

Doc Number: KP000188

# Iran Claims Agreement on Entry Into Kurd Stronghold

TEHRAN, Iran (AP)—Interior Minister Hashem Sabaghian claimed Wednesday that the government and a Kurdish delegation here had agreed on terms for the army's entry into the rebelling minority's stronghold city of Mahabad. But a Kurdish spokesman in Mahabad said he was certain that had not happened.

The Kurdish spokesman said the state radio, which had broadcast Sabaghian's announcement, was "distorting reports of the negotiations."

The key issue appeared to be whether the Kurds, who now control Mahabad, would allow Iranian army forces to enter the city of 100,000 in western Iran.

The Kurds, fighting in their provinces for autonomy and withdrawal of government forces, have said the government cannot take Mahabad. But after a costly fight 50 miles to the south last week, they are now trying to reach a negotiated settlement.

Last weekend, the government broke a Kurdish siege of the military garrison at Saqqez, and Islamic revolutionary guards and army troops backed by columns of tanks marched to within 19 miles of Mahabad.

On Sunday, an unofficial cease-fire went into effect and a delegation from the Mahabad city council was sent to the Iranian capital to explore the possibility of a negotiated settlement.

Sabaghian said in a radio interview Wednesday that the delegation "had agreed that the army has to enter Mahabad and take hold of the city's

security." He pledged that the army would leave the garrison within a reasonable period, base itself outside the city and convert the garrison into a university.

However, an official of the banned Kurdish Democratic Party, reached by telephone in Mahabad, said: "I am certain the goodwill delegation has not agreed to the army entering Mahabad; not one person in Mahabad is willing to agree to the army entering the city."

Kurdish sources said the truce was holding around Mahabad Wednesday, despite maneuvers by government forces Tuesday night. But state radio reported that the military garrison in the mountain town of Jaldian 31 miles west of Mahabad was attacked by heavily armed Kurds Tuesday night in a six-hour attack that killed one sergeant.

In Mahabad, a Kurdish party official said, "We do not hold much hope for the negotiations in Tehran," in view of hard-line statements by the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, Iran's revolutionary and spiritual leader.

Two Kurds were among 16 persons executed Wednesday, according to the official radio. A revolutionary court in Zanjan, about 125 miles east of Mahabad, found the pair guilty of "having entered into battle with God and his emissaries on earth." The other 14 were prisoners who tried to escape in the northwestern city of Tabriz, the radio said.

Blocked due to copyright  
See full page image on  
microfilm.

On Tuesday, Khomeini sent a personal envoy, Moslem cleric Hosseini Kermani, to the Kurdish areas with orders to "crush the outlaws if need be." Two weeks ago, Khomeini sent revolutionary prosecutor Ayatollah Sadegh Khalkhali into the region, and Kurdish sources have said that more than 100 Kurds have since been executed.

Also on Wednesday, the Ayatollah Kazem Shariatmadari, a Moslem cleric who is considered a moderate and has differed with Khomeini, called for a formal cease-fire and negotiations between the Kurdish rebels and the government.

"I have no doubt that this war is imposed on them (the Kurds)," he said, adding that if they accept negotiations, "I personally guarantee that they will not be shortchanged."

The interview was held privately in a Tehran villa. Shariatmadari refused to see reporters from state radio and television, charging that their organizations had engaged in censorship and failed to cover his activities.