

[TRANSCRIPT OF ORIGINAL NEWS ARTICLE IN ENGLISH]

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Reagan urges halt to Bahai killings

Washington, Sun. – President Ronald Reagan will issue a statement tonight saying that the United States is alarmed and dismayed at the persecution of Bahais in Iran and urging the Iranian government to stop the planned execution of a group of prominent Bahais, White House officials said yesterday.

"I strongly urge other world leaders to join me in an appeal to the Ayatollah Khomeiny and the rest of Iran's leadership not to implement the sentences that have been pronounced on these innocent people," said the presidential statement, which was made available yesterday.

White House officials said at least 150 Bahai men and women were hanged or shot by the Iranian government since 1979.

Singled out

Although the Bahai population in Iran is relatively small – between 300,000 and 400,000 – the Khomeiny government has singled them out as adherents of a heretic Islamic sect.

The Bahais have no clergy and uphold the divine origin of all major religions, including Islam.

They shun violence, abstain from partisan politics and espouse the eradication of prejudices of race, creed, class, nationality and sex.

Bahai officials in the US said M. Reagan's statement would be the first White House expression of concern about the persecution of the Bahais since the Iranian revolution.

The statement was prompted by several congressional resolutions about the Bahais, growing State Department concern about the treatment of the minority, and the highly vocal and organised Bahais in the US, who number 100,000. — NYT.

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