

Iranians, Kurds reported preparing for second clash

Saqqez, **Iran** (AP)—The Islamic regime's troops mopped up in this shell-shattered town yesterday after smashing a four-day siege by Kurdish rebels. But the rebels vowed to fight again elsewhere and reported both sides were preparing for a major battle for the Kurds' main stronghold of Mahabad.

In Tehran, assassins killed two supporters of the Islamic regime's spiritual leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, and wounded a third.

The battle for Saqqez, a town in western **Iran** near the Iraqi border, ended Saturday after government troops, flown there in giant Chinook helicopters, reinforced their besieged garrison. They fired a blistering barrage with heavy weaponry and overpowered the Kurdish fighters.

Yesterday, as government troops searched house-to-house for insurgents, the Kurds called their pullout a "tactical retreat." One Kurdish source said most of the rebel force of less than 500 had escaped. The government garrison was about 700 men.

Kurdish sources said they now expect a government strike on Mahabad, a heavily fortified city of more than 100,000, about 50 miles northwest of Saqqez. They said a government armored column of at least 65 tanks, scores of armored personnel carriers and long-range artillery, was awaiting orders outside the farming village of Solduz, about 20 miles south of Mahabad.

The insurgents said Mahabad would not be intimidated.

"We have anti-aircraft weapons, 105-mm. howitzers, 106-mm. recoilless rifles,

us as they did at Saqqez, they are going to find it rough. Now we have the weapons to knock them out of the sky."

Mahabad was reported quiet, with shops and businesses operating normally.

Mahabad is where Abdol Rahman Qassemlu, secretary of the banned Kurdish Democratic party's Central Committee, maintains his headquarters. The Kurdish religious leader, Sheik Ezzedin Hosseni, also lives there. Like most Kurds, Sheik Hosseni is a member of the Sunni sect of Islam—a branch different from the Shiite branch, to which the ayatollah and most of Iran's Persian majority belong.

Kurdish rebels have been demanding autonomy from the fundamentalist Islamic regime that replaced Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's government last winter, and many of Iran's 4 million Kurds hope to form an independent state with about 8 million other Kurds in neighboring Iraq and Turkey.

Earlier this month, as fighting escalated, Khomeini banned the Kurdish Democratic party and sent Iran's armed forces and his revolutionary guards to crush the rebellion.

Mr. Qassemlu said yesterday the Kurds would wage "all-out war" and make Kurdistan "the graveyard of the reactionary regime." He also vowed that the Kurds, who hold 150 revolutionary guards hostage, would execute one guard for each **Kurd** the regime executes.

Yesterday, about 100 Kurds were reported to have been arrested by government forces in Saqqez when the battle there ended, and a religious judge was re-