

## Kurdish rebels tighten hold on Iranian city

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Sanandaj, **Iran** (AP)—Revolutionary leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini faced one of the toughest challenges to his Islamic state yesterday as Kurdish rebels tightened their hold on this provincial capital and threatened the military barracks after four days of bloody fighting.

Rebel forces tried repeatedly to overrun the barracks but were turned back when the government put two tanks into the battle.

Tuesday night's shaky stand-down vanished yesterday morning as Kurdish rebels wearing cartridge belts across their chests dodged from doorway to doorway toward the garrison. Government bullets cracked back at them down the tree-lined streets.

Boys in their teens and gray-haired

men helped distribute arms and ammunition and set up barriers near the beleaguered barracks.

Terrified civilians huddled in doorways and ambulances and private cars took a stream of dead and wounded to the city's two hospitals. Many victims were taken to private homes for lack of hospital space. At least one ambulance driver was shot in the head.

Appeals for blood donors went out over the local radio station, which the Kurds control, and from sound trucks.

An old woman stepped out of her shop to watch the fighting, but ran back in when a bullet shattered the window above her.

The government admitted that more

than 100 persons were dead and several hundred wounded. Independent sources here claim at least 200 have died.

Ayatollah Khomeini appealed for an end to the fighting and sent his closet aide, Ayatollah Mahmoud Taleghani, head of Tehran's Shiite Muslims, to Kurdistan in Northwestern **Iran** to try to arrange a truce.

Most of Sanandaj was under the tight control of the rebels who received tons of food and ammunition from nearby Kurdish towns and villages.

Kurdish marksmen poured automatic weapons fire into the military compound from key vantage points. The government tanks rumbled out of the barracks compound, their machine guns and cannons

blazing.

The government said armed forces commander Gen. Vali Ullah Gharani and Interior Minister Seyyed Ahmad Sadr-Haj Seyyed Javadi flew to Kurdistan to try to stop the rebellion from spreading. There are about four million Kurds in western **Iran**, but about seven million more live just over the adjacent borders of Iraq and Turkey.

The fighting in Sanandaj, 250 miles west of Tehran, threatened to envelop all of Kurdistan province.

Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan, addressing several thousand persons in Tehran's main sports stadium to mark the Persian new year yesterday, said "the Army is duty-bound to defend its garrison."