

(Video) Iran: Trial of Former Prison Official in Albania and Shocking Testimonies of MEK Members

Religious edict declared members of the country's leading opposition group to be inherently guilty of "enmity against God" and thus subject to the death penalty

PARIS, FRANCE, November 13, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The 37th session in the trial of former Iranian prison official Hamid Noury took place in Albania on Friday. It was the third session held in the Balkan country, as part of a trial that is being prosecuted by the Swedish judiciary. The temporary change of venue was requested by prosecutors in order to hear testimony from seven eyewitnesses who reside in Albania in Ashraf 3, established by exiled members of [the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran \(PMOI/MEK\)](#). Proceedings are expected to return to Stockholm after next week, and the trial is currently scheduled to conclude in April.



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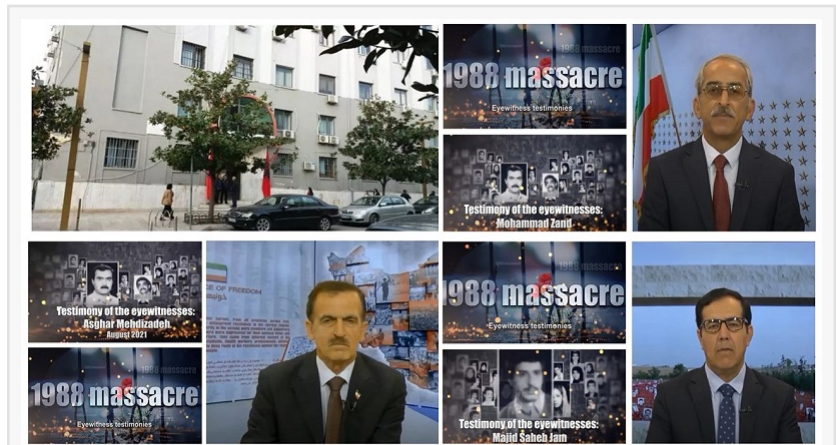
The National Council of Resistance of Iran has held a number of conferences in recent months to bring further attention to that crime and to urge the international prosecution of known perpetrators. Presently, Noury is the only person to face prosecution anywhere for his role in the massacre, and that role was allegedly much smaller

than that played by higher-profile officials. Chief among these is the Iranian regime's president Ebrahim Raisi, who was inaugurated in August right around the time the Noury trial began.

Raisi was reportedly one of four officials who sat on the Tehran "death commission" that was tasked with implementing a fatwa regarding the MEK, issued by the regime's founder and first supreme leader, Ruhollah Khomeini. That religious edict declared members of the country's leading opposition group to be inherently guilty of "enmity against God" and thus subject to the death penalty. Khomeini's instructions to the death commission were to "annihilate the enemies of Islam immediately."

This language has been cited by scholars of human rights and international law in recent [the National Council of Resistance of Iran's \(NCRI\)](#) conferences, to support holding Raisi to account for genocide. The charge of genocide was mentioned by MEK members and supporters this week, in comments to the media outside of the Albanian court, and in a separate gathering held at Ashraf 3 to commemorate the victims of the 1988 massacre and share stories among the survivors who are not participating directly in the Noury trial. Meanwhile, those who are participating shared equally broad-ranging accounts of their experiences, some of which noted personal interactions with Raisi as well as with Noury.

On Thursday, Majid Saheb Jam recalled seeing Noury at Gohardashst Prison calling up prisoners for execution in groups. On Friday, Asghar Mehdizadeh offered similar testimony, noting that at one point he spent five consecutive days in the "death corridor" and saw prisoners being taken out in groups of between 10 and 15, approximately 15 times per day. Both men recalled that



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many detainees were forced to watch their fellows being hanged, and Saheb Jam even recounted having been subjected to a mock execution after becoming one of the very few political prisoners to avoid a capital sentence from the death commission.

The testimony affirmed that Noury was directly involved in that mock execution, having ordered several prisoners to line up facing the gallows before abruptly sending them back to their cells. Stories like this one underscore the fact that Noury was accused not only of facilitating mass executions but also of torturing political detainees both during the 1988 massacre and throughout his career as a prison official. Many of the witnesses in his trial have emphasized that their mistreatment was accelerating for months before the massacre began in earnest.

Asghar Mehdizadeh reported having witnessed Noury's participation in the torture of other prisoners, as well as being victimized by him personally. On one occasion months prior to the massacre, he said, he saw Noury "taking a number of the younger inmates to the courtyard" in winter and "forcing them to crawl on the ground in that cold." Then, at the height of the massacre in early August, Mehdizadeh recognized Noury among several officials who stormed the cell where he was being held in solitary confinement and took him out, blindfolded, to be tortured after they accused him of being "still firm in his support" for the MEK.

Throughout the Noury trial and in the various conferences, it has been stated repeatedly that such "firm support" was alone sufficient to secure a death sentence for any political prisoner. As a result, entire political wards were reportedly emptied by death commissions in various prisons.



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On Wednesday, Mohammad Zand testified that he was sent to solitary confinement for three months in the middle of the massacre and when released, asked an inmate from another ward how many of his fellow detainees were left.

“As far as I know, you’re the last one,” he was told. Zand reported that prior to his solitary confinement, there had been between 160 and 170 prisoners in his ward.

In separate comments published on the NCRI’s website, another survivor of the massacre named Mahmoud Royaei, who has since published five books on the topic, emphasized that the clean sweep of certain wards meant that there were no survivors to give accounts of the massacre from certain regions. This, he said, left open the possibility that the current estimate of 30,000 victims may be an undercount.

The MEK, NCRI, and other concerned parties have long advocated for a formal international investigation into the 1988 massacre, in order to establish its true scale, details of the accompanying abuses, and the location of victims’ bodies. Many of those victims were promptly interred in secret mass graves, and in recent years the Iranian regime has undertaken extensive efforts to destroy and build upon those sites, as part of an effort to downplay the massacre and impede any future investigation.

While these efforts have been a source of despair for many victims’ advocates, the Noury trial has been embraced as a possible sign of newfound political will on the part of some Western powers that are in a position to spearhead an investigation. The particular circumstances of the trial suggest that “universal jurisdiction,” the principle behind Noury’s prosecution, should also be used to arrest the regime’s president Ebrahim Raisi if he travels to certain foreign countries.



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(NCRI) and (PMOI / MEK Iran): Supporters of the Iranian resistance declared their solidarity with the martyrs of the November 2019 nationwide uprising. They also stressed to continue of seeking justice for the martyrs of the 1988 massacre and their families.

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(NCRI) and (PMOI / MEK Iran): It is worth noting that hundreds of former political prisoners are now in Ashraf 3, and many of them were prepared to testify in the Stockholm court. Due to limitations in time, only a few were accepted as plaintiffs in the case.

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