

Ex-Iran Official Executed by Tehran Was Spy for MI6, Intel Officials Confirm

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A former Iranian official and dual British-Iranian citizen who was hanged in Tehran in January was a spy for the UK's Foreign Intelligence Service, intelligence officials have revealed.

According to a report by the *New York Times* – which cited information obtained through interviews with former and current American, British, German and Iranian intelligence officials – Alireza Akbari provided nuclear secrets to the UK's Foreign Intelligence Agency, MI6, for 15 years, before he was arrested and then [executed](#) by the Iranian government in January this year.

As Iran's former deputy Defence Minister, Akbari reportedly began giving confidential information to the UK in 2004, when Iranian authorities trusted him enough to meet with ambassadors from the five permanent members of the UN Security Council in order to allay their concerns of Tehran's potential plans to produce nuclear weapons.

It was then, according to Tehran, that MI6 recruited Akbari that year during a function at the British Embassy, offering to his family visas to the UK – where they later moved to – and starting assignments that would pay him a total of £2 million. He also reportedly set up companies in the UK, Austria and Spain as a cover to meet his handlers.

According to the *NYT* report, he was the source which informed British intelligence of Iran's nuclear ambitions, revealing that Tehran had been enriching uranium at a secret underground site at Fordow, 20 miles north-east of the city of Qom. That resulted in a senior British intelligence official visiting Israel's capital, Tel Aviv, in 2008 and passing on the information to Israeli officials regarding the nuclear secrets and MI6's possession of a mole deep within the Iranian State.

At the G20 summit in Pittsburgh the following year, former western leaders made the

intelligence public, with US President Barack Obama stating that Iran was operating a “covert uranium enrichment facility” and subsequently “endangering the global non-proliferation regime”.

British Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, also said that the secret nuclear base should “shock and anger” the international community, and that it had “no choice today but to draw a line in the sand”.

Akbari also reportedly revealed the identities and activities of over 100 Iranian officials involved in the nuclear programme, including Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, the chief Nuclear Scientist or the “father of the Iranian bomb” who was to later be assassinated by Israel in 2020.

Despite being arrested and interrogated by Iranian authorities soon afterwards, Akbari was released and moved to London with his family, where he gained British citizenship. He continued to have deep ties with Iranian officials and visited the country three times, before Iran and its Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) discovered – through Russian intelligence – his role in providing intelligence to MI6.

A decade after the public revelations of Tehran’s apparent nuclear aims, he was arrested and detained upon his trip to Iran in 2019, where he was reportedly brutally interrogated and then executed on 14 January this year.

Despite Iran having charged Akbari with being an MI6 agent, the British government has never acknowledged it. The *NYT* report and intelligence officials’ revelation of his role for the agency now seems to confirm that, although London has not yet commented on the report.

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