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## Iran hangs three for bombing in oil-rich southwest

Thu Sep 13, 2007 12:31PM BST

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TEHRAN, Sept 13 (Reuters) - Iran has hanged three people convicted of involvement in a bombing attack in its oil-rich southwest and others are awaiting execution for the same crime, the official IRNA news agency said on Thursday.

In October 2005, bombs killed six people and wounded nearly 100 in Ahvaz, provincial capital of Khuzestan province, which has a substantial ethnic Arab population. Another double bombing in January 2006 killed eight and wounded 46.

"They were hanged after their sentences were upheld this week," IRNA quoted Ahvaz prosecutor Musa Piriai as saying, without making clear when they were put to death or specifying which attack they were convicted of.

"Some others involved in the bombings are on the waiting list to be hanged," he said. IRNA did not name those executed. Iran has also previously executed people for the bombings.

It was the latest in a series of hangings in Iran that has been criticised by the European Union and Western rights groups.

Khuzestan, heartland of the oil industry in the world's number four producer, was last year simmering with unrest among its Arab population. Some have complained of discrimination by Tehran.

In August, Iranian media said intelligence officials had uncovered a separatist group in the province, arresting members and seizing weapons.

About 3 percent of Iran's population are Arabs and the authorities are sensitive about discontent in Arab territories.

Murder, rape, adultery, armed robbery, apostasy and drug smuggling are all punishable by death under Iran's sharia law, imposed after the 1979 Islamic revolution. [Continued...](#)

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The number of executions in the country, many in public, has risen since July with the launch of a summer crackdown on "immoral behaviour". Police have arrested dozens of murderers, rapists and drug traffickers.

Amnesty International, which says Iran has one of the highest rates of executions in the world, last week said it had recorded 210 so far this year, including those reported on Wednesday, compared with 177 for all of 2006.

Iran says it is prosecuting criminals under its Islamic sharia law and rejects criticism of its human rights record.

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