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Iran Says Two Charged With Spying For Israel

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Prosecutor Abbas Jafari Dolatabadi said the alleged spies worked for the country's atomic energy program

Tehran's chief prosecutor says two Iranians have been charged with spying for Israel about Iran's nuclear program, RFE/RL's Radio Farda reports.

Abbas Jafari Dolatabadi said on October 26 the two were in contact with Israeli intelligence and provided them with information. He said their cases will be presented to a court by November 1.

Dolatabadi added that 15 other Iranians are now serving prison terms of 10-15 years on similar charges. He did not say for whom they had been spying or where or when they had been tried.

Dolatabadi added that their names have not been revealed in order to protect the reputations of their families. They reportedly worked for the country's atomic energy program.

Dolatabadi did not say if the latest cases were also nuclear program employees.

Iranian Intelligence Minister Haider Maslehi announced last month that several people had been arrested for espionage in regard to the country's nuclear program.

Mohammad Seifzadeh, a Tehran-based attorney, told Radio Farda on October 27 that Iran's espionage law states that "should anyone knowingly and willingly provide a third party with plans, secrets, or documents regarding the domestic or foreign policy of the country, [he/she] may be sentenced to about 10 years of imprisonment."

Seifzadeh supported the prosecutor's decision not to release the names of those arrested in order to protect their families' reputations, calling it "completely legitimate." He said even after their sentences are passed they can remain anonymous if the judicial authorities think it is appropriate.

Seifzadeh told Radio Farda that sentences for espionage range from 1-15 years in jail depending on the severity of the offense.

The Iranian authorities' recent wave of arrests for espionage are in addition to the detentions of opposition members for "alliance with the enemy" and "participation in soft war" against Iran that began with the postpresidential election unrest in summer 2009.

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