

The Sunday Telegraph

**Khomeini fatwa
'led to killing of 30,000 in Iran'**

By Christina Lamb, Diplomatic Correspondent

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CHILDREN as young as 13 were hanged from cranes, six at a time, in a barbaric two-month purge of Iran's prisons on the direct orders of Ayatollah Khomeini, according to a new book by his former deputy.

More than 30,000 political prisoners were executed in the 1988 massacre - a far larger number than previously suspected. Secret documents smuggled out of Iran reveal that, because of the large numbers of necks to be broken, prisoners were loaded onto forklift trucks in groups of six and hanged from cranes in half-hourly intervals.

Gruesome details are contained in the memoirs of Grand Ayatollah Hossein-Ali Montazeri, The Memoirs of Grand Ayatollah Hossein Ali Montazeri, one of the founders of the Islamic regime. He was once considered Khomeini's anointed successor, but was deposed for his outspokenness, and is now under house arrest in the holy city of Qom.

Published privately last month after attempts by the regime to suppress it, the revelations have prompted demands from Iranian exiles for those involved to be tried for crimes against humanity. The most damning of the letters and documents published in the book is Khomeini's fatwa decree calling for all Mojahedin (as opponents of the Iranian regime are known) to be killed....

NEW REVELATION

IRAN

1988 MASSACRE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS

IN THE SUMMER OF 1988

30,000 EXECUTED



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IRAN: 1988 MASSACRE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS

In the summer of 1988, the Iranian regime summarily and extra-judicially executed tens of thousands of political prisoners held in jails across Iran. The massacre was carried out on the basis of a fatwa by the regime's then-Supreme Leader Ruhollah Khomeini.

The facts:

- More than 30,000 political prisoners were massacred in Iran in the summer of 1988.
- The massacre was carried out on the basis of a fatwa by Khomeini.
- The vast majority of the victims were activists of the opposition PMOI (MEK).
- A Death Committee approved all the death sentences.
- Mostafa Pour-Mohammadi, a member of the Death Committee, is today Hassan Rouhani's Justice Minister.
- The perpetrators of the 1988 massacre have never been brought to justice.
- On August 9, 2016, an audio tape was published for the first time of Khomeini's former heir acknowledging that massacre took place and had been ordered at the highest levels.



Most of the massacred were university students and high school seniors, significant numbers were women

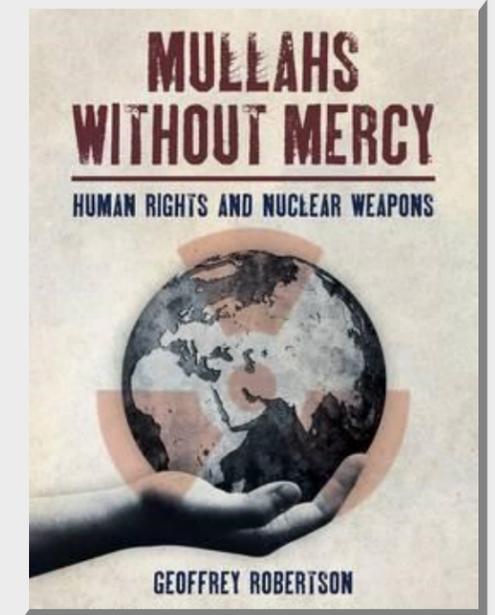
Geoffrey Robertson:

The delegation had one question for these young men and women, most of them detained since 1981, merely for taking part in street protests or possession of political reading material, and although they didn't know it, on their answer their life would depend. Those who by their answer by evidence any continuing affiliation with the MEK were blindfolded and ordered straight to the gallows. They were hung from cranes 4 at a time, or in groups of 6, from ropes hanging from the front of the stage of the assembly hall, some were taken to army barracks at night, and then shot by firing squad. Their bodies were doused with disinfectant, packed in refrigerator trucks and buried at night in mass graves.

Months later their families, desperate for information about their children, would be handed a plastic bag with their few possessions, they would be refused any information about the location of the graves, and ordered never to mourn them in public. By mid-August 1988 thousands of prisoners had been killed in this manner by the state. Without trial, without appeal and utterly without mercy.

So at the end of the day you have the worst crime in modern history. And what has happened, why are all those people who are still prominent in the Iranian regime, the minister of justice was one of the death committee judges, Pour Mohammadi, Ardebili, Nayyeri. They're all in high positions. They are 50-60 people, who were deeply involved in the bloody slaughter of the innocent prisoners, who are now in control of the state. Their supreme leader was president at the time, he gave the orders. He is a mass murderer. Rouhani was an assistant of Rafsanjani who was himself deeply involved.

What happened in 1988 was a crime against humanity. Crimes against humanity are of a special hideousness. They cannot be forgotten and they cannot be forgiven. There is a duty by the world community, represented by the United Nations and Security Council to set up an international tribunal, like the one in Sierra Leone, that I was president of, To investigate and punish those who are guilty of the 1988 prison massacres.



In Memory of 30,000 Political Prisoners Massacred in Iran in 1988.
Rally Against Executions in Iran - The United Nations Plaza, September 20, 2016

Geoffrey Robertson: what happened in 1988 was a crime against humanity

New York, United Nations, on Tuesday September 20, 2016 Geoffrey Robertson renowned human rights barrister who Chaired the UN Sierra Leone Genocide investigation, spoke at an event organized by the Organization of Iranian American Communities in the U.S., in which thousands of Iranian-Americans strongly criticized the visit to the UN by the Iranian regime's president Hassan Rouhani and also urged the UN Security Council to scrutinize the shocking massacre of 30,000 political prisoners in Iran in 1988, seen as one of the biggest human carnages since World War II.



Geoffrey Robertson, QC:

The killing of prisoners is the worst of all war crimes, it has been for hundreds of years. The prisoner is utterly at the mercy of the state. There have been three since the second world war. The worst came in 1988 when thousands of upon thousands of prisoners who were in the first place members of the MEK, then they came to the atheists, for the communists, for the liberals. People who were in prison for their politics, many of them had served their sentence, they'd been arrested in 1981 and were being held in prison although they finished their sentence, were killed, monstrosly, and this is why, this dreadful act has never been punished. Has never even been investigated apart from an investigation that I did , and my report that was the conclusion on the facts was published as a book, Mullahs without Mercy.

Late in July 1988 as the war with Iraq was ending, prisons in Iran that were crammed with opponents suddenly went into lockdown. All family visits were canceled, television and radios switched off. Prisoners were kept in their cells not allowed exercise or trips to the hospitals. The only permitted visitation was from a delegation, turbaned and bearded, which came in black government BMW's a religious judge, a public prosecutor, and an intelligence chief.



New Revelation:

The Montazeri's Tape



On August 9, 2016, relatives of Hossein-Ali Montazeri, Khomeini's former heir, published a shocking audio tape in which Montazeri [can be heard telling](#) a meeting of members of the "Death Committee" 28 years ago (August 15, 1988) that they are carrying out a crime against humanity. The Montazeri tape revealed new information about the scope and breadth of the massacre of political prisoners at the time. It has sent shockwaves in Iran and in particular among the regime's

officials who had for more than two decades attempted to impose an absolute silence on the massacre.

The clip also showed that the Iranian regime's leaders who held positions of power since the beginning of the regime's establishment must face justice for committing one of the most horrific crimes against humanity.

In the audio tape, Hossein-Ali Montazeri, who was subsequently dismissed as the heir by Khomeini, for these very remarks, tells members of the "death commission", Hossein-Ali Nayyeri, the regime's sharia judge, Morteza Eshraqi, the regime's prosecutor, Ebrahim Raeesi, deputy prosecutor, and Mostafa Pourmohammadi, representative of the Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS),

"The greatest crime committed during the reign of the Islamic Republic, for which history will condemn us, has been committed by you. Your names will in the future be etched in the annals of history as criminals." He adds, "Executing these people while there have been no new activities (by the prisoners) means that ... the entire judicial system has been at fault."

Khomeini's heir protests rash of executions in 1988 massacre

The haste to execute was so abhorrent that some of Khomeini's closest confidantes, most notably, Hossein Ali Montazeri, Khomeini's heir had doubts and protested it. In letters to Khomeini, Montazeri urged for some leniency and slowing down. But Khomeini ordered there should be mercy for no one, including teenagers. He said pregnant women should not be spared or have the chance to give birth to their child and should be executed immediately.

In December 2000, Montazeri published his memoirs. The book revealed shocking documents on the atrocities committed by the clerical regime, none as horrendous as the massacre of 30,000 political prisoners in 1988 on the orders of Khomeini.

Montazeri's book was not the first document informing the world of this massacre. News of the carnage had already begun to trickle through the iron curtain of censorship imposed by the mullahs to ensure a complete blackout on their crime.

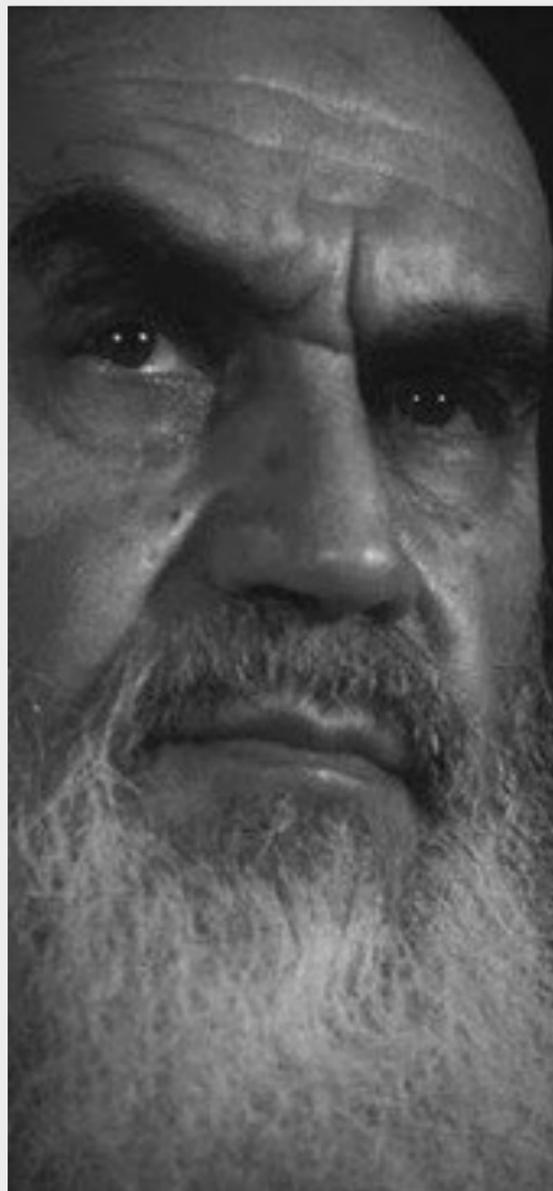
Executions Began with Khomeini's "Death Decree"

In the final phases of the Iran-Iraq war, Khomeini who felt that defeat was imminent, decided to take his revenge on the political prisoners. He issued fatwas (religious decrees) ordering the execution of anyone who had not "repented" and who was not willing to collaborate entirely with the regime.

The massacres began, and everyday hundreds of political prisoners were hanged and their corpses were buried hurriedly in unmarked, mass graves all over major cities, in particular Tehran.

Khomeini's "Death Decree" for mass executions of Iranian political prisoners in 1988

The following is the full translation of Khomeini's fatwa ordering the 1988 massacre in Iran:



In the Name of God,
the Compassionate, the Merciful,

As the treacherous *Monafeqin* [Mojahedin] do not believe in Islam and what they say is out of deception and hypocrisy, and as their leaders have confessed that they have become renegades, and as they are waging war on God, and as they are engaging in classical warfare in the western, the northern and the southern fronts, and as they are collaborating with the Baathist Party of Iraq and spying for Saddam against our Muslim nation, and as they are tied to the World Arrogance, and in light of their cowardly blows to the Islamic Republic since its inception, it is decreed that those who are in prisons throughout the country and remain steadfast in their support for the *Monafeqin* [Mojahedin], are waging war on God and are condemned to execution.

The task of implementing the decree in Tehran is entrusted to Hojjatol-Islam Nayyeri, the religious judge, Mr. Eshraqi, the Tehran prosecutor, and a representative of the Intelligence Ministry. Even though a unanimous decision is better, the view of a majority of the three must prevail. In prisons in the provinces, the views of a majority of a trio consisting of the religious judge, the revolutionary prosecutor, and the Intelligence Ministry representative must be obeyed. It is naive to show mercy to those who wage war on God. The decisive way in which Islam treats the enemies of God is among the unquestionable tenets of the Islamic regime. I hope that with your revolutionary rage and vengeance toward the enemies of Islam, you would achieve the satisfaction of the Almighty God. Those who are making the decisions must not hesitate, nor show any doubt or be concerned with details. They must try to be "most ferocious against infidels." To have doubts about the judicial matters of revolutionary Islam is to ignore the pure blood of martyrs.

Ruhollah Moussavi Khomeini

Justice not yet served

The massacre of 1988 remains to be one of the darkest stains on the recent history of mankind, as one of the least exposed and discussed. Some human rights experts have described it as the greatest crime against humanity in the 20th Century following World War II that has gone unpunished.

It is the darkest irony of this very dark episode, that of all its human rights violations the Iranian regime has been most successful at keeping the 1988 killings a secret from the international community and even from many Iranians. By now, virtually everyone knows of the reign of terror that immediately followed the Islamic Revolution, the Iranian government's assassination campaign abroad, and the "Chain Murders" that targeted opposition intellectuals and activists in the late 1990s. Tragically, however, there is very little public awareness of the 1988 executions.

Not only has there been no prosecution of the criminals who orchestrated and carried out that summer's gruesome murders, but the regime continues to deny that they even occurred. The Iranian regime continues to deny the 1988 elimination of opposition prisoners. None of the perpetrators or masterminds have been brought to justice and none of the regime's senior officials including the current Supreme leader, Ali Khamenei, have been held accountable.

The pervasive silence of the past 28 years should be shattered. The UN should launch an independent investigation into one of the most hideous crimes against humanity after the Second World War.

**Member of Death Committee in 1988, and
current Justice Minister in Rouhani's Cabinet,
Pour Mohammadi:**

"I am proud of the executions..."



Five members of the "Death Commission"

Khomeini required total conformity from the regime's officials

All officials of the regime at the time had to conform fully to this massacre or they would be sacked or deposed. Ayatollah Montazeri, who protested the massacre, fell from grace and was sacked by Khomeini in March 1989. Montazeri's memoirs in December 2000 and its shocking enclosures exposed the horrendous scale of the massacre. What gave weight to the revelations is that they were made by a man who was at the time of the executions the officially ordained successor to Khomeini and the second highest authority in Iran. Yet when it came to massacring political prisoners, Khomeini showed no mercy to slightest non-conformity even by Montazeri.

Role of Hassan Rouhani in 1988 massacre of political prisoners

Hassan Rouhani was Deputy Commander-in-chief of the regime's armed forces at the time. Furthermore, since 1982 he was a member of the regime's Supreme Defense Council and a member of the Central Council of the War Logistics Headquarters.

In those positions, he was fully cognizant of this hideous crime and obviously was in full conformity.

This shows that the notion that Rouhani is a "moderate" and "reform minded" is absolutely preposterous and baseless. Actually he, like all other senior officials of the regime, is a culprit of this hideous crime.



Supreme leader Khamenei, Was the president at the time of the 1988 massacre of 30,000 political prisoners in Iran.

President Rouhani was deputy Commander-in-Chief of Armed Forces of Iran during the massacre. Under his presidency, Iran's executions are the highest since 1988.

"Death Committee"

Khomeini assigned an "Amnesty Commission" for prisons. In reality it was a "Death Committee" comprised of the three individuals: A representative of the Ministry of Intelligence, a religious judge and a prosecutor. The final decision rested with the Intelligence Ministry official. They held a trial for a few minutes that resembled more of an integration session. The questions were focused on whether the inmate continued to have any allegiances to the PMOI (MEK). The PMOI prisoners made up more than 90 percent of those taken before the "Death Commission."

If the prisoners were not willing to collaborate totally with the regime against the PMOI, it was viewed as a sign of sympathy to the organization and the sentence was immediate execution. The task of the Death Commission was to determine whether a prisoner was a so-called "Enemy of God" or not. In the case of Mojahedin prisoners, that determination was often made after only a single question about their party affiliation. Those who said "Mojahedin" rather than the derogatory "Monafeqin" were sent to be hanged.





Amnesty International:

In 2008, twenty years after the massacre Amnesty International "renewed its call for those responsible for the 'prison massacre' to be held accountable. There should be no impunity for such gross human rights violations, regardless of when they were committed."



Amnesty added: "Those responsible for the killings - one of the worst abuses to be committed in Iran - should be prosecuted and tried before a regularly and legally constituted court and with all necessary procedural guarantees, in accordance with international fair trial standards."



A site of a mass grave for some of the victims of the 1988 massacre of political prisoners in Iran



Iran still seeks to erase the "1988 prison massacre" from memories, 25 years on

29 August 2013