

Kurds threaten to abandon Iranian citizenship unless demands are met

From Liz Thurgood
in Tehran

More than 12,000 Kurdish refugees have threatened to abandon their Iranian citizenship and march into Turkey or Iraq if the Government does not allow them to return to their homes in safety.

The ultimatum was delivered yesterday by the Kurdish refugee committee which was set up after fighting in the western town of Naghadeh two months ago. According to a committee spokesman, 12,473 Kurdish men, women, and children were made homeless by the fighting and are now wandering from town to town in search of help, frightened to return home.

The Kurds have also issued a five-point list of demands which, they say, must be fulfilled before they will return to Naghadeh. These range from the prosecution of "members of the Shah's re-

gime" now serving on the Iman Komitehs, the replacement of the Komitehs (made up of Persians), with councils of Kurds and Turks, control of the local gendarmerie, and Government compensation for damaged property.

The Kurdish action apparently follows repeated efforts to try to negotiate a settlement with the Government. The committee cabled the Prime Minister's office warning that it would seek political asylum in either Iraq or Turkey if their demands were not met. The deadline expires at midnight on Monday.

"If neither the Iraqis nor the Turks will give us a home, we will ask other countries such as Afghanistan, Kuwait, or Pakistan," said Mohammad Morad Rassouli, one of five committee members visiting Tehran to try to see Dr Mehdi Bazargan, the Prime Minister. The Kurds have been told that

a meeting cannot be arranged for at least two months.

The demands coincide with fresh reports of Kurdish unhappiness with the newly-released draft Constitution. The Kurds, and Iran's other restless ethnic minorities such as the Turkomans and Arabs, had been hoping that the 151-article document would offer them autonomy.

But the only concession the Government appears ready to make is greater participation in running their own affairs and the right to linguistic and cultural freedoms.

The refugees were made homeless when fierce fighting broke out between the Kurds and Turks two months ago. The Iranian Army moved in with tanks and helicopters and the Kurds claimed that 200 of their people died in the ensuing battle. The Kurds claim that the Government has offered no help.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Sadech Khalkhali, reputedly close to the religious leaders, has put a price of \$131,000 on the Shah's head. "Anyone who assassinates the Shah will receive a hero's welcome," the Sheikh told Iranian newspapers yesterday. "His name will glitter in history."

Earlier, the Sheikh, who recently upset many Iranians by proposing the Persian Gulf be renamed the Islamic Gulf, disclosed that three gunmen had been sent to Mexico to kill the Shah. The Shah's wife, Empress Farah, could return home freely, he said, should she either kill the Shah herself, or help in his assassination.

Ayatollah Khomeini's special envoy in the holy city of Najaf, Iraq, Ayatollah Rezvani, has reportedly been seized by the Ba'athist regime in a continuing wave of arrests.

