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IRN41136.E 20 March 2003

Subject: ►Iran◄: Update to IRN30373.E of 12 November 1998 on whether the group Derafsh-e Kaviani (Flag of Freedom Organization of ►Iran◄) is active in ►Iran◄; its structure and relationship with Reza Pahlavi II

Regional Office: 7

16/6'04

From: Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

Information obtained by the Research Directorate concerning the Derafsh-e Kaviani is contradictory.

Derafsh-e Kaviani, or Flag of Freedom Organization of ►Iran◄, is a Paris-based (*The Dallas Morning News* 29 Apr. 1996), "underground nationalist movement which advocates the establishment of parliamentary democracy in ►Iran◄" (Persian Web n.d.). Agence France Presse identified the group as "a pro-democracy opposition group" in one of its news reports (21 Dec. 2000). According to the United Kingdom's Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND), the Derafsh-e Kaviani changed its name in 1992 to the Organisation for Human Rights and Fundamental Liberties for ►Iran◄ (Oct. 2002). However, corroborating information concerning the group's name change could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

The country report on ►Iran◄ contained in the final report of the 7th European Country of Origin Information Seminar provides the following information on nationalist and monarchist groups in ►Iran◄:

Although often Iranian asylum seekers claim to have carried out activities for either nationalist or monarchist groups inside ►Iran◄ (distributing pamphlets, putting up posters, organizing resistance, etc...) there is no evidence of any such activities inside ►Iran◄. ...

There are, however, numerous monarchist splinter groups in many of the European countries, that have lost all sense of reality with respect to ►Iran◄. Some are not more than coffee gatherings, others try to pursue some structured activities with members, ... [while] some are slightly more active such as the Derafsh-e Kaviani led by former Minister Manouchehr Ganji, but in fact none of these organizations are known in ►Iran◄ or have activities inside the country (UNHCR/ACCORD 11 June 2001, 90).

Information corroborating the UNHCR/ACCORD assessment was provided by a member of the National Movement of Iranian Resistance (NAMIR) (10 Mar. 2003), "a broad-based coalition of Iranian people" who are working towards a democratic government (NAMIR n.d.). The NAMIR member stated that the Derafsh-e Kaviani "is not an active organisation either inside ►Iran◄ or outside ►Iran◄" (10 Mar. 2003).

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, the Secretariat of Reza Pahlavi stated that while Derafsh-e Kaviani "did have activities [in ►Iran◄] in the past," the Secretariat "do[es] not have any information regarding this organization's present activities" (7 Mar. 2003).

However, contradictory information was provided by the Executive Director of the Foundation for Democracy in ►Iran◄ (FDI) (11 Mar. 2003), "a non-profit organization devoted to the promotion of democracy and human rights in ►Iran◄ [that] provides free weekly news service and human rights alerts online" (Islam Online n.d.). The Executive Director, a former journalist who has written for the *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Times*, *Newsweek*, *Time*, CBS News and ABC News

(NewsMax.com 7 Mar. 2002), stated that "[y]es, Derafsh-e Kaviani - the Flag of Freedom Organization - is active inside »Iran«" (11 Mar. 2003).

Information corroborating the FDI Executive Director's assertion is provided by IND in its October 2002 country assessment on »Iran«, which states that the Derafsh-e Kaviani "distributes audio and videotapes within »Iran«, " that it "broadcasts from radio station Voice of Kaviyani Banner of »Iran«" and that it "[c]laims" to have a "network of resistance cells" in »Iran« (Oct. 2002).

When asked whether there is a relationship between the Derafsh-e Kaviani and Reza Pahlavi, the Secretariat of Reza Pahlavi simply responded by stating that Derafsh-e Kaviani "is an independent organization" (7 Mar. 2003). However, both the IND and the NAMIR member identified Derafsh-e Kaviani as a monarchist group (UK Oct. 2002; NAMIR 10 Mar. 2003), which, according to the NAMIR member, "therefore promotes Reza Pahlavi" (ibid.). He also stated that "Reza Pahlavi will not solely identify himself with any group; [he] plays a figure head and unifying role amongst opposition groups to the Islamic Republic" (10 Mar. 2003).

The Executive Director of FDI stated that he is not "aware" of any "institutional relationship" between Derafsh-e Kaviani and Reza Pahlavi, Derafsh-e Kaviani and "the Constitutional »Monarchists« of »Iran«" or between Derafsh-e Kaviani and "other monarchist groups" (11 Mar. 2003).

In 1996, *The Dallas Morning News* reported that Dr. Manouchehr Ganji, the founder and secretary-general of Derafsh-e Kaviani (29 Apr. 1996; Yale University 2002), was a cabinet member "in the pro-Western regime of Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi before its fall in 1979" (*The Dallas Morning News* 29 Apr. 1996).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

Agence France Presse (AFP). 21 December 2000. "US Court Orders »Iran« to Pay 311 Million Dollars for Dissident's Killing." (NEXIS)

The Dallas Morning News. 29 April 1996. Gregg Jones. "U.S. Policy Toward »Iran« Focus of Conference Unilateral Sanctions Cost U.S. Companies While Global Competitors Arrange Contracts." (NEXIS)

Foundation for Democracy in »Iran«. 11 March 2003. Correspondence received from the Executive Director.

Islam Online. n.d. "»Iran«." <<http://www.islamonline.com/iran1.html>> [Accessed 14 Mar. 2003]

National Movement of Iranian Resistance (NAMIR). 10 March 2003. Correspondence received from a member of the Movement.

_____. n.d. "About NAMIR." <<http://impact.users.netlink.co.uk/namir/namir1.htm>> [Accessed 14 Mar. 2003]

The NAMIR "believes in the separation of religion from the institutions of Government and the creation of a stable, prosperous ►Iran◄ ..." (NAMIR n.d.). According to IND, it is a Paris-based, monarchist group that was "forced into exile in Revolution 1978-1979" and is "[n]o longer very active" (UK Oct. 2002).

NewsMax.com. 7 March 2002. Carl Limbacher and NewsMax.com staff. "Drudge: CNN Censors Jackson Bio." <<http://www.newsmax.com/showinside.shtml?a=2002/3/7/142614>> [Accessed 14 Mar. 2003]

Persian Web. n.d. "Politics and Political Groups." <<http://www.farsinet.com/persianweb/indexp6.html>> [Accessed 13 Mar. 2003]

Secretariat of Reza Pahlavi. 7 March 2003. Correspondence.

United Kingdom (UK). October 2002. Immigration and Nationality Directorate, Home Office. "Annex B - Political Parties." *Country Assessment - ►Iran◄*. <<http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/default.asp?PageId=3442>> [Accessed 14 Mar. 2003]

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees/Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (UNHCR/ACCORD). 11 June 2001. "►Iran◄: Country Report," Presentation by Drewery Dyke of Caswanme, UNHCR HQ, with additional remarks from Bernard Quah of Amnesty International, London in "Final Report on the 7th European Country of Origin Information Seminar, 11-12 June 2001, Berlin.

Yale University. 2002. Yale Political Union. "Dr. Manouchehr Ganji." <<http://www.yale.edu/ypu/schedule/ganji.html>> [Accessed 6 Mar. 2003]

Additional Sources Consulted

Derafsh-e Kaviani did not respond to a letter requesting information within time constraints.

Unsuccessful attempts to contact the Institute for Political and International Studies in Teheran, Islamic Republic of ►Iran◄.

Internet sites, including:

Amnesty International

Derafsh-e Kaviani Website is inactive.

Human Rights Watch

International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (including ►Iran◄ Report)

Search engine:

Google

