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Detainees Were Raped in Iran Prison, Says Reformist

By ALAN COWELL
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PARIS — As dispute swirls around events at a notorious prison used to incarcerate political opponents after Iran's June 12 election, a leading reformist candidate in the vote said some inmates, both male and female, had been raped, according to news reports Monday.

The accusation was made by the candidate, Mehdi Karroubi, after the Kahrizak detention center in southern Tehran was ordered closed by Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah [Ali Khamenei](#). The center's director was arrested, according to state media reports. The Iranian police chief, Esmail Ahmadi-Moqaddam, said on Sunday that the prison "was only built for thugs and gangsters. Election protesters should not have been transferred there," he said, according to state-run Press TV.

But Mr. Ahmadi-Moqaddam denied that the deaths of two people there were the result of mistreatment by guards, insisting that they had been killed by a "deadly virus infection," Press TV said.

Continued challenges to the authorities, however, showed the deep fissures that have been opened in Iranian society and among its elite by the disputed election, which the opposition says was rigged. The vote was followed by mass protests on the streets, which were met with a brutal official crackdown.

The opposition has said that at least three protesters died in Kahrizak, including Mohsen Ruholamini, the son of a senior aide to Mohsen Rezai, a losing conservative candidate in the June election that returned President [Mahmoud Ahmadinejad](#) to power with a landslide victory.

Mr. Ahmadinejad took the oath of office as president last week and is now preparing a new government. News reports from Tehran Monday said he has dismissed several senior Intelligence Ministry figures in what appeared to be a purge of officials who opposed the brutal government crackdown on dissent after the elections. The A.P. said several news Web sites reported the dismissals.

Following the mass detentions during the crackdown, much attention has focused on the conditions under which protesters were held. A top judiciary official acknowledged Saturday that some detainees had been tortured in Iranian prisons, the first such acknowledgment by a senior Iranian official.

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The comment had a particular resonance since allegations of torture by Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi became a central justification of the 1979 revolution that brought the hard-line clerics to power.

On Sunday, Mr. Karrubi raised new questions about prison conditions, and was quoted on his Web site as saying that some detainees had been raped.

The Web site quoted a letter Mr. Karrubi wrote 10 days ago saying that senior officials told him that “really shameful issues” had arisen in the detention of opponents.

“Some young male detainees were raped,” the letter was quoted as saying, while “some young female detainees were raped in a way that have caused serious injuries.” There was no immediate official response to the accusation.

The Web site said the letter was sent to a former president, [Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani](#), one of Iran’s richest men and a powerful adversary of Mr. Ahmadinejad. Mr. Rafsanjani also heads an influential state arbitration panel called the Expediency Council.

The developments coincide with a mass trial of reformers and election protesters, in which more than 100 people are accused of trying to topple the government. The accused included a French researcher and employees of the French and British Embassies, prompting angry responses from Britain, France and the [European Union](#).

Over the weekend, a senior official with Iran’s [Revolutionary Guards](#), Brig. Gen. Yadollah Javani, was quoted by the official IRNA news agency as saying opposition leaders, including [Mir Hussein Mousavi](#), who came second in the June 12 ballot, should also be placed on trial for trying to engineer a so-called velvet coup in Iran.

If Mr. Mousavi and other opponents, including Mr. Karrubi and former President [Mohammad Khatami](#), “are the main suspects believed to have been behind the velvet coup in Iran, which they are, we expect the judiciary to go after them, arrest them, put them on trial and punish them according to the law,” General Javani was quoted as saying.



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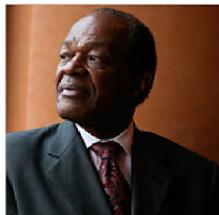
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