

Police in frontier clash with Iranian Kurds

From UPI in Tehran

Armed Kurds fought national police units near the West Iranian frontier town of Serow yesterday as the Government, in an attempt to end five months of Kurdish unrest, named a new Governor-General who is a native of the area.

Press reports from Serow said the clashes had begun on Wednesday when the national police tried to move reinforcements into the area. Iran's 800 miles of frontier have been the scene of sporadic violence since the February revolution.

It was not immediately clear if the Kurds fighting the national police in Serow belonged to the movement which seeks Kurdish autonomy. The State radio described them as "counter-revolutionaries."

The Ettelaat newspaper, quoting officials, said a national police official had been wounded and several Kurds killed and wounded in nearly 20 hours of fighting.

Kurdish sources in Tehran said the death toll was much higher but could not give any details.

Liz Thurgood adds: The Iranian Cabinet held a special session yesterday to consider what were believed to have been critical decisions taken on Wednesday at talks in Qom with Ayatollah Khomeini, the *de facto* Head of State.

The Qom meeting came amid press reports of a sweeping Cabinet reshuffle. Little emerged, though, except an announcement that the controversial chief of military police, General Azizollah Amir

Rahimi, had finally been dismissed.

The Interior Minister, Mr Sadeq Tabatabai, confirmed General Rahimi's dismissal after a tussle between the Government and the religious leadership.

The General, who had been dismissed 10 days ago by the Defence Minister, Mr Taghi Riahi, and promptly reinstated by the ayatollah, had proved to be a highly embarrassing thorn in the side of an already weakened Government.

According to a report yesterday in Bamdad, one of Tehran's more reliable dailies, a Cabinet reshuffle was expected within a week. Contrary to widespread rumour, the Prime Minister was not expected to leave his post, the newspaper said.

Meanwhile, in the southwestern port of Khorramshahr, an Arab ultimatum, threatening new violence if their spiritual leader was not released, expired peacefully at 9 a.m. yesterday. The elderly Shi'a leader of Iran's estimated two million Arabs, Ayatollah Khaghani was reported to have arrived in Qom where he was expected to meet Ayatollah Khomeini to discuss the recent political upheavals and Arab demands for autonomy. Earlier his supporters had feared he had been kidnapped.

Early yesterday in the northwestern town of Khoy, five former officials of the Shah's regime were executed, as was the former police chief in Qazvin, west of Tehran.

