

Kurdish rebels kill 60; Iran vows to take war to countryside

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Tehran (Reuter)—Iranian authorities yesterday announced plans to take the war against Kurdish guerrillas out of the towns and into the countryside after rebel ambushers killed up to 60 revolutionary guards on a rural highway.

Interior Minister Hashem Sabaghian told the Tehran daily *Bamdad*: "We must spread the fight to the mountains and roads. After investigation, we will send forces to the area because at the moment we are stationed in towns."

A revolutionary guard spokesman in the former rebel capital of Mahabad said that as many as 60 guards were believed to have been killed in Sunday night's attack on the road from Sardasht, on the Iraqi border, to Baneh.

The spokesman, Ali Falah, said: "In the next two or three days, the rebels will be severely crushed with the use of bombs, mortars, helicopters and fighters. This decision has been made by the revolutionary guards corps. We have already identified their positions and hideouts."

According to Mr. Sabaghian, only 5 out of 72 revolutionary guards escaped from Sunday night's ambush. But he said as many as 28 may have been taken hostage by the Kurds.

Kurdish rebels took to the hills last month after government forces captured strongholds of the banned Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) in a number of towns, including Mahabad, Sardasht and Baneh.

But the authorities have acknowledged the guerrillas still control roads in the region:

In the provincial capital of Urumiyeh, officials announced that revolutionary guards, the prime target of the guerrilla campaign, would start wearing uniforms similar to those of the Army rather than their distinctive camouflage fatigues.

The official news agency Pars reported yesterday that in the latest bombing incident in the southern Persian Gulf province of Khuzestan, guerrillas last night planted a bomb near the Karun River in Khorramshahr, the country's main cargo port. The explosion caused no casualties and little damage, the agency said.

It added that so far, 35 persons had been arrested in connection with the week-old bombing campaign that has killed 13 persons.