

After a previous abortive coup attempt against Rawls last November.

— Reuter

Lebanese Civil Defence rescuers prepare to carry the mutilated body of a man killed while driving a booby-trapped car. —AP laserphoto

10 women Baha'is hanged

LONDON, Sun. — Sixteen Baha'i sect members condemned to death in Iran on espionage charges have been executed in secret, a sect official said here today.

They included 10 women who were hanged last night in prison at Shiraz, Baha'i spokeswoman Mary Hardy told Reuters. She added that six men were executed the previous night.

The 16 belonged to a group of 22 Baha'is for whom President Reagan last month made a plea for clemency after learning that they had been sentenced to death.

Hardy said more than

130 Baha'is, members of a 19th Century offshoot of Shi'ite sect regarded by all Muslims as heretical, had been killed since the Iranian revolution began.

"Our information has come from inside Iran," said Hardy, who is national secretary of the British Baha'is.

She said the 16 had "refused to recant their Baha'i faith despite being beaten and tortured."

Iranian leader Ayatollah Khomeini was quoted as saying Baha'ism was not a religion but a Washington-backed political party.

The movement is estimated to have 300,000 followers in Iran and has an

international headquarters in Israel.

Baha'is believe the founder of their religion 'Al Baha' was "God."

Hardy's account conflicted with an official statement issued by the Baha'is spokesman in New York, Gerald Knight, who said the executions took place last Thursday.

Knight was talking to reporters at the Baha'is International Community Organisation in New York yesterday.

At least 4,000 executions of anti-government activists, drug dealers, prostitutes and others have occurred in Iran since the revolution. — Reuter, AP

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