

# MKO Presence Unconstitutional

**BAGHDAD, Iraq, Feb. 13**--Iraqi Interior Minister Javad Al-Boulani said the presence of the terrorist group Mujahideen Khalq Organization (MKO) in Iraq is against the constitution.

In a meeting with Iran's Ambassador to Iraq Hossein Kazemi-Qomi earlier this week, Al-Boulani stressed that the presence of MKO members in Iraq can create security problems and hinder development of ties with Iran, IRNA reported.

"There is no room in Iraq for groups that can have negative effects on the good relations of Iraq



Javad Al-Boulani

with its neighbors," he said, adding that the Iraqi government is seeking to evict MKO agents from Iraq.

Referring to the present border cooperation as "appropriate", Al-

Boulani noted that it is necessary for Iran and Iraq to pay heed to maintaining their border security.

Kazemi-Qomi, for his part, invited Al-Boulani for a formal visit to Iran.

According to IRNA, Iraqi religious scholars, ethnic leaders, political thinkers and intellectuals issued a statement last week in a conference aimed at studying the role of terrorist groups in conducting criminal operations against the Iraqi government.

Elaborating on MKO's murderous activities against Iraqis, they called for the banishment of 4,000 MKO agents.

## During 24 Provincial Tours

### 5m Letters for President

**TEHRAN, Feb. 13**--President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has received some 5 million letters during his 24 provincial visits.

The president has ordered ministries and state organizations to put these letters, most of which contain requests for jobs, housing loans and medical assistance, on their agenda, Fars News Agency reported on Tuesday.

Earlier, vice president for executive affairs, Ali Saeedlou, said more than 70 percent of letters have been followed up, adding that 95 percent of them pertain to personal problems.

He further said that the president has ordered his administration to help resolve people's problems. Saeedlou announced that the remaining letters will be reviewed in the next two months.

## Elham Voted Justice Minister

**TEHRAN, Feb. 13**--Majlis on Tuesday gave its vote of confidence to Gholamhossein Elham, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's nominee for the post of justice minister.

In an open session on Tuesday, Majlis debated the qualifications, plans and programs of Elham, IRNA reported.

Based on the Majlis rules for confirming presidential appointees, arguments

were heard for and against the nominee with the president starting the proceedings.

The voting by ballot followed the 30-minute speech of the nominee. A total of 254 deputies cast their votes, of which 130 voted in favor, 101 against and 23 abstained.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, in a letter to Majlis Speaker Gholamali Haddad Adel read by Tehran MP Hossein

Nejabat on February 4, introduced the government spokesman who also heads the Presidential Office to Majlis as his nominee for the post of justice minister.

The post became vacant after Justice Minister Jamal Karimi-Rad, 50, died in a road accident on December 28.

Elham will serve in the dual capacity of justice minister and government spokesman.

## Kuwait Commends Iran's Regional Efforts

**TEHRAN, Feb. 13**--Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Muhammad Al-Sabah Al-Salim Al-Sabah said on Tuesday Iran is honest in its efforts to establish security in Iraq.

Al-Sabah, who is currently in Tehran on an official visit, made the remark at a joint press conference with his Iranian counterpart, Manouchehr Mottaki, after talks between the two officials, IRNA reported.

"Iran plays a crucial role in preserving stability in the Middle East," he

said.

Asked about the latest proposal that the parties resume nuclear talks and allow Iran to maintain uranium enrichment at the 4 percent level, the Iranian foreign minister said, "In technical terms, enrichment to produce fuel for nuclear energy production requires a certain level. It is usually between 3.5-5 percent."

Mottaki pointed to a law passed by Majlis which mandates the government to produce 20,000 MW of electricity through nuclear power plants, stressing that Iran defines enrichment as that need-

ed to produce fuel for nuclear power plants.

"This definition will be discussed in talks," he said.

Such levels of uranium enrichment are well off those required to make a nuclear bomb, which is believed to need uranium enriched to around 90 percent.

Mottaki's comments came after chief nuclear negotiator Ali Larjani said on his weekend visit to the Munich security conference Iran could accept a limit on its enrichment as a guarantee it was not seeking nuclear weapons.

## Illegal Pilgrims Arrested in Iraq

**BAGHDAD, Iraq, Feb. 13**--Iraq's Interior Ministry announced on Tuesday 29 Iranian pilgrims who entered Iraq without entry permits were arrested last week.

Releasing a statement, a copy of which was faxed to IRNA's office in Baghdad, the ministry said the pilgrims were arrested by Iraqi forces after they entered Iraq without entry permits.

Iraqi officials, on Feb 10, had announced that the country's borders with its neighboring countries,

including Iran, would be closed for four days as of last Saturday. Travel in and out of the country was, therefore, prohibited.

The decision was made in line with the new Iraq security plan which is

aimed at controlling cross-border traffic.

The detained Iranians will be sent to court where they face a maximum six-month sentence for not having the permit to enter Iraq, the Iraqi Interior

## Councilors Criticize TM Garbage Recycling



7,700 tons of waste materials are transferred to the Kahrizak Landfill on a daily basis.

**TEHRAN, Feb. 13**--Members of Tehran City Council lambasted Tehran Municipality's Urban Services Organization over its garbage recycling performance.

In a two-hour-long meeting on Tuesday, a number of councilors also lashed out at the organization for not hiring private companies and experts for recycling garbage, ISNA reported.

Head of Planning and Budget Commission, Nader Shariatmadari, criticized the replacement of the former head of the organization and said unqualified managers in recent years have been unable to devise a comprehensive plan for recycling.

"It was recently heard that the organization has decided to recycle all garbage into compost. This is while, with 40 years of experience in recycling waste material, the United States changes

only 30 percent of garbage to compost," he said.

According to Shariatmadari, 150 new personnel have been added to the organization during the past four months while compost production facilities handled by contractors have been closed since past six months.

Another critic, Hassan Bayadi, deputy head of Tehran City Council, said officials are indifferent toward the way they handle hospital waste.

Bayadi also lashed out at the organization for not employing private companies and reducing compost production.

"Some municipal officials believe there is no reason for them to be accountable to the city council and councilors should pose questions by writing letters or impeaching the mayor," he said.

Another councilor, Amir Reza Vaezi-Ashtiani, also

criticized the reduction of compost production in recent years from 3,000 tons to 250 tons.

Referring to the poor performance of municipality in collecting garbage from the streets of the 13-million-strong capital, Vaezi-Ashtiani criticized municipal officials for not hiring private operators.

At the beginning of the meeting, deputy Tehran mayor for urban services, Massoud Karbasian, briefed the council on his performance as the head of the Urban Services Organization.

Karbasian said 7,700 tons of waste materials are transferred to the Kahrizak Landfill on a daily basis.

According to him, 22.5 percent of urban garbage are recycled, 27.5 percent are changed into compost, 25 percent are dumped while "the reuse of 25 percent has been planned".

## Mottaki Meets Qadhafi's Envoy

**TEHRAN, Feb. 13**--Libya called for expanding bilateral relations.

Saad Mujber, the special envoy of Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi, told Iran's Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki on Tuesday, the activities of the joint economic commission are inadequate and urged a visit to Tripoli by President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to remove obstacles to mutual relations, IRNA reported.

Pointing to Iran's over 100 years of oil industry expertise, Mottaki said it is ready to share the know-how and assist in Libya's oil projects.

The foreign minister further said Iran can also

take part in development and industrial projects such as the construction of power plants and dams as well as automobile production, stressing that realizing these visions requires the political will of the Libyan government.

"Iran is seriously pursuing stronger ties with Africa," he said.

"Extensive cooperation in different fields can be based on the solid foundation of Iran-Libya relations."

Mottaki referred to contracts signed by Iran and Venezuela, worth \$6 billion, as a model and called on Libya to play an active role in both Latin America and Africa by contributing to the Iran-Venezuela investment package.

## Baztab Banned Again

**TEHRAN, Feb. 13**--The popular Persian website Baztab was banned for the second time in the current Iranian year (ending March 20).

According to IRNA, deputy minister of culture for press and promotional affairs, Alireza Mokhtarpoor, issued a notification on Tuesday, calling on the manager of the website to stop its news and information dissemination activities.

The ban was based on articles 5, 9 and 14 of the bylaw to rehabilitate informational websites.

According to these articles, any activity of informational sites directed against the constitution, national solidarity and territorial integrity and aimed at creating differences, pessimism and hopelessness among people concerning the legitimacy of the Islamic system as well as publication of fabrications will result in a ban.

Baztab was banned by the judiciary on October 14. In November, Tehran's Public Court lifted the ban.

Judge Mohammadkhan, who presides over Branch 1060 of the court, overruled the ban and said the website can resume work.

The judiciary had charged that Baztab posted a letter of the Supreme National Security Council several months ago despite an embargo.

According to informed sources, Mohsen Rezaie, the former head of the Islamic Revolution's Guards Corps and the current secretary of State Expediency Council, runs Baztab. The site's access to key documents concerning financial corruption of some officials, which were posted on the Internet, is also linked to the ban.

## Persian Press Watch

### Strategically Important

**JAAME JAM:** Yet for another time Iran's access to nuclear technology has topped the news agenda both at home and abroad. Not surprisingly the very countries that waited in queues to sell nuclear technology to Tehran before the 1979 and had invested in this key sector are today in the opposite camp and exerting pressure to dismantle the nuclear program. Their attitude, among other things, indicates the value of nuclear energy and the achievements that come with it. Needless to say, if it were otherwise, we would not be witness to hundreds of conferences, tens of general and urgent meetings by powerful states and international organizations. Similarly if nuclear power was not of strategic importance, the big players would hardly spend time and energy on issuing resolutions and statements. The Islamic Republic is aware that so far as we produce spaghetti, potato chips, chocolates, confectionary, canned food...there will be no sensitivity towards us. But if and when we want to enter the so-called exclusive zones that a few big and hegemonic powers consider as their backyard, the problems start with huge howls and cries. Published reports have it that today 442 nuclear plants are operating across the world generating 17 percent of the global electricity. Most of the atomic plants are in the US, France, the UK, Germany, Japan, Russia and China and multi-billion-dollar investments are planned in new generation nuclear plants in these and other countries.

### More Assertive

**ABRAR:** Russian President Vladimir Putin's speech at the just concluded international security conference in Munich has been billed as unprecedented and contained important issues that could well be a turning point in the making of the new world order. Putin told the high-profile session that America under George Bush has exceeded its limits too far and wide. He warned of the potential dangers posed to the world by Bush and his foreign policy. The Kremlin chief stressed that no one feels safe under the present conditions and few if any consider international law and its instruments as effective. He said that the planned deployment of new US missile defense systems in Poland and the Czech Republic simply has nothing to do with the fight against terrorism. It seems Putin seized the opportunity created as a result of successive failures of US diplomacy in war-torn Iraq and Afghanistan. US attempts aimed at further restricting Russian influence and control in the former eastern block countries has compelled Moscow to embark on some retaliatory measures against Washington. Furthermore, neocon policy not to allow Moscow to play a bigger and effective role in Afghanistan and Iraq is not hidden from Russian sight and has in fact encouraged it to be more assertive in this part of the world.

### Hindrance

**MARDOMSALARI:** Weekend talks between Iran's top nuclear negotiator and security chief, Ali Larjani and EU foreign policy chief, Javier Solana on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference opened a new phase in Iran's nuclear issue. In the past year and a half after the new government took office, international pressure on Tehran to dismantle its civilian nuclear program has visibly increased. The UN Security Council in 2006 issued two anti-Iran resolutions in a bid to push Tehran to reverse its nuclear program. Under the conditions that pressure, intimidation and threats against the country are of the ascending order, radical moves and decisions related to the nuclear issue could hinder not help. It is only with wisdom, foresight and broad vision that a peaceful solution can and should be found to the nuclear standoff.

### New Focus

**IRAN:** Government spokesman, Gholamhossein Elham was proposed by the government for the justice portfolio and the Majlis approved the nomination. Elham has experience in both the executive and judiciary branches of government. It is expected that he will initiate important developments in the Justice Ministry. According to Article 160 of the Constitution pertaining to the duties of the justice minister, he is responsible for all affairs related to the interaction between the three branches of power, i.e. legislative, judiciary and executive. Although as per our Constitution this key ministry has lofty duties to fulfill, it has hardly done so in practice. Now the focus is on Elham, he is expected to deliver where his predecessors could not, and elevate the justice dispensing organization to its proper status.