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## Ahmadinejad Says West Behind Iran Unrest

TEHRAN (Reuters) -- The West must be held to account for stoking Iran's postelection unrest, President Mahmud Ahmadinejad said, as the third mass trial got under way of demonstrators accused of trying to overthrow clerical rule.

The June 12 vote has plunged Iran into its biggest internal crisis since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, exposing deepening divisions within its ruling elite and also further straining relations with Western governments.

Iran accuses the United States, and Britain in particular, of inciting postelection protests in an attempt to topple the clerical establishment. They deny the charge.

Ahmadinejad, sworn in on August 5 for a second four-year term, said the West should be held accountable.

"This time you clearly interfered in Iran's domestic affairs and you thought you would be able to harm the Islamic nation," the official IRNA news agency quoted him as saying on August 16.

"You should be held accountable for your actions but we know very well the fuss you created in the world is not a sign of your authority but rather it is a sign of your weakness and downfall," Ahmadinejad said.

Tehran and the West are already at odds over Tehran's nuclear work, which Washington fears is aimed at making bombs but which Iran, the world's fifth-biggest oil-producer, says is for peaceful electricity generation.

At the August 16 trial, no prominent moderate politicians were among the 28 accused named by Fars news agency. Iranian media showed pictures of some of them sitting in a courtroom wearing light-colored prison clothes.

Iran earlier this month held two trials for more than 100 moderates, including senior politicians, for various charges including acting against national security which is punishable by death under Iran's Islamic law.

French teaching assistant Clotilde Reiss and two Iranians working for the British and French embassies in Tehran were among those tried on August 8.

The West and human rights groups have condemned the trials.

### 'Green Path Of Hope'

The indictment read in court on August 16 accused some of the detainees of "moving towards overthrowing the Islamic establishment, taking part in illegal protests and using hand-made bombs and grenades in protests," IRNA reported.

"The detainees' confessions reveal that this plot had been planned years ago and the recent election was only an excuse to carry it out," it said, according to IRNA.

After the indictment was read, footage of street protests and riots were shown in court, media said.

Moderate defeated presidential candidates Mir Hossein Musavi and Mehdi Karrubi say the election was rigged to secure the reelection of Ahmadinejad, a firebrand conservative.

The authorities deny the charge, saying it was the "healthiest" vote Iran has had in the past three decades.

Analysts see the mass trials as an attempt by the authorities to uproot the moderate opposition and put an end to the protests that erupted after the June poll.

The losing candidates say 69 people were killed in unrest following the vote. The figure is more than double the official toll of 26.

Defying Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who has formally endorsed Ahmadinejad, Musavi and Karrubi have said they will continue rejecting the vote result and have rejected the new government Ahmadinejad is to appoint as illegitimate.

Ahmadinejad has until August 19 to name his cabinet.

Musavi plans to set up a "Green Path of Hope" movement to preserve people's rights, media reported, a move signaling his determination to press on with his opposition activities. Green was the color of his election campaign.

Rights groups say hundreds of people, including senior pro-reform politicians, journalists, activists and lawyers, have been detained in Iran since the election. At least 200 people remain in jail including senior reformists.

Karrubi last week said some detainees, both men and women, had been "savagely raped" in jail. His allegation was rejected by Iranian authorities as "baseless".

The abuse allegations, rejected also by Tehran's police chief, have created a rift among hard-line politicians, many of whom backed Ahmadinejad's reelection.

But many hard-liners have also called on the authorities to try Karrubi for the accusations he raised. Karrubi insists he has evidence proving the mistreatment of detainees.  
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