

Iran warns of 'mock assassination' ring

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Tehran's governor says a foreign-backed group intends to stage mock assassinations to disrupt Iran's pre-election political climate.

"We have reliable intelligence that certain parties are plotting to carry out mock assassinations to disrupt the pre-election climate and make the atmosphere seem insecure," Morteza Tamaddon said in the Iranian capital on Tuesday.

Tamaddon, however, promised that the relevant government bodies would take the necessary security measures to ensure that all candidates are provided with a calm setting to run their campaigns.

He also said that although the current Principlist administration was under attack by some potential contenders, it would not allow the rights of any candidate to be violated.

However, Reformist media, such as Roozonline, described the governor's speech as 'an assassination threat made against President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's rivals'.

The notion of an assassination prior to the June 12 elections was first introduced a few months ago when the influential Keyhan daily published an article, predicting an incident similar to the assassination of Pakistan's Benazir Bhutto in Iran.

Keyhan said that Washington may orchestrate an assassination attempt against Mohammad Khatami should the speculations lead to the conclusion that the former Reformist president would lose the election to Ahmadinejad.

At the time, Khatami had announced his decision to run in the upcoming presidential elections — a decision that was later revoked.

The article drew a harsh reaction from the Reformist camp who called it the 'product of an extremist mind'.

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