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Some Iran detainees were tortured to death: Karoubi

Thu Aug 13, 2009 1:15pm EDT

TEHRAN (Reuters) - Iran's defeated presidential candidate Mehdi Karoubi said on Thursday that some of those arrested after the June presidential election were tortured to death, his website reported.

"We observe that in an Islamic country some young people are beaten to death just for chanting slogans in (the post- election) protests," Karoubi's Etemademelli website said.

Karoubi said on Sunday that some protesters, men and women, had been raped in detention. His allegation was rejected by Iranian authorities as "baseless."

He repeated the allegation on Thursday, calling for the formation of an independent fact-finding committee to review his evidence in "a calm atmosphere where relatives of detainees and freed protesters can talk."

"Some of the detainees said they were forced to take off their clothes. Then they were made to go on their hands and knees and were ridden (by prison guards)," Karoubi said.

"Or the prison authorities put them on top of each other while they were naked," Karoubi added.

Many of the post-election detainees were held in south Tehran's Kahrizak prison, built to house people breaching vice laws. At least three people died in custody there and widespread anger erupted as reports of abuse in the jail spread.

The abuse allegations, also rejected by Tehran's police chief, have created a rift among hardline politicians, many of whom backed President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's re-election.

The disputed election was followed by the worst unrest in Iran since its 1979 Islamic revolution.

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei ordered the closure of the Kahrizak prison last month.

(Editing by Michael Roddy)

(Tehran newsroom)

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