

Kurds reportedly ambush government troops in Iran

Tehran, Iran (AP)—Rebellious Kurdish tribesmen ambushed government troops, killing about 20 and wounding 30, as the dissident minority renewed its sporadic battle for autonomy in the remote, mountainous region of Kurdistan, news reports said yesterday.

Ten thousand men, women and children from the city of Sanandaj were reported pushing on with a 50-mile protest trek to Marivan, a town abandoned by its 30,000 residents in anger over the arrival of militia units to take over security.

The Marivan Kurds want to run their own security.

Reporters said some of Marivan's townspeople set up tent cities on the outskirts of the town, 300 miles west of Tehran, and others took refuge in the mountains.

The Sanandaj Kurds reportedly launched the march to protest the alleged seizure of Kurdish hostages by government forces in recent fighting near Marivan.

A government mediation team, sent to Marivan to negotiate with the rebels, has returned to Tehran after talks collapsed. A member of the team described the Kurdish demands as "uncompromising."

Since the Islamic revolutionary victory in Iran in February, rebels seeking autonomy for the Kurdish region of western Iran have waged an on-and-off war against government forces.

The government sent reinforcements and armored personnel carriers by helicopter to Marivan's military compound, a reporter said, and Thursday, troops in the compound fired mortar barrages at sus-

The reporter said the Kurds were keeping government forces off balance with nightly raids, enabling the rebels to maintain control of the roads leading west to the Iraqi border.

Reports from the remote region said Iran had moved troops to its border with Iran. It appeared that Iranian government forces would attempt to force the rebellious Kurds to the frontier, up against the stronger Iraqi force, possibly cutting off any escape route.

Kurds, a semi-nomadic people, also live in Turkey, Syria, the Soviet Union and Iraq, where for years they have struggled for independence from the Baghdad government.

Jamshid Haghu, governor-general of western Iran's West Azerbaijan province, said that between 50 and 60 railway workers had been taken hostage by Kurdish tribesmen.

"Because of this, the railway link between Iran and Turkey has been practically severed," state radio quoted Mr. Haghu as saying.

Iran has closed two crossings on its border with Turkey in areas where fighting was taking place, official sources in Turkey said yesterday.

The border point of Esendere in Hakkari province and the railroad crossing at Kapikoy in Van province were closed to traffic late last week, the sources said. The only crossing on the border still open was Gurbulak in Agri province, they said.