

# USADI Dispatch

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## USADI Commentary

### Rafsanjani's Crimes against Humanity

Nearly seventeen years ago, the tyrants who rule Iran carried out one of the most horrific political mass killings of our times. In what is now known as "The 1988 Iran massacre," tens of thousands of political prisoners were summarily executed nationwide in a span of a few months, beginning in mid-summer 1988. Many international law experts believe this heinous atrocity qualifies the current Iranian leadership as a perpetrator of crimes against humanity.

It is widely expected that Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, Iran's former President the powerful Parliament Speaker and the acting Commander-in- Chief at the time of the 1988 massacre, would be declared the victor in the June 17 presidential election.

As Rafsanjani is preposterously busy reinventing his image for the second time as a moderate, his appeasement-prone admirers on both sides of the Atlantic have already cast him as a pragmatic insiders' insider who can make things happen.

Rafsanjani's appalling record as president and as a key figure in Iran's theocratic leadership since 1979 has been out in the open. However, his decisive role in leading, planning, and carrying out the 1988 massacre has not yet been fully addressed.

In 1981, the Iranian regime embarked on systematic arrest, torture and execution of political dissidents. Tens of thousands of Iranian men and women were imprisoned or executed; members and sympathizers of Iranian People's Mujahedeen Organization (PMOI) comprised the vast majority of executions.

In the mid-1980s international pressure increased tremendously on the clerical regime, urging it to open its prisons to human rights monitors. The problem was what to do with tens of thousands of political prisoners that had been subjected to the most brutal forms of torture. The murderous patriarch Ayatollah Khomeini came up with a solution: Kill them all. In a fatwa in summer of 1988, Khomeini ordered the following:

*"Those who are in prisons throughout the country and remain committed to their support for the [Mujahedeen], are waging war on God and are condemned to execution.... Destroy the enemies of Islam immediately. As regards the cases, use whichever criterion that speeds up the implementation of the [execution] verdict."*

According to published documents, Khomeini first raised the idea of his fatwa at a meeting attended by his key advisors including Rafsanjani, then-President Ayatollah Ali Khamenei (the then President), and Mohammad Khatami (then Director of Cultural Affairs at the General Command of the Armed Forces and Minister of Islamic Guidance). As the regime's de facto Number Two, Rafsanjani vigorously defended the fatwa. After Khomeini issued the fatwa, Rafsanjani oversaw its enforcement as Khomeini's representative and reported to him on the progress of the massacre.

Rafsanjani of course has already proved his ruthlessness in the summer of 1981, when large- scale execution of dissidents began. The testimony of many former political prisoners indicates that he regularly visited prisons to make sure political prisoners were dealt with harshly. It is documented that he facilitated the execution of the prisoners by making it easier for the judges to issue death sentences.

He infamously told a state-run daily in 1981 that: "God's law prescribes four punishments for them (the Mujahedeen). 1-Kill them. 2-Hang them, 3- Cut off their hands and feet 4-Banish them. If we had killed two hundred of them right after the Revolution, their numbers would not have swelled this way. I repeat that according to the Quran, we are determined to destroy all who display enmity against Islam." He eventually fulfilled that promise in summer of 1988 and later during his two-term presidency where scores of prominent Iranian dissidents were assassinated at home and abroad.

By any measure, the massacre of 1988 constitutes a crime against humanity. The current leadership of the clerical regime, including Khamenei, Rafsanjani and Khatami, who were actively involved in this hideous crime, should be held to account.

Rafsanjani's brush with the international criminal law does not end here. In 1997, the criminal court of Berlin implicated Rafsanjani for his direct role in the assassination of Iranian dissidents abroad, according to Iran Focus news journal.

And this is the man who the Trans Atlantic appeasers of mullahs want us to believe would end Iran's nuclear weapons program. A murderous charlatan with no respect for the sanctity of human life and an insatiable obsession with weapons of mass destruction is nothing but a hoax. **(USADI)**

The US Alliance for Democratic Iran (USADI), is an independent, non-profit organization, which aims to advance a US policy on Iran that will benefit America's interests, through supporting Iranian people's aspirations for a democratic, secular, and peaceful government, free of tyranny, fundamentalism, weapons of mass destruction, and terrorism. The USADI is not affiliated with any government agencies, political groups or parties.

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## The Washington Times

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### Rafsanjani and his hitmen

*By Hossein Abedini*

It was 15 years ago, but still seems like yesterday. In mid-afternoon on March 14, 1990, I was sitting next to the driver taking me to the Istanbul airport, when we hit a traffic jam caused by an accident.

Suddenly, a car carrying four men blocked our path. Another car pinned us in from behind. Seconds later, two men, one from the front car and one from the car behind, raced out with automatic guns. As they approached, I opened the car door and rushed at them carrying only a small briefcase. One of the men fired nine bullets; the other man's gun jammed. I was shot in the chest and stomach and gravely wounded. The assailants fled.

Luckily, we were close to Istanbul's International Hospital, where I was rushed. I was in a deep coma for 40 days, and unconscious for three months. With 80 percent of my liver gone, I barely survived and was written off by my doctors more than once. One bullet hit very close to my heart. I went through 14 operations and was given 154 pints of blood.

I am a member of the National Council of Resistance of Iran, the coalition of Iranian opposition movements. The assailants were acting on behest of the clerical regime, the main state sponsor of terrorism. Ironically, as later became evident, the hit men weren't after me. Mohammad Mohaddessin, chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the NCRI, was the real target, as Iranian state radio confirmed.

Even so, this didn't end the attempts to kill me; there were two efforts to finish me off in the hospital. Once, assassins disguised as Turkish police approached the hospital; luckily, the Turkish police came to the hospital at the same time and foiled the plot. Another time, two men pretending to be friends came to my room. They were the mullahs' men. Once again, I was fortunate; several real friends came to visit me at the same time, and the murderers fled.

I am one of very few who has survived mullahs' assassination attempts. My episode is relevant now because all this took place when Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani was the clerical regime's president. With new Iranian presidential elections approaching, he is touted as the front-runner, and some in the West are hoping to be able to strike a grand bargain with him.

It is important to know that there was a clear pattern of assassination and murders during his previous term.

Professor Kazem Rajavi, Iran's most renowned human-rights activist, was gunned down in broad daylight by the mullahs' hitmen while driving near his house in Geneva in 1990. The Swiss implicated 13 Iranian officials with passports stamped "Special Mission." Documents released by Mr. Rajavi's family showed that in 1997 a Swiss magistrate "clearly" had enough evidence to justify an international arrest warrant against Iran's then-Intelligence Minister, Ali Fallahian.

The Rajavi murder was not an isolated incident during Mr. Rafsanjani's presidency. Several Iranian Kurdish leaders were murdered in Vienna in 1989 and in Berlin in 1992. The list goes on.

A Berlin court ruled in 1997 that a secret committee comprising supreme leader Ali Khamenei, Mr. Rafsanjani, then-Foreign Minister Ali-Akbar Velayati, and Mr. Fallahian, had ordered the 1992 assassinations.

The mullahs' terror targets were not only Iranians. The FBI established undeniable evidence that Tehran had masterminded the bombing of Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia in 1996, resulting in the deaths of 19 American servicemen. Nor is Mr. Rafsanjani's mischief-making limited to terrorism; he is an ardent proponent of Iran's drive to acquire nuclear weapons.

For two decades, Europe's appeasement policy has failed. The notion of fishing up a moderate from within the regime has been offered in different wrappings for different occasions, all to no avail.

The West's greater blunder was trying to placate the mullahs by labeling as terrorists the People's Mujahedeen, the principal Iranian opposition, 120,000 of whose members and sympathizers have been executed so far. The Mujahedeen also has played a paramount role in exposing the mullahs' nuclear program and terrorist network.

This terror-listing decision — denounced by renowned jurists as baseless and devoid of any legal basis — has only emboldened the regime's most extreme factions in suppression, nurturing terrorism, and the quest to acquire nuclear weapons.

All signs indicate that the Iranian people are completely disenchanted by the clerical system and desire fundamental changes for democracy. It would be naive and shortsighted to pin any hope on a spent force like Mr. Rafsanjani. The West must ally itself with the Iranian people's cry for freedom. A first step would be to remove the Mujahedeen from the terror list it never should have been on. The West should declare in no unequivocal terms that it does not recognize this sham as an election.

***Hossein Abedini is a member of the the National Council of Resistance of Iran, one of many organizations working to overthrow the regime in that country.***