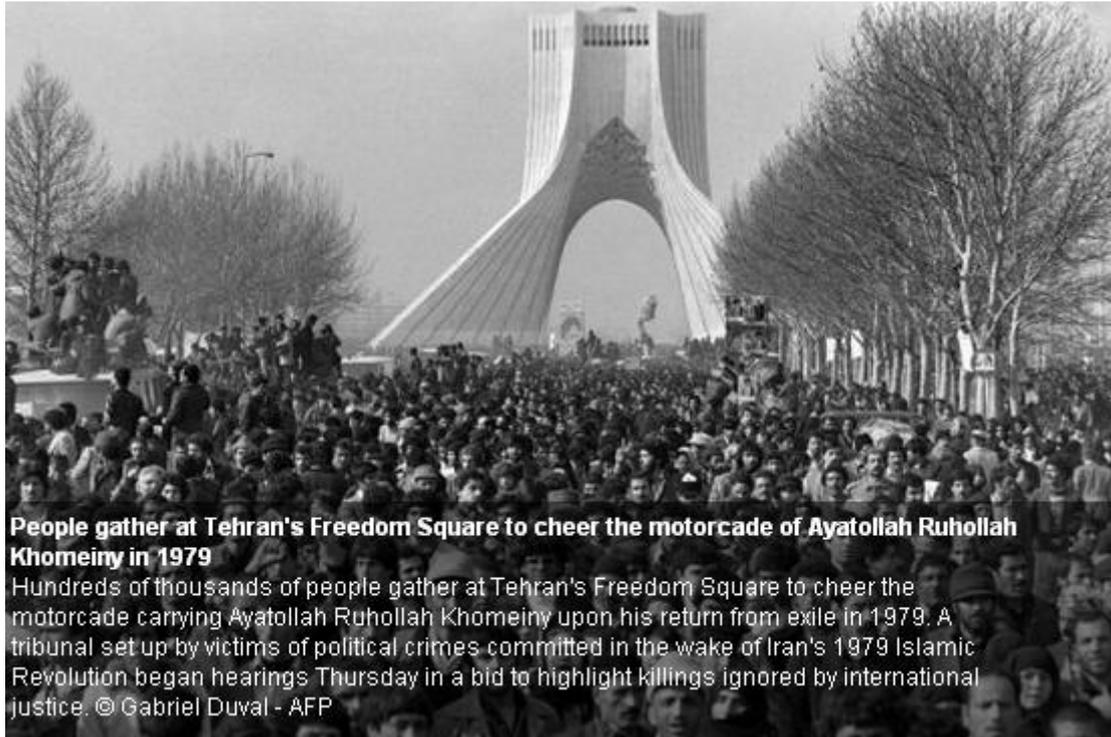
“Men were arrested at ten in the morning and dead by eleven. Entire families were eliminated and whole wards purged. Rows of prisoners were shot by firing squads, still breathing until they were finished off by coups de grâce, and we heard from this morning’s witness of how child prisoners were required to administer these coups de grâce. Truckloads of bodies were tipped into mass graves.”

<http://www.jpost.com/International/Article.aspx?id=290204>

YOUR MIDDLE EAST

Your Middle East, October 25 2012

Hague tribunal judges killings in wake of Iran's Islamic revolution



A tribunal set up by victims of political crimes committed in the wake of Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution began hearings Thursday in a bid to highlight killings ignored by international justice.

Top judges and lawyers are taking part in the tribunal, which has no judicial authority, to judge those responsible for killing thousands of political prisoners after Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini came to power.

The hope is that the tribunal, held in the library of the Peace Palace in The Hague, will force the United Nations to set up a commission of enquiry into the killings of over 20,000 people that have gone unpunished for over 25 years.

"The world doesn't investigate what it doesn't want to investigate," said Geoffrey Nice, a member of the tribunal and former prosecutor at the UN's International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

"The most important thing is to leave a record."



"What we want is to force the UN to set up an enquiry commission because once such a commission says 'there have been horrible crimes', they can't go back and they have to do something," he said.

"But the (UN) Security Council, and especially Russia would veto that," he said.

The tribunal's prosecutor, Payam Akhavan, who also worked for the ICTY, said more than 20,000 political prisoners -- men, women and children -- were executed in Iranian prisons in the 1980s after the Islamic Revolution.

"In 1988, more than 5,000 apolitical prisoners were executed in a short time throughout Iran," Akhavan said.

"We say it's Iran's Srebrenica (the massacre of almost 8,000 Bosnians in 1995), but here, no one investigates even though families and victims still suffer and cannot forget what happened, even after that time."

Mehdi Ashough was among the first witnesses to testify on Thursday, recounting the time he spent in Iranian cells between 1981 and 1983.

"There were 60 different forms of torture, they used everything they could think of to torture us," Ashough said, relating how he witnessed from his cell 44 people, including a 15-year-old boy, being executed on one night in 1981.

The 1979 revolution toppled the monarchy of shah Mohammad Reza, a key US ally in the region, and set up a fundamentalist Islamic republic with little tolerance for opponents.

The tribunal says it was set up through donations from relatives of victims or survivors who live today in exile. The current Iranian regime has been invited to attend the hearings but declined, the tribunal said.

Iran acknowledges people were executed in its prisons after the Islamic Revolution but says the killings were carried out legally in the eyes of international law.

Hearings are to last until Saturday, with 19 witnesses to testify before the judges deliver their unenforceable verdict on Saturday.



Big Pond News, October 26 2012

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http://bigpondnews.com/articles/World/2012/10/26/Hague_tribunal_judges_Iran_killings_809658.html?cid=ZBP_NEWS_L_L2-2_HaguatribunaljudgesIrankillings_RSS_251012

THE HUFFINGTON POST CANADA

The Huffington Post Canada, October 26 2012 The Iran Tribunals: Finally Holding Death Committees to Account

The final sessions of the Iran Tribunal investigation into the execution of 20,000 political prisoners in the 1980s has opened in The Hague.

The charges against Iran include crimes against humanity.

In one very bloody seven month period, from August 1988 to February 1989, at least 4,500 people, some of them women and teenagers, were executed, according to Amnesty International. This works out at an average execution rate of one person almost every hour for over 200 days.

The current regime of President Ahmadinejad refuses to acknowledge these mass killings or provide any redress.

The Iran Tribunal, inaugurated in 2007, comprises leading judges and lawyers from around the world, including former prosecutors at the International Criminal Court (ICC) and at the special tribunals on Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia.

British legal experts on the tribunal's legal steering committee include Prof John Cooper QC and Sir Geoffrey Nice, Gresham professor of law and a former prosecutor at the ICC.

The tribunal was set up after past attempts to get the United Nations to investigate the killings were blocked by Iran's allies in the Human Rights Council.

Most of the people executed were democrats, secularists, liberals, students and left-wingers. They were shot by firing squads or hanged from cranes, usually after prolonged torture and unfair, summary trials. Some women were raped before their execution. The victims were buried in mass graves. Many of the bodies have never been recovered.

The previous session of the tribunal, the Truth Commission in June 2012, heard witness testimonies of floggings, burnings, slashings, nerve constriction, suspension from ceilings and mock executions. The sexual abuse of detainees was commonplace. Prisoners were often kept in solitary confinement in tiny two-square metre cells; and subjected to sleep deprivation and starvation rations. Many were stripped naked and exposed to prolonged extreme heat or cold. Children as young as 11 years old were among those tortured and hanged.

A member of the Iran Tribunal, Professor Payam Akhavan, observed:

"It (the tribunal) is a unique opportunity for the Iranian people to hold those in power accountable for past injustices to build a better future based on the rule of law.

"Instead of being punished, the perpetrators of these heinous crimes have been promoted to senior positions in government; members of the Death Commission sit on the Iranian Supreme Court, in its

parliaments and in its Cabinets....without accountability for past crimes, it will be difficult to build a culture of human rights in Iran and to move beyond the present culture of impunity,” he said.

Unlike the massacres in apartheid South Africa, Darfur, Srebrenica and General Pinochet’s Chile, there has never been any international outrage at the mass killings in Iran. The victims and their loved ones have never had any opportunity for justice and legal redress.

This tribunal is the first time the full scale of the executions and the suffering of the victims has been subjected to authoritative judicial investigation and documentation. For the loved ones of those who were murdered, documenting these horrendous crimes is the first step towards exposing the perpetrators and hopefully one day bringing them to justice.

Repression continues in Iran today, with frequent arbitrary arrests, sham trials, torture, forced confessions and the incarceration and execution of political prisoners.

Since the fraudulent presidential elections in 2009, Amnesty International has documented an intensifying crack down by the Tehran regime. Its alarming report, published this year, is entitled: We Are Ordered To Crush You: Expanding Repression of Dissent in Iran.

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In June, four Ahwazi Arab men, members of another victimised minority nationality, were executed for “enmity against God and corruption on earth.” Their families say they were tortured into confessing to the killing of a law enforcement official.

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Shaheed said that 670 people were executed in 2011, making Iran the country with the world’s highest per capita use of the death penalty.

Aside from executions, the Iranian regime stands accused of persecuting political and ethnic dissidents, Sunni Muslims and other religious minorities, trade unionists, students, journalists, lawyers, women’s rights activists and LGBT people.



THE HUFFINGTON POST CANADA

The Huffington Post Canada, October 27 2012 The Iran Tribunals

A process of truth and reconciliation is underway this week in The Hague. The event is the Iran Tribunals, a proceeding modelled after the famous Russell Tribunals of the 1960s, which placed the United States on a symbolic trial for its human rights abuses throughout the Vietnam War.

The aim of the tribunals is to bring the facts, individuals, and victims of the mass executions that marked the beginnings of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Massacres of political prisoners in the 1980s took a dramatic turn when the Islamic Republic of Iran accepted the UN ceasefire during the war with Iraq.

Ayatollah Khomeini, the leader of the 1979 Islamic Revolution, and Supreme Leader, issued a fatwa calling for the elimination of all political prisoners. Panels called "Death Committees" were created to issue execution orders.

Nationally, these executions instilled a culture of fear and impunity at the dawn of Iran's Islamic revolution. Those who commissioned the death orders, and those executing the orders are amongst the highest rank and file of the Islamic Republic.

Yesterday, witnesses identified the techniques, and individuals used throughout the massacres. One Kurdish witness, Malakeh Mostafa Soltani, went through the trauma with which her two brothers and husband were systematically executed throughout Kurdistan. In a haunting testimony, she explained the executioner to have been Sadegh Khalkhali. Khalkhali would go on to get the nickname "the Butcher of Kurdistan." He later became the parliamentary representative for Qom, and the individual responsible for the nomination of Ayatollah Khamenei to the position of Supreme leader after Khomeini's death.

Mehdi Ashough, another witness testifying during the first day of tribunals went through his time as an inmate of the prison formerly known as the UNESCO Cultural Centre. He was arrested on suspicion of sympathizing with the Mojahedin-e-Khalq organization. He went through the instances of "one minute" trials that would determine executions.

"The worst crime against humanity is to tell a person they're not alive. That they have no feelings," explained Ashough of the malice of officials running the Death Commissions.

Today, many of the executioners and officials responsible for these crimes are still thriving within the regime. Individuals such as Morteza Eshraghi, a notorious member of the Death Commission at Evin and Gohardasht Prisons are the current heads of Iran's Supreme Court.

A topic of discussion throughout much of the proceedings has been international inaction, especially by the United Nations Human Rights Council. The ultimate aim of these proceedings is to provide enough attention, and facts to aid in an official international recognition of the massacres. The President of Commission overseeing the tribunal, a former constitutional judge who transitioned South Africa out of Apartheid, Johann Christian Kriegler stated in the tribunals opening remarks that their ultimate aim was to "serve the people of Iran with honesty and dignity."



More than one tear was shed for these tragic experiences, and the lives lost. As witnesses of day one related their stories to the audience, there was a feeling of clarity. While those perpetrators of these crimes carry on without impunity within Iran, the international community has come one step closer to recognizing the tragedy of the Iranian people under the Islamic Republic of Iran.



Euronews, October 27 2012
Hague to judge post-Revolution killings in Iran

A tribunal on Iran's mass execution of an estimated 20,000 political prisoners after the country's 1979 Islamic Revolution is due to end today in The Hague.

Although it has no judicial authority, the aim is to force the United Nations to set up its own investigation and bring those responsible to justice.

One of the Tribunal's prosecutors, Payam Akhavan said a representative from Tehran had been asked to attend: "We did send official representation to the Islamic Republic, to invite it to defend itself, but we had no response."

Some of the testimonials given in evidence were harrowing. Witness Malakeh Mostafaei told what had happened to her family:

"Nine members of my family were killed: five brothers – four of them were executed. Another was killed in a conflict. The same thing happened to my husband and three cousins."

According to Amnesty International 4,500 teenagers were killed. Many of the perpetrators are said to be in positions of power in today's regime.

Sir Geoffrey Nice QC explained the value of the tribunal:

"If you have a good record of what happened, then it's much more difficult for people in the future to write politics on the basis of it not having happened; of abusing history and writing out from history things that are there."

Iran has acknowledged people were executed in its prisons after the Revolution but claims the killings were carried out legally according to international law.

Video Report Available here:

<http://www.euronews.com/2012/10/27/hague-to-judge-post-revolution-killings-in-iran/>



News.com.au, October 26 2012

Hague tribunal judges Iran killings

A TRIBUNAL set up by victims of political crimes committed after Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution has begun hearings in a bid to highlight killings ignored by international justice.

Top judges and lawyers are taking part in the tribunal, which has no judicial authority, to judge those responsible for killing thousands of political prisoners after Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini came to power.

The hope is that the tribunal, held in the library of the Peace Palace in The Hague, will force the United Nations to set up a commission of inquiry into the killings of more than 20,000 people that have gone unpunished for over 25 years.

"The world doesn't investigate what it doesn't want to investigate," said Geoffrey Nice, a member of the tribunal and former prosecutor at the UN's International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). "The most important thing is to leave a record." "What we want is to force the UN to set up an inquiry commission because once such a commission says 'there have been horrible crimes', they can't go back and they have to do something," he said. "But the (UN) Security Council, and especially Russia would veto that," he said.

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The Communication Group plc

<http://www.news.com.au/breaking-news/world/hague-tribunal-judges-iran-killings/story-e6frfkui-1226503541554#ixzz2AhzvGT5H>



Shahrazad News, October 23 2012

Second round of 'Iran tribunal' to be held in The Hague

Between October 25th and 27th the second round of the Iran Tribunal is to be held in the library of the International Court of Justice, in the Dutch city of The Hague. The symbolic tribunal is investigating the political crimes of the Islamic Republic, the 1980s massacres in particular. Over the first two days, fourteen witnesses, some of whom survived the atrocities, while others are relatives of the victims, will give evidence of to a group of Iranian and international human rights lawyers and organisations. On the third day the tribunal will give its ruling. As well as those who suffered at the time, seven international lawyers and judges plus a team of young academics are expected to attend.

The first round of the tribunal was held in June in London. On that occasion too, dozens of witnesses testified about the torture and execution of thousands of political prisoners by the Iranian regime during the purges of the 1980s. Shahrazad News' live broadcast of that event was followed by a large audience in Iran.

This is the first time a fact-finding opportunity has been provided for victims and their relatives, and as such is an important historic occasion. The Fact-Finding Commission has now been compiled, the full report of the first round of the tribunal. To view it, go to:

<http://www.irantribunal.com/Eng/PDF/Commission%20Report-p.pdf>

<http://www.1001nights.org/index.php?page=2&articleId=3347>

IranPressNews

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<http://www.iranpressnews.com/english/source/135203.html>

BEFORE IT'S NEWS[®]

Before its News, October 17 2012

Iran Massacre Survivors to Recall Horrors at The Hague Tribunal

The Islamic Republic of Iran has been invited to participate in the trial but has to date refused to engage with the Tribunal process

The second phase of the People's Court process by the Iran Tribunal will be held at the Peace Palace in The Hague between 25-27 October 2012.

The Iran Tribunal seeks to investigate the crimes committed by the Islamic Republic of Iran against the country's political prisoners during the 1980's, when between 5,000 and 30,000 Iranian citizens were tortured and executed under the power of Ayatollah Khomeini's Fatwa for holding beliefs that conflicted with those of the Iranian government. The Tribunal will see eight experienced human rights judges convene to hear firsthand accounts of the atrocities committed against Iranian citizens.

Witnesses will be travelling from across the Iranian Diaspora, which spans North America and Europe, to shed light on humanitarian crimes committed by the Islamic Republic. The precursor to the Tribunal was a Truth Commission held in London in June 2012, which documented and assembled witness statements and compiled a report. It concluded that "These violations of human rights were, devised, instigated and executed (or caused to be executed) by a single authority and as such the Islamic Republic of Iran is the only authority responsible for these acts."

This is the first hearing of its kind to address the crimes committed by a sitting government and will bring to the fore information that has been suppressed by the Islamic Republic of Iran for more than two decades. It will be an historic investigation into the crimes committed against the people of Iran.

The Truth Commission and the People's Court do not represent any state power and, therefore, cannot compel the accused to stand before the court. To date there has been no investigation into these crimes and no international pressure on Iran to launch such an investigation. In the absence of any formal accountability through the legal system in Iran, survivors and relatives of the massacred people have taken matters in their own hands.

The Iran Tribunal Campaign is a grass roots movement that has gained momentum, funding, and support over the last twenty five years. It seeks to bring recognition for the victims who were intellectuals, students, leftists, members of opposition parties and ethnic and religious minorities, whose crime was as innocuous as leaflet distribution but resulted in being sentenced to execution by the Death Commission. The prisoners killed were from across the political and religious spectrum.

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this Tribunal to fruition. Following the due process of the Tribunal many people will be eagerly awaiting the final ruling of the Tribunal in October.”

The Chief Prosecutor, Professor Payam Akhavan said; “This Tribunal is a seminal moment in establishing the historical truth about a decade of mass-atrocities that the Islamic Republic of Iran has suppressed for so long. It is a unique opportunity for the Iranian people to hold those in power accountable for past injustices in order to build a better future based on the rule of law. Instead of being punished, the perpetrators of these heinous crimes have been promoted to senior positions in Government; members of the Death Commission sit on the Iranian Supreme Court, in its Parliaments and in its Cabinets. Without speaking truth to power, without accountability for past crimes, it will be difficult to build a culture of human rights in Iran and to move beyond the present culture of impunity.”

2012-10-17 06:03:50

<http://beforeitsnews.com/media/2012/10/iran-massacre-survivors-to-recall-horrors-at-the-hague-tribunal-2447126.html>



Iranian, October 26 2012

Live stream of Testimonies in Haag Tribunal against IRI

Watch and listen to IRI and Islamist Crimes. Soon we will have tribunals to expose ALL of IRI's crimes during the past 34 years.

<http://www.iranian.com/main/news/2012/10/25/live-stream-iran-tribunal-den-haag-mass-executions-political-prisoner>

The Iranian, November 1 2012

Iran Tribunal delivered its interim judgement: Islamic Republic of Iran committed crimes against humanity!!



01-Nov-2012

After a harrowing three-day hearing at the Peace Palace in The Hague, the Iran Tribunal delivered its interim judgement on October 27th. According to the tribunal, which has no legal standing, the Islamic Republic of Iran committed crimes against humanity and gross violations of human rights against its citizens during “the bloody decade” of 1980s.

Democratic Islamic Republic is a biggest lie; Democracy is intrinsically not Islamic or Christian; Democracy is democracy! Dignity of man "I have rights as a man - when you take my rights away you take my humanity away!!" Dissent and freedom of expression are source of democracy, a nation that denies both denies democracy. Iran can be rightly termed as the cradle of civilization and of being a "Lawgiver"; it has a rich tradition of culture and diversity of thinking.

No prophet can claim the institution of dignity emanating from the source of his scriptures! Hence no Republic founded on 'any of the holy scriptures' can claim warrants to enforce human dignity ala Islam or Christianity. Human dignity is free of holy scriptures it is within us. When free expression is denied humanity is denied. Human dignity is not a 'God bestowed right' it is an innate right to respect and receive ethical treatment. It is an offshoot of Enlightenment-era concepts of inherent, inalienable rights.

The first 'Iranian rulers' were lawgivers and now contrast it to today and one see the 21st century Iran under clergy as the biggest violator of human rights. Cyrus the Great granted that right, and



literally figures like Rumi and Saadi have structured within the Iranian genre by saying: "The sons of Adam are limbs of one another Having been created of one essence." "When the calamity of time afflicts one limb, The other limbs cannot remain at rest." A great commanding and authoritative speech by a global champion of Human Right causes. It is perhaps the tragedy that "deranged ideologically motivated" leadership has wasted the histological traditions of Iran in less than three decades, the richness of thousands of years trampled in few years.

Look at this damning indictment of Khomienism: Islamic Republic of Iran has committed crimes against humanity and gross violations of human rights against its citizens during "the bloody decade" of 1980s. Its post-revolution decline from bastion and cradle of civilization to the lowest rung of civilized nation's ladder is scandalous and disgusting. To live in peace without coercion is an indispensable human right; terror campaigns violate the sacred trust of "live and let others live" that has been evolved over millenniums.

Law started in Iran in the beginnings of human history, however, this rich inheritance has been wretchedly shattered by the in-attendance clerical tyranny in Tehran. Although it is generally considered that the most ancient code of laws is understood by Western scholars to be the code of Hammurabi, an ancient king of Babylonia, who ruled about 2100 B.C. Babylonia, the first dignitaries to have rendered extraordinary service in framing and codifying laws was Prince Uruvakhshaya, the brother of the eternal idol Krsaspa (Garshasp) and the son of King Thrita, the vicar of medicine. They were the direct ancestry of Yima, the dazzling antediluvian monarch. This unquestionably demonstrates insistence of early Iranian rulers to codify law and provide justice to their subjects.

The other code known to civilisation popularly is the "Justinian code" Roman law that was promulgated by Justinian, the contemporary of Khosrow, the Great of Persia who was more popularly known as Anoshervan. The influences of Anoshervan on edicts of Justinian code are extraordinarily evident. Iran is far too sophisticated for that. But to see the violations in terms of human rights abuses originating from this great country is heartbreaking; particularly, a nation ingrained with the utterances of Cyrus the Great, who 2500 years ago said, "he would not reign over the people if they did not wish it" and declared that he would not force any person to change his religion or faith.

Rediscovery of "political Islam" in Shiite and Sunni worlds has led to the redefinition of our human social contract evolved over thousands of years through a process of survival of the best idea. The legacy of thousands of years' human richness has been sacrificed on the altar of holy interpretations of how we should administer our life; unfortunately these interpretations are led by the likes of Khomeini. Ideologically provoked "terrorism" has plunged a dagger into the heart of our social contract, that of basic respect of human life. It provides, through its ill-founded medieval judgement and jurisprudence, the "right to kill innocent" without hearing.

With new ideological jurisprudence in practice, we are living in a two-tiered world of justice, one where justice demands evidence before someone is convicted, the other, where convictions are handed by 21st century's new inquisitors, those who are quick to dispense justice and are able to craft and interpret the worst of atrocities in the name of "moral equivalence and ideological justifications."



5. Blogs



**UNPO News, October 31 2012
Ahwazi: Testimony At Hague Tribunal**

Ahwazi Arab Jalil Sharhani spoke at a Hague Tribunal on the mass killings of political prisoners in Iran.

Below is an article published by Ahwaz News Agency:

Ahwazi Arab refugee Jalil Sharhani spoke of the massacre of 40 members of his family at a Hague tribunal on Iran's mass killings of political prisoners.

Sharhani told the court that his 65-year-old father was a simple farmer, but was arrested and executed along with 16 other close relatives during the violent mass purges under Ayatollah Khomeini. A further 24 distant relatives were also killed.

He said: "The executions were carried out because the persecuted Ahwazi Arabs of the oil-rich Al-Ahwaz region demanded their basic ethnic rights. I have submitted evidence to the court that the executions were brutal and carried out without a trial. Their corpses were thrown into fields only an hour after their arrests."

The Iran Tribunal campaign was established in October 2007 in response to a call by families of the political prisoners who were murdered and massacred in the prisons of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the 1980s and the survivors of this human tragedy. Under a fatwa by Khomeini, all who were in opposition to the regime were labelled apostates and put to death. Up to 30,000 people were killed in the purges.

Foreign Policy Association



Foreign Policy Association, October 17 2012

Iran Massacre Survivors to Recall Horrors at The Hague Tribunal

The Islamic Republic of Iran has been invited to participate in the trial but has to date refused to engage with the Tribunal process

The second phase of the People's Court process by the Iran Tribunal will be held at the Peace Palace in The Hague between 25-27 October 2012.

The Iran Tribunal seeks to investigate the crimes committed by the Islamic Republic of Iran against the country's political prisoners during the 1980s, when between 5,000 and 30,000 Iranian citizens were tortured and executed under the power of Ayatollah Khomeini's fatwa for holding beliefs that conflicted with those of the Iranian government. The Tribunal will see eight experienced human rights judges convene to hear firsthand accounts of the atrocities committed against Iranian citizens.

Witnesses will be travelling from across the Iranian Diaspora, which spans North America and Europe, to shed light on humanitarian crimes committed by the Islamic Republic. The precursor to the Tribunal was a Truth Commission held in London in June 2012, which documented and assembled witness statements and compiled a report. It concluded that "These violations of human rights were, devised, instigated and executed (or caused to be executed) by a single authority and as such the Islamic Republic of Iran is the only authority responsible for these acts."

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<http://foreignpolicyblogs.com/2012/10/17/iran-massacre-survivors-to-recall-horrors-at-hague-tribunal/>



Politikus, October 27 2012

Iran Tribunal documents execution of 20,000 political prisoners

The final sessions of the Iran Tribunal investigation into the execution of 20,000 political prisoners in the 1980s has opened in The Hague.

The charges against Iran include crimes against humanity.

In one very bloody seven month period, from August 1988 to February 1989, at least 4,500 people, some of them women and teenagers, were executed, according to Amnesty International. This works out at an average execution rate of one person almost every hour for over 200 days.

The current regime of President Ahmadinejad refuses to acknowledge these mass killings or provide any redress.

The Iran Tribunal, inaugurated in 2007, comprises leading judges and lawyers from around the world, including former prosecutors at the International Criminal Court (ICC) and at the special tribunals on Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia.

British legal experts on the tribunal's legal steering committee include Prof John Cooper QC and Sir Geoffrey Nice, Gresham professor of law and a former prosecutor at the ICC.

The tribunal was set up after past attempts to get the United Nations to investigate the killings were blocked by Iran's allies in the Human Rights Council.

Most of the people executed were democrats, secularists, liberals, students and left-wingers. They were shot by firing squads or hanged from cranes, usually after prolonged torture and unfair, summary trials. Some women were raped before their execution. The victims were buried in mass graves. Many of the bodies have never been recovered.

The previous session of the tribunal, the Truth Commission in June 2012, heard witness testimonies of floggings, burnings, slashings, nerve constriction, suspension from ceilings and mock executions. The sexual abuse of detainees was commonplace. Prisoners were often kept in solitary confinement in tiny two-square metre cells; and subjected to sleep deprivation and starvation rations. Many were stripped naked and exposed to prolonged extreme heat or cold. Children as young as 11 years old were among those tortured and hanged.

A member of the Iran Tribunal, Professor Payam Akhavan, observed:

"It (the tribunal) is a unique opportunity for the Iranian people to hold those in power accountable for past injustices to build a better future based on the rule of law.

"Instead of being punished, the perpetrators of these heinous crimes have been promoted to senior positions in government; members of the Death Commission sit on the Iranian Supreme Court, in its

parliaments and in its Cabinets....without accountability for past crimes, it will be difficult to build a culture of human rights in Iran and to move beyond the present culture of impunity,” he said.

Unlike the massacres in apartheid South Africa, Darfur, Srebrenica and General Pinochet’s Chile, there has never been any international outrage at the mass killings in Iran. The victims and their loved ones have never had any opportunity for justice and legal redress.

This tribunal is the first time the full scale of the executions and the suffering of the victims has been subjected to authoritative judicial investigation and documentation. For the loved ones of those who were murdered, documenting these horrendous crimes is the first step towards exposing the perpetrators and hopefully one day bringing them to justice.

Repression continues in Iran today, with frequent arbitrary arrests, sham trials, torture, forced confessions and the incarceration and execution of political prisoners.

Since the fraudulent presidential elections in 2009, Amnesty International has documented an intensifying crack down by the Tehran regime. Its alarming report, published this year, is entitled: We Are Ordered To Crush You: Expanding Repression of Dissent in Iran.

Within the last week, three campaigners from the persecuted Baluch ethnic minority community have been hanged, after unfair trials and confessions extracted under torture.

In June, four Ahwazi Arab men, members of another victimised minority nationality, were executed for “enmity against God and corruption on earth.” Their families say they were tortured into confessing to the killing of a law enforcement official.

A further nine Arab political prisoners are on death row, awaiting execution. Already seven Arab activists have been killed extra-judicially under torture this year.

The UN special rapporteur on human rights in Iran, Ahmad Shaheed, a former foreign minister of the Maldives, this week presented a report that warned of worsening discrimination against religious and ethnic minorities, women and gay people.

He noted that there had been more than 300 officially reported executions in the first eight months of this year but that the real figure is probably much higher because Iran is now less open about the number of people it puts to death.

Shaheed said that 670 people were executed in 2011, making Iran the country with the world’s highest per capita use of the death penalty.

Aside from executions, the Iranian regime stands accused of persecuting political and ethnic dissidents, Sunni Muslims and other religious minorities, trade unionists, students, journalists, lawyers, women’s rights activists and LGBT people.

http://www.politicus.org.uk/news/iran-tribunal-documents-execution-of-20000-political-prisoners_292



The Justice Gap, October 23, 2012

Iran Tribunal: Shining Light On The Shortcomings Of International Justice

This week an independent tribunal in The Hague will examine the massacre by the Ayatollah Khomeini's regime of some 20 to 30,000 political prisoners, men and women, in Iran in the 1980s, writes Matt Evans. About 4,500 people, many of them teenagers and from leftwing groups, died in the summer of 1988 alone, according to Amnesty International. The killings have been largely ignored by the west, unlike the mass killings perpetrated in places like Srebrenica, Rwanda, or the Chile of Pinochet.

You can find out more about the Iran Tribunal [HERE](#). The photo below comes from a series from the tribunal site of the Khavaran cemetery and family members of political prisoners executed during the mass executions – for more background see [HERE](#).

The main photo is of the International Criminal Court by Josef Stuefer.

The steering committee includes the barrister (and chair) John Cooper QC; Sir Geoffrey Nice QC, former prosecutor of the International Criminal Court; Richard Falk, Professor of International law, UN Special Rapporteur on Palestinian human rights; and Payam Akhavan, Professor of International Law, the first Legal Advisor to the Prosecutor's Office of the International Criminal Tribunals and others (see [HERE](#)).

You can read the report of an Inquiry Conducted by Geoffrey Robertson QC The Massacre of Political Prisoners in Iran, 1988 [HERE](#) (PDF).



In late July 1988, as the war with Iraq was ending in an exhausted and bloody stalemate, prisons in Iran and crammed with government opponents, went into lockdown. A visiting delegation from the Khomeini regime arrived at the prison where many of the prisoners were supporters of the Mojahedin Khalq Organisation (MKO). The MKO were Marxist in their politics, and Islamic in their

theology. Although the MKO had fought the Shah and supported the revolution that brought Ayatollah Khomeini to power, they had later become disillusioned with the subsequent theocratic state and sought to support democracy. Many had been in prison since 1981, merely for taking part in street protests or the possession of 'political' reading material.

No mercy

The visiting delegation set about the task in hand – each individual prisoner was paraded before it and asked a simple question which would, though they did not know it at the time, determine whether they lived or died. They were asked to renounce the MKO and accept the Islamic Republic as envisaged by Khomeini. An answer that evinced any continuing affiliation with the MKO led to their being hung en masse from cranes, in an assembly hall in the prison, or executed by firing squad. Their bodies were then doused with disinfectant and buried in mass graves. There were no trials, no appeals, and no mercy.

The regime did not stop at the extermination of Mojahedin supporters. The killings were suspended for a fortnight's religious holiday, but began again when the 'Death Committee' (as prisoners would later call the delegation) summoned members of other left wing groups whose ideology was regarded as incompatible with the theocratic state. This time there was something approaching a kind of trial and some hope of survival. However a second wave of executions quickly began, lasting several months. Mass executions were routine, with torture (lashes, beatings on the soles of the feet with electric cable) as an alternative sentence. The families were not informed about the fate of their children or close relatives for several months afterwards. When they were eventually told they were presented with a small plastic bag of possessions. Some were able to collect the bodies of their relatives and to mourn. However for many families no information at all was given about where their relatives might be buried, a situation that continues to this day.

The killings were genocide in nature. The victims were selected on religious criteria given that after the fatwa in 1988 anybody who opposed the regime, such as the Mojahedin, were deemed to be apostates – and should be killed.

At the time a few newspapers like the Financial Times had started to report on a drip feed of information around 'political executions' taking place in Iran – and in September – Amnesty International had put out an Urgent Action telegram expressing concern that 'hundreds of political prisoners may have been executed'.

Importantly the UN had also become aware of the allegations around mistreatment and summary executions. The Human Rights Commission's Special Representative for Iran, the El-Salvador Professor Reynaldo Pohl reported that there was credible information that 860 bodies had been dumped in mass graves in Tehran. However there seemed no conception of either the numbers of political prisoners held in Iran or the true scale of the massacres that were taking place. There was also little motivation or urgency on behalf of the UN or its officials to investigate. This torpor continued during the massacres and afterwards. Pohl eventually provided evidence of mass murder

to the UN General Assembly on 13 October 1988. However in his communiqués with Iran he was still asking the Khomeini regime to investigate the abuses themselves and, with alarming naivety, seemed to believe they would eventually do so.

Justice gaps

In 2007 the UN's courts and special tribunals was founded as no official judicial body would investigate complaints against Iran. The tribunal is a cross between a people's truth commission and a formal legal indictment. The first stage of hearings took place in London this summer hearing with 75 witnesses, many surviving detainees, giving evidence – some in person, others via video. The Iranian government has declined an invitation to attend.

The tribunal will I hope now consider the full culpability of Iran and the individuals involved in terms of its breaches of jus cogens rules of international law (such as the right to life). So far as the state of Iran is concerned, breaches of its treaty and customary law responsibilities will have no criminal consequences given states cannot be subject to penal sanction. Whilst any breaches of international law might technically give rise to reparation claims the obvious difficulty will come in identifying a forum in which these claims could ever be pursued: the International Court of Justice for instance might be activated by a UN organ or by a member state, but Iran would refuse to cede jurisdiction to it.

It is these gaps in the idea of 'international justice' that, in addition to the abject failure of the international community to respond to or prevent massacres which they knew were going on, are likely to be uncomfortably spotlighted by the tribunal proceedings.

There is a general lack of coherence in how the international crime and punishment system operates, not least the highly selective and politicized nature of which conflicts are subject to judicial intervention. The elephant in the room as far as effective international enforcement and sanctions are concerned is, of course, the status of the International Criminal Court. In theory this is the means by which individuals directly connected and responsible for the atrocities in Iran might be brought to account. However it has only been ratified by 121 of approximately 200 countries in the world. Iran unsurprisingly is not a member but then neither are the US, Russia or China – though the US whilst not content for its own citizens to be brought before the court – is happy to send citizens of other non-ratifying countries like Sudan or Libya to the court for trial through security council resolutions.

The tribunal may ultimately have little power or jurisdiction. However I hope that it will at the very least bring greater awareness of the scale of the atrocities committed in Iran 24 years ago – and just maybe – spark a debate about the commitment of the international community in preventing such abuses in the future and the role of international law in achieving that aim.



About the Iran Tribunal campaign

The tribunal was founded in 2007. Families and survivors came together to form the Iran Tribunal modeled on the Russell Tribunal set up by British philosopher Bertrand Russell and Jean-Paul Sartre in 1966 to examine American intervention in Vietnam. There were subsequent Russell Tribunals on Chile, Iraq and Argentina.

Like the earlier tribunals, the Iran Tribunal won't have any legal status, but will act as a tribunal of conscience to deal with violations of international law that have not been recognized nor dealt with by existing international jurisdictions.

After five years of fundraising, and assembling a team of lawyers, the Iran Tribunal has divided its work into two parts – truth commission and tribunal.

The truth commission, during which the court heard and examined oral and written evidence from dozens of witnesses, was held at Amnesty International's headquarters in London on June 18-22.

The tribunal will meet this week (on October 25-27) in The Hague to issue a verdict.



Why We Protest, October 27 2012 **Hague tribunal reviews 1988 massacre in Iran**

THE HAGUE (AFP) — A tribunal set up by victims of political crimes committed in the wake of Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution began hearings Thursday in a bid to highlight killings ignored by international justice.

Top judges and lawyers are taking part in the tribunal, which has no judicial authority, to judge those responsible for killing thousands of political prisoners after Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini came to power.

The hope is that the tribunal, held in the library of the Peace Palace in The Hague, will force the United Nations to set up a commission of enquiry into the killings of over 20,000 people that have gone unpunished for over 25 years.

"The world doesn't investigate what it doesn't want to investigate," said Geoffrey Nice, a member of the tribunal and former prosecutor at the UN's International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

"The most important thing is to leave a record." "What we want is to force the UN to set up an enquiry commission because once such a commission says 'there have been horrible crimes', they can't go back and they have to do something," he said. "But the (UN) Security Council, and especially Russia would veto that," he said.

The tribunal's prosecutor, Payam Akhavan, who also worked for the ICTY, said more than 20,000 political prisoners — men, women and children — were executed in Iranian prisons in the 1980s after the Islamic Revolution. "In 1988, more than 5,000 apolitical prisoners were executed in a short time throughout Iran," Akhavan said. "We say it's Iran's Srebrenica (the massacre of almost 8,000 Bosnians in 1995), but here, no one investigates even though families and victims still suffer and cannot forget what happened, even after that time."

Mehdi Ashough was among the first witnesses to testify on Thursday, recounting the time he spent in Iranian cells between 1981 and 1983. "There were 60 different forms of torture, they used everything they could think of to torture us," Ashough said, relating how he witnessed from his cell 44 people, including a 15-year-old boy, being executed on one night in 1981.

The 1979 revolution toppled the monarchy of shah Mohammad Reza, a key US ally in the region, and set up a fundamentalist Islamic republic with little tolerance for opponents.

The tribunal says it was set up through donations from relatives of victims or survivors who live today in exile. The current Iranian regime has been invited to attend the hearings but declined, the tribunal said.



Iran acknowledges people were executed in its prisons after the Islamic Revolution but says the killings were carried out legally in the eyes of international law. Hearings are to last until Saturday, with 19 witnesses to testify before the judges deliver their unenforceable verdict on Saturday.

<https://whyweprotest.net/community/threads/hague-tribunal-reviews-1988-massacre-in-iran.106092/>



Variant Perception October 17th, 2012
Iran Massacre Survivors to Recall Horrors at The Hague Tribunal

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Watching the Law

Watching the Law, October 30 2012

The Iran Tribunal - The Hague 25-27 October 2012

A post on The Justice [] Gap blog preceded an independent tribunal hearing in The Hague (held 25th - 27th October) which examined the massacre by the Ayatollah Khomeini's regime of some 20 to 30,000 political prisoners, men and women, in Iran in the 1980s. About 4,500 people, many of them teenagers and from leftwing groups, died in the summer of 1988 alone, according to Amnesty International. The killings have been largely ignored by the west, unlike the mass killings perpetrated in places like Srebrenica, Rwanda, or the Chile of Pinochet. The Islamic Republic of Iran was invited to participate in the hearing but has to date refused to engage with the Tribunal process.

See the Tribunal's Press Release of 15th October.

The Tribunal follows on from a Truth Commission process which issued a report in September 2012. The report is 357 pages and is exceptionally harrowing. The report provides in detail the manner of arrest, the brutal tortures that were carried out by the regime in the Iranian prisons and mass executions between 1981 and 1988. The report further investigates the disastrous impact of these brutalities on the families of the victims and the survivors of the torture and imprisonment.

The Tribunal is to hand down a verdict in November - see Payvand Iran News 27th October 2012 - Iran Tribunal Closing Statement at The Hague

In the closing statement John Cooper QC said: "We have heard the accounts of many who had crimes committed against them by the Islamic Republic of Iran. The experienced panel of judges will now adjourn to consider the wealth of information that witnesses have provided about their experiences of the Iranian prisons and the treatment of political as well as religious and ethnic minority prisoners between 1980 - 1988. It is a real credit to the wives, sisters, and mothers of those who were executed and victims of atrocities who have persevered for twenty five years to have their voices heard in a court for the first time. The Tribunal will be issuing its verdict on the Islamic Republic of Iran and the crimes against humanity that have been described here shortly."