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Iranian Doctor Confirms Prison Abuse Death

Medical Examiner Says Political Adviser's Detained Son Died From Beatings, Poor Prison Conditions After Iran Vote



(AP)

(AP) An Iranian medical examiner found that the son of a prominent conservative politician's adviser died from beatings and poor prison conditions, a semiofficial news agency reported Monday, in what would be the first official confirmation of a prisoner abuse death during Iran's post-election turmoil.

The report could be a sign that conservatives will seek to prosecute those responsible for prisoner abuse in an attempt to defuse anger over allegations that many opposition supporters detained after the disputed presidential election

were tortured.

The claims have outraged many conservatives, as well as the pro-reform opposition that believes hard-line President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad stole the June election through massive vote fraud.

Conservative anger has partly been driven by the death of Mohsen Rouharamini, the son of an adviser to defeated presidential candidate Mohsen Rezaei.

Police initially suggested that Rouharamini's death while in custody was caused by meningitis. But the semiofficial Mehr news agency, which has close ties to conservatives, said Monday that a state forensic doctor ruled that out in a report handed over to judicial authorities about 10 days ago.

Instead, it said Rouharamini died of **"physical stress, the effects of being held in bad conditions, multiple blows and severe injuries to the body,"** according to the news agency, which cited "informed sources" without revealing their names.

The report could not be independently confirmed, but conservative critics of Ahmadinejad have used the news agency to leak information previously.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei recently appointed the brother of Ahmadinejad's main conservative rival to head the judiciary, a move some analysts interpreted as a way to appease conservatives upset over Khamenei's swift support of the president in the election crisis.

The new judiciary chief, Sadeq Larijani, whose brother is parliament speaker Ali Larijani, recently appointed a three-member team to supervise an investigation into the post-election unrest, including the alleged abuse of detained protesters.

The prosecution of officials accused of torture would be an embarrassment for Ahmadinejad, who has staunchly defended the security forces sent out after the June 12 election to violently crack down on the thousands of protesters who took to the streets.

The government has confirmed that at least 30 people were killed during the unrest, but the opposition believes at least 69 died. Hundreds of protesters and opposition activists were also arrested.

Rouharamini was detained during a July 9 protest and taken to a hospital two weeks later where he died within hours. Reformist Web sites said he had been held at Kahrizak prison, where much of the alleged prisoner abuse took place, and his jaw was broken when his father received his body.

The medical examiner's report carried by the Mehr news agency said Rouharamini was "in bad physical condition" prior to a scheduled move to Evin prison, which is also located in Tehran.

"After his condition was seen to worsen ... and after a 70-minute delay, he was taken to a hospital, where unfortunately he died," said the report.

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