

Rebels send peace mission to Khomeini as Tehran punishes profiteers to counter inflation

Iranian clergy calls Kurdish ceasefire

IRAN'S ruling Moslem clergy yesterday agreed to proclaim a ceasefire on all fronts in the Kurdish revolt, Kurdish negotiators said in Tehran last night. A spokesman said agreement had been reached after talks with Ayatollah Mahmoud Taleghani. Also in Tehran, three shopkeepers were flogged, charged with profiteering, in the first public punishment in the capital.

From Liz Thurgood in Tehran

An uneasy calm settled over Iran's troubled Western province of Kurdistan yesterday amid reports that government troops were massing for a two-pronged attack on the rebel stronghold of Mahabad.

The uneasy, described as the calm before the storm, coincided with conflicting reports of Kurdish intentions. Kurdish rebels blew up a fuel storage tank in the West Azerbaijan town of Salmas in an attack in which one Kurd was killed and two civil servants were missing, according to the Government news agency.

The attack was followed yesterday by news of the arrival in the capital of a low-level Kurdish team which has since made a direct appeal to Ayatollah Khomeini to end the fighting. According to Iranian newspapers the fighting has taken more than 500 lives during the past ten days.

In a letter made public yesterday, the revolutionary council of Mahabad said that the Ayatollah was misinformed about the situation in Kurdistan. The letter, signed by Abdul Rahim Abbassi, who is now leading the team in Tehran, repeated assurances of the Kurdish Moslem people's solidarity with the Ayatollah and "in return hope that you will not pay attention to certain people who want to create disunity and divide the nation."

But in Mahabad itself, there were indications that the Kurds were preparing for a show of force. Reports from the small town said scores of young Kurds yesterday crowded round the local army base to "register for battle" and both men and women were

receiving training on four captured tanks and howitzers.

Outside Mahabad, which in 1946 declared itself an autonomous republic, two armoured columns of the Iranian military had reportedly taken up position on key roads leading into the small town not far from the mountainous border with Iraq. According to a member of the banned Kurdish Democratic Party, close to 100 tanks

IRANIAN Government forces arrested two Iraqi military officers during last week's battle for the Kurdish city of Pavah and sent them to Tehran, Pars news agency reported yesterday. Abu Wafa, deputy commander of Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps, told Pars that the two men denied being Iraqi nationals. But their Iraqi citizenship was proved by their identity and military conscription cards, Abu Wafa said.

and armed personnel carriers had been assembled by the Government, together with long range artillery and heavy trucks.

The activity in and around Mahabad yesterday followed a government victory over the weekend in Saqqez. More than 100 Kurds and men loyal to the Ayatollah are believed to have died during the five days of fighting which ended on Sunday when the government finally took control.

The streets of Saqqez were yesterday reported quiet, with the military and Islamic Guards maintaining a 24-hour patrol in what was seen as a form of martial law. Parts of dismembered bodies reportedly lay in the streets next to the barracks but the water supply

was intact and power had been partially restored.

More than 300 captured Kurds were awaiting the arrival of Sheikh Khalshali, a Right-wing militant who has been named by Khomeini to conduct the Kurdish trials. The Sheikh, who was sentenced the Shah to death in absentia, has already sent 50 Kurds to their deaths.

The Kurds in Saqqez ignored a warning on the state radio calling for the return of all weapons in rebel hands. Failure to reply, said the commander of the 28th division, would be considered "a counter revolutionary act."

The commander's appeal followed an interview published yesterday with Tehran's public prosecutor in which Ayatollah Azari-Chomi warned that all those possessing arms illegally would be considered "corrupt on earth" and shot.

Reuters adds: The revolutionary prosecutor of the town of Zanjan has ordered the arrest of his predecessor after sex magazines and alcohol were found at his home, the newspaper Bamdad reported.

The cache was discovered when prosecutor Mahmoud Omid went to the home of Hossein Majahedi to collect four files. He found a large quantity of imported and domestic alcohol, sex magazines, opium, gambling equipment, bank savings books showing large deposits, a phone book with the number of a former Savak secret police torturer, Communist leaflets, an Israeli entry card, a hunting gun and 750 bullets and books of freemasonry.

Mr Majahedi is under guard in hospital where he is recovering from injuries received in an unsuccessful assassination attempt.



Wounded Iranian troops (top) prepare to board helicopters that will take them out of Saqqez. The bodies of dead soldiers are lined up for evacuation (above)

