

Dissident Will Not Be Returned to Iran

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Body

An Iranian **dissident** who has been detained since April on suspicion of belonging to a group designated by the State Department as a sponsor of terrorist activities **will not** be deported to **Iran**, her lawyer and an immigration official said yesterday.

But they disagreed about whether she **will** be deported at all. As part of a settlement, Mahnaz Samadi, 35, who claims to have been tortured in **Iran** between 1982 and 1986, **will** be deported to a third country, an immigration spokesman said. Her attorney, disputing that assertion, said Samadi **will** be allowed to remain indefinitely in the United States.

She was accused in immigration documents of preparing rebel units under her command for "coordinated attacks designed to liberate **Iran**."

The settlement calls for her release from detention and dismissal of terrorism-related charges against her, said Russ Bergeron, a spokesman for the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Samadi, who came to the United States in 1994 and was granted political asylum in 1995, admitted to immigration officials that she had fraudulently attained asylum and was **willing** to give up that status, Bergeron said.

Samadi's main concern was that she **not** be deported back to **Iran**. Speaking to the Washington Times last week from her jail cell in Richmond, she said, "I have no doubt that I **will** be tortured to death, **not** simply executed" if she is **returned**.

She has had the backing of more than 60 House members, who sent a letter to Attorney General Janet Reno pleading for her release and accusing prison officials of mistreating her.

Sen. Robert G. Torricelli (D-N.J.) welcomed the decision to drop the terrorism charges against Samadi. "I have been convinced from the beginning she is **not** a terrorist, and she poses no threat to our country," Torricelli said.

Samadi has the backing of the National Council for Resistance of **Iran**, which has been praised by many lawmakers as a legitimate group seeking democracy in **Iran**.

The State Department, however, continues to list it as an alias for the Iraq-based Mujahedeen Khalq, which it describes as a terrorist organization.

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Samadi has denied committing any terrorist acts. Her Washington attorney, Michael Maggio, says she is no longer a member of the Iranian opposition and has committed no crimes in this country.

He said immigration service assertions that she will be deported to a third country are incorrect.

"It would violate the spirit of the agreement," Maggio said. "In reality, something like this is not going to happen."

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