



In Iran court, dissolution of reform fronts is sought

Tue, 25 Aug 2009 12:26:55 GMT

In a follow-up to the post-election mass trials of opposition activists and protestors, Iran puts aides to former Iranian President Mohammad Khatami and top Reformist figures in the dock.

The fourth session of the revolutionary court held on Tuesday dealt with former officials from the administration of leading Reformist figure Khatami -- including former deputy economy minister Mohsen Safaie-Farahani, former deputy interior minister Mostafa Tajzadeh, former deputy foreign minister Mohsen Aminzadeh and Reformist activists Mohsen Mirdamadi and Abdollah Ramezanzadeh.

Saaed Hajjarian, a former deputy intelligence minister who is known for architecting Iran's Reform movement, was also among the accused. Hajjarian has been in custody for more than 2 months despite his serious health condition.

Behzad Nabavi, a top Reformist figure and former minister in the government of Ahmadinejad's main presidential election rival Mir-Hossein Mousavi after the 1979 revolution, and Iranian-American scholar Kian Tajbakhsh were also on trial.

Member of Iran's Islamic Participation Front and Reformist journalist Hamidreza Jalaeipour and leading Reformist journalist Saeed Leylaz were also present at the court session.

Mohammad Ghoochani, chief editor of Etemad-e-Melli (National Trust) daily belonging to another opposition figure Mehdi Karroubi, was also put in the dock.

Mohammad-Reza Jalaei, Sadeq Norouzi, Hedayat Aqayi, Massoud Bastani, Hamzeh Ghalebi, Feizollah Arabsorkhi were among other Reformist figures present at Tuesday's court session.

The other defendants include Ali Tajemia, a former opposition lawmaker, Shahaboddin Tabatabaei, a leading figure in the country's largest Reformist party, and Ahmad Zeidabadi, a journalist who has written critically of the Islamic establishment.

During the legal proceeding in the morning session, prosecutors brought a new list of charges against the post-vote detainees.

The indictment read out by Tehran's Deputy Prosecutor Mehdi Sepehri, accused members of the Islamic Participation Front of taking steps to undermine the country's presidential election and its official results which granted a landslide victory to the incumbent, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

Along with the Islamic Participation Front, the Islamic Revolution Mujahedeen Organization has been accused of "lying" and spreading "rumors of fraud in the election."

Citing examples of illegal activities carried out by the two political fronts in the country's post-vote frenzy, the revolutionary court called for both factions to be dissolved.

Sepehri claimed that an election head office in northern Tehran -- used by defeated presidential candidate Mir-Hossein Mousavi -- had been used in various illegal activities, such as providing a base for the BBC's Persian TV service.

The prosecutor went on to say that on June 12's evening, as the vote process was underway, security forces raided the office which prompted the elements inside the building to "take hostage" some of the forces.

The statement by the court went on to describe the opposition as a "power-seeking defiant movement" which has "stood against the system and the majority vote of the people."

The prosecutor also went on to claim that evidence gathered from the Islamic Participation Front's office reveal that Hajjarian was the mastermind behind the alleged "soft coup" while Tajzadeh had entertained the idea of using "American weapons."

The prosecutor also implicated Mohammad-Reza Khatami, the former president's brother, of seeking "foreign support" for the alleged coup attempt.

During the session, meanwhile, certain defeated political groups were charged with having links to Western media and foreign embassies seeking to cause mayhem in the country.

The trials come as the official outcome of the June 12 presidential vote provoked unprecedented, widespread protests in Iran and opened a rare divide among the ruling elite.

The crackdown against the street demonstrations resulted in the arrest of thousands of opposition figures, protesters and journalists -- who have been accused of plotting to topple the government --- and the deaths of at least 30 people.

Iran has already staged mass trials of nearly 140 individuals on offences linked to widespread demonstrations that followed Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's hotly-disputed victory in the June election.

Following the controversial mass trials of post-vote detainees, the opposition announced that the confessions made at court had been forced.

The opposition and their supporters have also condemned the trials as a "sham" staged by supporters of the incumbent president.

CS/MD