



Iran – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 21 January 2014

Is there any information on the “Students Green Party”. History, aims and objectives etc Legal status of party. Has the group held demonstrations? Any reports of some of its members being arrested within the past 6 months? Treatment of members while in custody?

Information on a group specifically named the “Students Green Party” was not found among sources available to the Research and Information Unit.

An Al Jazeera article refers to the Iranian opposition known as the “Green Movement” as follows:

“On June 23, 2009, a spontaneous mass demonstration erupted in Iran against the officially declared victory of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in perhaps the most publicly contested presidential election in the history of the Islamic Republic. The following day, the victorious Ahmadinejad staged an official demonstration in support of the declared victory. The day after that, on June 25, Iran witnessed a huge mass rally against the status quo with the slogan of ‘Where Is My Vote?’, which eventually emerged as the defining moment of an uprising that its supporters by now called the ‘Green Movement’. The Green Movement progressed apace with mass demonstrations and civil disobedience until February 14, 2010, when its attempt to stage a rally in support of the emerging Arab revolutions was brutally suppressed. The nominal leaders of the uprising were systematically arrested, subjected to kangaroo courts and jailed.” (Al Jazeera (12 June 2013) *What happened to the Green Movement in Iran?*)

A document published on the United States Institute for Peace website, in a section titled “Overview”, states:

“A new opposition was born after the disputed June 12, 2009 presidential election that changed the face of Iranian politics—and Iran. A nation long maligned—for a regime of corrupt zealots that harbored terrorists and took diplomats hostage—suddenly became a beacon of democratic hope. The movement was widely seen as a new non-violent, non-utopian and populist paradigm of revolution that infused twenty-first century Internet technology with people street power. In turn, the regime’s facade as a populist theocracy, led by a divinely sanctioned ‘guardian’ and supported by a deeply pious nation, was torn asunder. Over the next six months, the Green Movement evolved from a mass group of angry voters to a nation-wide force demanding the democratic rights originally sought in the 1979 revolution, rights that were hijacked by radical clerics. Every few weeks, protesters took to the streets to challenge the regime and its leadership. But by early 2010, the regime had quashed public displays of opposition. The Green Movement retreated into a period of soul-searching and regrouping.” (United States Institute for Peace – The Iran Primer (undated) *The Green Movement*)

A 2009 article published by the Institute for War and Peace Reporting states:

“The Green Movement began when millions of people poured into the streets in the belief that Ahmadinejad had rigged the election. The repression that followed forced the movement to retreat underground, but it stayed alive. It sought different arenas in which to pursue its goals and spread deeper into society. Government violence succeeded in reducing the number of street protesters and dispersed the movement. We no longer see millions protesting in unison. The movement has, however, become more difficult to control. What was once a movement of young and modernised middle-class youth has become truly multi-generational. It includes the modern and the traditional, the Muslim, and the secular, the old and the very young. The Green Movement is everywhere. It appears like a spectre, becomes invisible, and returns. It came out on Quds (Jerusalem) Day on September 19, intended to mark solidarity with the Palestinians, and surfaced in universities across the country on the first day of term on September 28. It reappeared again on the 30 anniversary of the takeover of the United States embassy on November 4. University students protested across the country. Old and young, traditional women covered head to toe in black, and youth clad in loud and funky outfits came out in defiance of strict orders by the security forces. And this time, Iranian children joined their parents and older siblings. They turned their schools into places of protest.” (Institute for War and Peace Reporting (13 November 2009) *Green Movement Spreading Despite Crackdown*)

A US Congressional Research Service report, in a section titled “Opposition/”Green Movement” (Rah-e-Sabz)” (paragraph headed “Student Groups”), states:

“Groups composed of well-educated, Westernized urban youth are the backbone of the Green Movement. They have attempted, with mixed success, to gain support of older generation, labor, clerics, village-dwellers, and other segments. The Office of Consolidation of Unity is the student group that led the 1999 riots but which later became controlled by regime loyalists and disbanded. An offshoot, the Confederation of Iranian Students (CIS), believes in regime replacement and in U.S.-style free markets. CIS founder, Amir Abbas Fakhraei, is based in Washington, DC. Co-founder, Arzhang Davoodi, remains in prison in Iran serving a lifetime prison sentence.” (US Congressional Research Service (4 November 2013) *Iran: U.S. Concerns and Policy Responses*, pp.5-6))

An article from The Guardian states:

“The green tide has been reversed by a crackdown that has seen an estimated 5,000 people arrested since last June and 115 executed this year alone. Opposition groups say at least 80 have died in street clashes and in detention, although the real death toll may be far higher. At least six political detainees are on death row after being convicted of mohareb (waging war against God) for their alleged role in the demonstrations. Activists capable of organising protests have been detained or intimidated into silence and passivity. Leading reformists – such as Karroubi's former aide, Mohammad Ali Abtahi – have been given lengthy prison sentences after televised show trials before being released on onerous bail conditions. Many activists have

fled to neighbouring countries such as Turkey. Turkish refugee officials have acknowledged the arrival of around 4,000 Iranians since last June, though some sources suggest that is an underestimate. Former detainees complain of brutal and degrading treatment, including alleged rape and sodomy. One man, who fled to Turkey, said he was dumped in the street and left for dead after sexual assault. The award-winning film-maker Jafar Panahi – detained in Evin prison for two months until his release on 25 May – described being made to strip naked and stand outside for an hour and a half in the middle of the night.” (The Guardian (9 June 2010) *Iran election anniversary protests face severe crackdown*)

See also article from The Guardian which states:

“Nearly four years have passed since the birth of Iran’s green movement. Arising from the massive street protests against the official results of the 2009 presidential election, it endured brutal repression and finally receded in the face of arrests, beatings, and torture. Three of its most prominent figures – Mir-Hossein Mousavi, his wife, Zahra Rahnava, and Mehdi Karubi – have been under house arrest for more than two years. Other movement leaders are in prison or exile.” (The Guardian (17 May 2013) *Green Movement activists live in fear as Iran’s presidential election nears*)

This article also states:

“In December 2009, the government brought the hammer down on dissent, sanctioning savage attacks on street demonstrators. There were no more large-scale protests until spring 2011, after the Arab spring had created an opening. That revival was short-lived, in part due to the incarceration of Mousavi and Karubi with which the government responded to the marches of 25 Bahman (February 14).” (ibid)

A Washington Post article states:

“As Iran prepares to elect a new president, the anti-establishment energy that drove violent protests four years ago has disappeared, quashed by the heavy-handed crackdown in 2009 that followed Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s contested reelection. The unlikely leaders of that opposition movement, Mir Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karubi, have been under house arrest since 2011, and most of the student leaders and activists who helped organize the rallies are either in prison or living abroad, removed from the daily realities of a country whose focus on an economic crisis bears little resemblance to the struggles of four years ago. While activists abroad persist in their calls for change within Iran, there are no visible signs inside the country of those who led the protests.” (Washington Post (28 April 2013) *In Iran, protesters are silent ahead of elections*)

A Deutsche Welle article states:

“First, the reformist politicians and journalists were arrested. Hundreds of thousands took to the streets and thousands were arrested and jailed. Hundreds of journalists and activists were forced to flee Iran. Some 70 people were killed in the violence or tortured to death in jail. Four years later, tension between the government and the opposition is growing and it is unclear whether the Green Movement will be revived. The fact that despite

international pressure Karroubi, Mousavi and his wife Zahra Rahnavard remain under house arrest since calling on their supporters to protest in solidarity with the Arab Spring two years ago is a clear sign that the Green Movement is still alive, says one of Mousavi's advisors Ardeshir Amir Arjomand who is in exile. 'The authorities know that Mousavi and Karroubi's supporters would re-organize if the house arrest came to an end,' he explains. 'That's why they started their arrests and crackdown well before the elections.' 'I think that the Green Movement still exists.' However, the self-taught sociologist Abbas Abdi would disagree. 'A political movement is characterized by the presence of its supporters in the public sphere. On 25 June 2009, there were about two million demonstrators on the streets. What about today? No demonstrator to be seen.'" (Deutsche Welle (27 May 2013) *The state of Iran's Green Movement today*)

A report published by the US-based Foundation for Defense of Democracies states:

"Almost four years after the largest anti-regime demonstrations in the thirty-four years long history of the Islamic Republic, Iran's Green Movement, the main organizing force behind the public rallies, is a shadow of its former self as it lacks leaders, mid-level managers, regional headquarters, funding, access to the mass media, and a unifying ideology." (Foundation for Defense of Democracies (February 2013) *Iran's Green Movement*)

This report comments on the leadership of the Green Movement as follows:

"Engineer Mir-Hossein Mousavi and Hojjat al-Eslam Mehdi Karrubi, presidential contenders in 2009, were symbolic rather than effective leaders of the protest movement. Fearing regime collapse or a blood bath perpetrated by the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), both leaders proved indecisive at a time when their supporters were in the streets of Tehran in millions. Both leaders first urged their supporters to return home so they could negotiate with Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, but with the supporters out of the streets they had no chips with which they could bargain with the regime. Mousavi and Karrubi's later calls for public demonstrations were ignored by the public; both leaders have since been under house arrest and a new leadership of the Green Movement has yet to emerge." (ibid)

A report published on the The Green Voice of Freedom website states:

"According to the source, between 200-300 people were violently arrested near the Rahnama'i three-way crossing and the city's Mellat Park. The campaign adds that some of the protesters were bleeding as they were being taken away by security forces, who were beating them up. The detained were then taken to a detention in Reza Shahr's Kuye Polis. However, tens of those held in Kuye Polis, were blindfolded and taken to another security prison. Student activists Hoseyn Ahmadinezhad, Farzaneh Najjarnezhad, Ali Razaghi, Morteza Baqerzadeh and Amir Sheybani were also jailed on Monday [14 February] and there is currently no information about where they're being held. Interestingly, the activists were not arrested for protesting on the streets, but either at work or home. The University of Ferdowsi's security, aided by plain-clothed militia, attacked students on Monday preventing them from forming any gathering or simply filming the protests. Many student activists also were arrested for a number of hours before being

released.” (The Green Voice of Freedom (20 February 2011) *More than 200 detained in northeastern city following 14 Feb protests*)

An Amnesty International public statement describes the experiences of an Iranian student as follows:

“This was not Rozhin’s first encounter with arbitrary policies. Years before her detention, in 2006, she was a veterinarian student, but had been expelled after only one semester at Tehran University. Despite having done well in several courses, she received a zero in all of her subjects and the dean of her college told her that it was better for her not to go to university. She was not allowed to register for her second semester and told that it was impossible for her to resume her studies. Blocked from pursuing her education in Iran, that year Rozhin Mohammadi moved to the Philippines where she decided to study medicine. In 2009, during a trip back to Iran, she was brought under the scrutiny of Iran’s security services, in relation to her involvement with the Green Movement and Mehdi Karroubi’s presidential campaign.” (Amnesty International (23 September 2013) *A lesson in exclusion – Iran’s harsh treatment of student activists*)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research and Information Unit 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 read in full all documents referred to.

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Google

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