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Reformist Details Evidence of Abuse in Iran's Prisons

By NAZILA FATHI

TORONTO — A leading opposition leader, [Mehdi Karroubi](#), issued [a statement](#) on Monday giving new details of prison abuse allegations in [Iran](#), just days after a judicial [panel rejected](#) such claims and the country's supreme leader [warned](#) of a "harsh response" to those making them.

Another top opposition figure, Grand Ayatollah Hossein Ali Montazeri, urged fellow clerics in a new statement posted on his [Web site](#) on Monday to throw their support behind the opposition and to speak against "the violations that are happening under the name of religion." Later, the ayatollah's [Facebook](#) page reported that three of his grandsons, 18 to 22 years old, were arrested that evening in Qum, at the home of his son and their father, Ahmad Montazeri, who runs the ayatollah's office.

Mr. Karroubi and another opposition leader, [Mir Hussein Moussavi](#), were candidates in the June 12 presidential election, which they say was swung to the incumbent president, [Mahmoud Ahmadinejad](#), through extensive fraud. The ensuing protests were crushed with unnecessary brutality, they said, including the torture and rape of some of the thousands of people arrested.

Monday's statement was a response to the judicial panel, which dismissed Mr. Karroubi's documentation of the abuses as fabricated. In the statement, Mr. Karroubi said the documentation included information on four abuse cases, including photographic evidence of bruises caused by rape, telephone numbers of those who had been abused and their relatives, and detailed accounts from the victims on video.

He brushed off the government's threats of arrest, saying "the real trial is before the people, and one should ask them whom they condemn and who they believe is defending their rights." He also vowed to continue to speak out about what he called a "disgrace upon the Islamic republic and Iran."

The two opposition statements on Monday, and Internet reports of plans for protests on Friday in Tehran and several other large cities, underlined what appears to be the government's inability to extinguish the opposition movement, which enjoys considerable support in the clergy and from some senior officials in the government.

Ayatollah Montazeri, long a critic of Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah [Ali Khamenei](#), raised the pitch of his attacks, referring to Ayatollah Khamenei's "military rule" and expressing regret for his own role in cementing the "rule of the jurist" in the Constitution after the 1979 revolution. That provision established the position of supreme religious leader, first held by the Islamic republic's revolutionary founder, Ayatollah [Ruhollah Khomeini](#).

Ayatollah Montazeri was a close ally of Ayatollah Khomeini and his designated successor until he fell out of

favor in 1988.

Some opposition Web sites [posted videos](#) on Monday of a young man who described being raped while in custody, and then being forced to go into hiding after authorities threatened to kill his family for his cooperation with Mr. Karroubi in making the rape allegations public.

The judiciary resumed mass trials of detainees on Monday. The opposition has dismissed them as show trials devised to portray the protests as a part of an attempted “velvet revolution.” The session was the first since the appointment of the new leader of the judiciary, Sadeq Larijani, who had promised that a large number of detainees would be released under his leadership.

State television reported the indictment on Monday of a prominent student leader, Abdullah Momeni, who is accused of “spreading reports via Internet to provoke the unrest.” Reading from the indictment, Tehran’s deputy prosecutor, Ali Ahmad Akbari, said that that Facebook, the Internet and YouTube were “used as effective tools to organize illegal gatherings and to spread false information,” the ISNA student news agency reported.

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