

Guerrillas dig in at mountain village

as Khomeini's tanks close in

Iran tells Kurds to surrender or be crushed

From Reuter in Mahabad

The Kurdish village of Solduz yesterday stood between the rebel capital of Mahabad and a government armoured column sent to crush the main stronghold of Kurdish insurgency in Iran.

Kurds at Solduz have been given a 24-hour ultimatum to clear the main Naghade-Mahabad road to make way for the army's tanks. Solduz lies 20 miles from Mahabad on Route 82 of the Asian highway across a plain north of the Mahabad mountains.

Last night Kurdish guerrillas said that they had destroyed four Iranian Government tanks pushing towards Mahabad from Solduz. Some 20 tanks were still stationed at Solduz, a guerrilla spokesman said.

In a radio broadcast the command of the 64th division based at the government-held city of Rezaiyeh said: "Dear Kurdish brothers, the army has been sent to establish order and has the firepower to destroy all rebels . . . all rebels should leave within a few hours . . . otherwise they will be crushed."

Asked if the Kurds would evacuate Mahabad, it ordered to do so by the army, a senior spokesman of the banned Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) said: "We have promised to fight if the Government does not accept negotiations and, if necessary, we will take to the hills to begin guerrilla warfare."

The Kurds say they hold a triangle running from the outskirts of Miandoab in the north, through Mahabad to Sardasht on the Iraqi border, east through Baneh and back north through the Saggez hills. All roads in the triangle are controlled by the Kurdish guerrillas.

But the government claimed yesterday that troops had demolished Kurdish rebel defences and completed control of Saggez after five days of fighting which left the town in shambles.

Insurgents who fired upon the garrison and intended to recapture the military's main stronghold retreated from their hilltop positions around the rubble-littered community. By mid-afternoon yesterday at least 200 rebels had been arrested in Saggez.

Nine Kurds have been executed as traitors in the western border town of Marivan on the orders of the special judge sent to deal with Kurdish insurgents, the state radio announced yesterday.

The KDP has threatened to execute one Islamic revolutionary guard in retaliation for every Kurd sent before a firing squad by the Iranian government.

In Tehran gunmen killed the financial manager of the leading newspaper Kayhan and his son, the state radio said. The gunmen also wounded the owner of the paper, the radio said.

The radio interrupted normal programmes to announce that Kayhan's manager, Haj Mehdi Araghi, and his son, Haj Hessem, aged 20 had been shot dead.

Meanwhile, Iran's unofficial head of state, Ayatollah Khomeini, in a new blast against his political opponents, said those who wanted freedom only craved for bars, brothels, drugs and casinos.

In a speech reported by the Tehran press yesterday, the 79-year-old Ayatollah said: "When democrats talk about freedom, they are inspired by the superpowers. They want to lead our youth to places of corruption . . . (if that is what they want) then yes, we are reactionaries."

A pregnant woman has been sentenced to a public flogging for adultery, the official Pars

About 30 Left-wing demonstrators occupied the house in the Parisian suburb of Neauphle-Chateau where Ayatollah Khomeini lived during his French exile to protest against recent events in Iran. The house was vacant in Bonn, Iranian students yesterday demonstrated for the first time against the policies of the Ayatollah. Police said a total of 1,500 people took part in two demonstrations, in Bonn and Frankfurt.

news agency reported yesterday. An Islamic revolutionary tribunal in the north-eastern town of Neishapour decreed the sentence would be carried out once the woman, identified only by her first name of Showkat, had delivered her baby. Eighty lashes will be given in public and 20 in private, Pars said. Her lover was also sentenced to receive 100 lashes.

At least 45 men have been executed in the western Kurdish region since Ayatollah Sadeq Khalkhali arrived there last weekend on the orders of the ruling Moslem clergy to punish those involved in the anti-government fighting.

Former Central Bank governor Youssef Khoshkish, aged 73, went on trial yesterday accused of being a "corrupt of the earth," a Koranic charge which can carry the death sentence. The official Pars news agency said Mr Khoshkish, who resigned three weeks before the February revolution after about a year in office, was being tried by a revolutionary tribunal in the top security gaol at Evin, outside Tehran.

In a new economic development Iran cut oil exports by 400,000 barrels a day because of bad weather in the Gulf, the Pars news agency said.

It quoted the National Oil Company chairman, Hassan Nazih, as saying exports from Iran's main gulf loading terminal on Kharg island would return to normal as soon as the weather improved. No figures for total exports were given.