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## Former elite officers reveal tensions in Iran regime

Men describe measures taken to crush popular protests that erupted in the wake of last year's presidential elections

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Angus Stickler and Maggie O'Kane  
The Guardian, Friday 11 June 2010

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A remarkable series of interviews with former members of the [Iran's](#) Revolutionary Guard today offer a rare insight into one of the world's most oppressive regimes.

The four men, who have fled Iran and are in hiding in Turkey and Thailand, speak out in a documentary produced by Guardian Films and the Bureau of Investigative Journalism.

In testimony provided by the men, at least one of whom was part of last year's crackdown on opposition to the Iranian regime, the film reveals:

- Deep divisions within the Revolutionary Guard, the powerful military organisation at the heart of the Iranian state, which have widened since last year's repression of the so-called green opposition.
- Firsthand accounts of the measures taken to crush the popular protests that erupted in the wake of last June's presidential elections. The men interviewed describe the widespread use of rape and torture by the regime.
- A ruling elite so unsettled by the uprising that it had a plane on standby ready to fly the president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, and the supreme leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, to Syria at a moment's notice.

One former guard interviewed for the film says that until he fled the country earlier this year, he was part of the security team surrounding Khamenei. "I want people outside to know what is happening and what this regime is doing to them," says Muhammed Hussein Torkaman. He accuses the regime of betraying the values of the 1979 revolution in an effort to keep a grip on power.

Another former guard accuses the government of filling the ranks of the guards with young men from the countryside willing to carry out brutal assaults which more senior officers would not countenance. "The majority of these recruits ... have no idea of right or wrong," he says. The regime "hands them weapons and these young people come into the streets and commit acts of murder".

Iran's opposition leaders have called off rallies to mark the anniversary of last year's presidential election, in which Ahmadinejad controversially claimed victory. The decision is being seen as a setback for the pro-democracy movement.

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