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No proof West was behind Iran unrest: Supreme Leader

By Middle East correspondent Anne Barker

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Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei says he has no proof the leaders of the recent post-election unrest were backed by foreign countries.

Iran's rulers have consistently accused Western nations - namely Britain and the United States - of plotting to destabilise the country after the disputed presidential election and of helping to incite the wave of unrest.

The opposition says dozens of people died and hundreds were arrested during the protests following the re-election of President Mahmoud Ahmedinajad.

Among the hundreds of people on trial are several foreign embassy staff. Iran also expelled two British diplomats and several foreign journalists.

But the Ayatollah now says he has no proof the opposition leaders were backed by foreign states.

In a statement read on Iran's state television he said the judiciary should not deal with those behind the protests based on rumour or guesswork, but give rulings based on solid evidence.

Meanwhile, Iranian authorities are investigating claims of a mass burial of protesters killed in the recent post-election unrest.

But the claim has been dismissed as rumour

Iranian authorities say the official death toll from the recent wave of violence is 26. But opposition leaders say 69 people died in the unrest.

A pro-reform website last week claimed that "tens" of people had been buried in unnamed graves in Tehran's biggest cemetery on July 12 and 15.

The website indicated that those buried had been protesters.

But a former head of the cemetery has denied any mass burial took place.

A parliamentary committee in Tehran is looking into the claims.

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