



**Intelligence and Terrorism  
Information Center**



### Highlights of the Week

- ✓ Ayatollah Montazeri issues a *fatwa* against developing and using nuclear weapons.
- ✓ Following the attack in the province of Sistan-Balouchestan, Iran again accuses the West of supporting terrorism.
- ✓ Scandal of the week: Daughter of Ahmadinejad's senior advisor seeks political asylum in Germany.
- ✓ Woman, stay home! Increasing conservative criticism of women's involvement in politics.
- ✓ Growing argument over the health implications of the regime's jamming satellite and cellular broadcasts.
- ✓ Pictures of the week: Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei meets with Iranian women **Qur'an** scholars

### **The religious aspects of Iran's nuclear program: senior Iranian cleric, Ayatollah Montazeri, issues a fatwa against nuclear weapons.**

Ayatollah Hossein-Ali Montazeri, a senior cleric considered one of the most prominent opponents of the Iranian regime, issued a *fatwa* last week stating that developing and using nuclear weapons were contrary to Muslim religious law.

The *fatwa* was issued in response to a question he was recently asked by Mohsen Kadivar, an intellectual liberal cleric. Kadivar said that although the reformist opposition supported Iran's right to nuclear technology, it had reservations regarding Iranian foreign policy which, it felt, did not serve the country's national interests. He wrote that in view of the regime's oppression of its citizens, the leadership could not be trusted to meet its commitments to international conventions and agreements. The regime, he said, was ruled by the military and the Revolutionary Guards, neither of which had ever been considered good statesmen. Both bodies, he continued, were of the opinion that every issue could be resolved by force and are not subjected to the oversight of the Majlis or the Assembly of Experts. Therefore, he wanted Montazeri to state a position on the military use of nuclear energy: was investing in developing nuclear weapons permissible, especially in view of the possibility that many "reckless" army and political figures in Iran were liable to make improper use of such weapons. He also wanted to know if, under certain circumstances, Muslim religious law sanctioned the use of nuclear weapons, or if it could be stated categorically that the use of such weapons contradicted Islam and therefore their development was totally unacceptable, and should a Middle East without nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction be the objective.

On October 14 Montazeri issued a *fatwa* stating that developing nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction was completely forbidden. It was a waste of a country's national resources and a threat to other countries, leading to lack of trust of the country developing the weapons, and it would damage its relations with the rest of the world. The use of nuclear weapons would lead to the deaths of innocent people and harm future generations, and was therefore contradictory to Muslim law. It was forbidden by both logic and religion, and the citizens of a country developing nuclear weapons should do everything in their power to prevent their leaders from continuing. Humanity, especially Muslims, should use international guarantees to forbid all countries from developing and using nuclear weapons (Gooya News, October 16, 2009). This was not the first time an Iranian cleric was asked to comment on the religious Muslim aspect of the country's nuclear program. On a number of occasions in recent years senior Iranian figures have claimed that Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, even issued a *fatwa* (which was never made public) prohibiting the development of nuclear weapons, stating it was contrary to Islamic law, which forbid the indiscriminate killing of innocents during war. In February 2006, on the other hand, senior cleric Mohsen Gharavian was quoted as saying that the use of nuclear weapons was permissible according to Islamic law. Gharavian, a follower of the ultra-conservative Ayatollah Mohammad Taqi Mesbah-Yazdi, said that there was no religious reason not to use atomic energy for peaceful purposes, just as other sources of energy were used. In addition, since the entire world had nuclear arms, it was only natural that the need would arise for using

such weapons when fighting a rival whose military strength was equal (Rooz Online, February 16, 2009).

### **Following the attack in the city of Sarbaz, Iran again accuses the West of supporting terrorism**

This past week Iran again accused the United States and Britain of responsibility for the suicide bombing attack carried out in the city of Sarbaz in the Pisheen region of the Sistan-Baluchestan province in southeast Iran. More than 40 people were killed in the attack, among them senior members of the Revolutionary Guards, and several dozen were wounded. Among those killed were Nour-Ali Shoushtari, deputy commander of the Revolutionary Guards ground forces, and Rajab-Ali Mohammadzadeh, commander of the Revolutionary Guards in the Sistan-Baluchestan province. At the time of the explosion they were on their way to meeting with tribal heads to discuss "the unity of the Sunni and Shi'ite tribes." The Jundallah terrorist network claimed responsibility for the attack in the name of the Baluchi minority living in the province.



**Nour-Ali Shoushtari, deputy commander of the Revolutionary Guards' ground forces, killed in the attack.**

After the attack, Majlis chairman Ali Larijani claimed it was the result of America's double standard regarding terrorism, an expression of United States hostility toward Iran and its policy against Iranian national interests. He said that Iran was in possession of a great deal of information relating to America's ties to terrorist elements in the Sistan-Baluchestan province (Fars News Agency, October 18, 2009). Mohammad Ali Ja'fari, commander of the Revolutionary Guards, accused the intelligence services of the United States, Britain and Pakistan of supporting the Jundallah network, and said that an Iranian delegation was expected to leave for Pakistan in the near future to present evidence to that effect to the Pakistani government (ISNA, October 19, 2009).

The conservative daily *Resalat* accused the United States of responsibility for the attack and of aiding terrorist networks in Iraq and Afghanistan to establish themselves. According to the paper, the American attack on Afghanistan and the expulsion of the Taliban led to the establishment of independent Al-Qaeda-inspired terrorist networks operating along Iran's

eastern and western borders (*Resalat*, October 19, 2009). According to the daily *Javan*, it was impossible to imagine that a small terrorist group such as the Jundallah could carry out so many terrorist attacks in Iran without support from the American and Zionist intelligence services. An examination of strategic documents published by American research institutes, said the paper, clearly showed that all the terrorist attacks were the fruit of premeditated planning against the Iranian people (*Javan*, October 19, 2009). The Israeli Mossad was also mentioned in connection with the attack. An editorial in the daily *Keyhan* accused the Mossad of helping Jundallah with training, intelligence and equipment, and claimed that Israel's so-called "involvement" in the attack was linked to the rage felt in Israel after the publication of the Goldstone Report (*Keyhan*, October 20, 2009). Senior Iranian sources also accused Pakistan of not doing enough to prevent Jundallah from operating in its territory and of not cooperating with Iran in its struggle against the organization.

The attack in Sarbaz was the latest in a series of dozens of attacks carried out by Jundallah in the Sistan-Baluchestan province since its founding in 2003, killing hundreds of civilians and members of the Iranian security forces. In December 2008 Jundallah used a car bomb to carry out its first suicide bombing attack, killing a number of police officers. In May 2008 at least 25 people were killed and more than 120 wounded in an explosion in a Shi'ite mosque in Zahedan, the province capital, for which Jundallah also claimed responsibility. According to Iran, the network, headed by Abdolmalek Rigi, has ties to Al-Qaeda and is supported by the British and American intelligence services.

A number of months ago responsibility for the security of the eastern border region of Iran was transferred to the Revolutionary Guards, as part of an effort to increase security in the area.

### **Scandal of the week: Daughter of Ahmadinejad's senior advisor seeks political asylum in Germany**

This past week the Iranian media dealt extensively with the defection to Germany of Narges Kalhor, the daughter of Mehdi Kalhor, Iranian President Ahmadinejad's senior media advisor. Narges Kalhor, 25, a student of graphic design and film, went to Germany to present a short film she produced at a festival in Nuremberg dedicated to human rights. A few days before she was supposed to return to Iran she asked the German authorities for political asylum.

Interviewed by Western media, she said that given the current circumstances, she did not feel it was right to remain silent about the situation in Iran. She said she hoped her father would watch her movie (which was about torture) and modify his position. Regarding her request for political asylum, she said that she had decided to remain in Germany after having been warned by telephone call from Iran that because her film was critical of the regime, she

was liable to be arrested if she returned to Iran. She said that she and her father had been out of touch since he left home last year ([www.thelocal.de](http://www.thelocal.de), October 14, 2009).

Last week Mehdi Kalhor confirmed the reports of his daughter's defection and said that he had known nothing of her intentions. He said Narges had been exploited by Iran's enemies, who wanted to use her for propaganda purposes because she was his daughter. He added that after he left his wife last year Narges continued living with her mother. He said his wife had asked for a divorce because of the political differences between them caused by his collaboration with President Ahmadinejad.

Kalhor said that Narges' decision to leave Iran was her own and that he heard about it from the media. He added that for the past year he had had no contact with his daughter and did not know why she decided to defect to Germany. He also said that he had never tried to force his opinions on his children and that joining the reformist opposition and leaving Iran had been entirely her own idea. He exploited an interview with the Iranian News Agency to advise his daughter not to turn into a tool in the hands of Iran's enemies and not to choose a path from which there would be no turning back.



From [www.thelocal.de](http://www.thelocal.de)

The Narges Kalhor affair became more complicated after her mother, Ma'sumeh Taheri Mousavi, denied the divorce. She told the reformist daily paper *E'temaad* that she was not legally divorced from her husband and that there was no connection between their separation and political issues. Mousavi, who works as an instructor in the Iranian Broadcasting Authority College, said that her husband had left the house the previous year shortly after undergoing cardiac surgery. She also said that on a number of occasions her daughter had expressed a desire for contact with her father, but that he had not been interested (Mehr News Agency, October 14, *E'temaad*, October 15, 2009).

## **Woman, stay home! Increasing conservative criticism of women's involvement in politics**

Despite Ahmadinejad's pronouncements a number of weeks about his intention to appoint at least three women to government roles, and after the Majlis rejected his candidates for the positions of minister of education and minister of welfare, this past week his senior advisor Mojtaba Samareh Hashemi said that the president had no intention of proposing another woman candidate for one of the three government ministries still lacking heads (education, welfare and energy) (Mehr News Agency, October 17, 2009).

His remarks followed growing conservative criticism of the appointment of women to senior political positions. This week the conservative cleric Ayatollah Lotfollah Safi-Golpayegani strongly criticized the interior ministry's intention to appoint, for the first time since the Islamic Revolution, women as governors in provinces throughout Iran. At a meeting of clerics who serve as members of the Majlis, he said that appointing women as governors was contrary to Islamic principles. No religion, he said, had as much respect for women and required men to serve women as does Islam, but that did not mean that women could do the jobs of men (Press TV, October 15, 2009). Another senior cleric at the meeting, Ayatollah Makerem-Shirazi, added his voice to the call to keep women out politics. He said that current policy regarding certain issues, such as the presence of women at soccer stadiums and the entrance of women into politics, made it difficult for clerics to collaborate with the government and was liable to drive them away (*Mardom Salari*, October 15, 2009). After the president's announcement of his intention to appoint women as government ministers, senior conservative clerics also noted their reservations and asked him to change his mind.

Furthermore, this week *Yalsarat*, the weekly paper of the radical Islamic group Ansar Hezbollah, published a strident article condemning the involvement of women in politics. Taking women away from their families, it said, and putting them to work in positions which could be filled by any man, left the family without man or woman and created a situation in which the children grew up without a mother, without education and without love. It continued that for mothers to leave their families and work in environments in which men and women were mixed was forbidden by religious law, and all that for a small salary, most of which in any case went for child care and buying clothes and cosmetics. The questions the government had to answer, said the paper, were whether the objective of appointing women as ministers and governors was to solve a problem or to pander to the West and adopt feminist stances, and whether Allah and the Hidden Imam were satisfied by emptying houses of mothers and the dissolution of families. In Islamic society, according to the article, a woman had to be a mother and educator, and not a minister or a governor (*Farda News*, October 17, 2009).

## **Growing argument over the health implications of the regime's jamming satellite and cellular broadcasts**

This week a number of Majlis members demanded that President Ahmadinejad examine the use of devices jamming satellite and cellular telephone broadcasts in Tehran. The demand came in the wake of growing claims from civilians and the media in Iran regarding the negative effects of the devices on the health of the capital's residents.

In recent weeks various experts have warned that the increased use of the jamming systems installed by the regime at a number of locations in Tehran endanger health. One of the claims was that they influenced the fertility of both men and women and damaged the electrical grid and media networks in the city. Some of the experts also warned that the equipment could cause aerial accidents.

Sources in the Iranian ministry of health rejected the claims, stating that the equipment used to jam satellite broadcasts from abroad and cellular telephones was less dangerous than television broadcasts. Some of the members of the Majlis also rejected the warnings, claiming that there was no proof that jamming broadcasts posed a danger to health. For example, Amir-Hossein Qazizadeh, member of the Majlis health committee, claimed that the negative influences of the jamming devices were smaller than those of the spy satellites used by certain countries. This past week the health committee invited representatives from the ministries of defense, communications, intelligence and health, as well as representatives from the Revolutionary Guards, to discuss the issue (*Etemaad*, October 13; *Raja News*, October 17; *Tabnak*, October 19, 2009).



for jamming satellite broadcasts, Tehran  
(From <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/tehranbureau/2009/07/jamming-devices.html>).

Following the public disturbances in Iran after the recent presidential elections, the regime increased the use of jamming equipment to limit the reformist opposition and its supporters, and the influence of foreign media on public opinion in Iran.

### **Pictures of the week: Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei meets with Iranian women Qur'an scholars**

