

# Iranian Disinformation Campaign Against the MEK and All in Diaspora

## Strategies and Impacts on Opposition Activities

Treadstone 71

Introduction..... 3

Below is the first post for analysis ..... 3

    Analysis ..... 4

        Disinformation Analysis ..... 4

            Table- Analysis of Iranian Disinformation Tactics ..... 5

            The Graph Below ..... 5

                Graph Interpretation ..... 6

                    Graph- Disinformation Impact on Opposition Activities ..... 6

The Continued False Claims of Maryam Rajavi’s Health ..... 7

    Analysis ..... 7

        Analysis of the Disinformation ..... 8

Wrap-up ..... 8

## Introduction

The Iranian regime has recently made false claims regarding the health of Maryam Rajavi, leader of the MEK, alleging that her condition has deteriorated following a nervous attack. Their statement from Al-Alam News Network asserts that Rajavi's health remains unstable, requiring high-dose drugs to stabilize her vital signs. The regime's propaganda asserts that her attendance at the annual ceremony on June 30 is a drug-induced push to alleviate internal pressures, a claim intended to undermine the Berlin rally's significance and discourage participation.

The regime's statement falsely labels the temporary detainment and questioning of MEK dissidents in France as arrests, attempting to portray opposition members as criminals to justify its actions against them. The intentional misrepresentation undermines the legitimacy of the MEK and other opposition groups. The regime frames its actions as securing national interests, masking its oppressive tactics under the guise of legal measures while emphasizing judicial diplomacy to extradite dissidents. The broad and unfounded allegations of crimes such as money laundering, espionage, and drug trade aim to discredit the MEK and justify harsh measures against its members. The regime's threats to extradite dissidents create fear among opposition members and their families, discouraging anti-regime activities. Iran pressures host countries like Albania and France to expel MEK members. The regime seeks to isolate the opposition and limit their operational freedom.

The Iranian regime's disinformation tactics, executed by the Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS), impact not only the MEK but all Iranians living outside Iran. They spread false claims and manipulated judicial rhetoric to discredit opposition groups and create fear and uncertainty. Iranians abroad face threats of extradition and punishment, discouraging participation in anti-regime activities and fostering vulnerability. Additionally, the regime threatens those living abroad with the incarceration of loved ones still in Iran. Their coercive measures isolate opposition members, reduce their operational freedom, and intimidate the broader Iranian diaspora to prevent dissent and maintain control. The MOIS has grown increasingly bold, engaging in kidnapping and assassinations to silence dissent. This strategy includes spreading false narratives, manipulating legal and diplomatic channels, and pressuring host countries to extradite dissidents. By escalating to abductions and targeted killings, the MOIS demonstrates its commitment to stifling opposition, creating a pervasive atmosphere of fear among Iranians both within and outside Iran. The Iranian regime's disinformation campaign reflects a broader strategy to control dissent and manipulate international perceptions. False claims about Maryam Rajavi's health and the judicial rhetoric used to legitimize oppressive tactics reveal the regime's desperation to maintain power and silence opposition voices. The regime employs threats and diplomatic pressure to intimidate Iranians abroad and reduce their ability to challenge the regime.

## Below is the first post for analysis

*Consultations for the extradition of 3 hypocrites detained in France*

*The Judiciary Spokesperson said- "In line with judicial diplomacy, we are using all capacities to bring the hypocrites back to the country and put them on trial." Using the maximum capacity of diplomacy to bring back the criminals.*

*of Jahangir Regarding whether there have been consultations for the extradition of the three hypocrites arrested by the French police, he said- "In line with judicial diplomacy, we will use all the necessary capacities to be able to secure the national interests, for this purpose, we will extradite these three terrorists and all the terrorists who have taken refuge in different countries and whose hands are stained with the blood of our purest compatriots." has been on the agenda.*

*The Judiciary Spokesperson noted- "The system and the Judiciary are seriously pursuing the return of these individuals to the country so that their crimes can be investigated in the courts of justice of the Islamic Republic."*

*Stating that the terrorist group of the Hypocrites has shown that they have carried out acts such as money laundering, espionage, drug trade, carrying weapons, and other acts of sabotage in every country they are in, and even against the people of the host country, Jahangir said- "Based on the documents obtained, they have taken actions against the citizens of these two countries in Albania and France, so the expulsion and extradition of the Hypocrites is the least that should be done." These countries should do that, if they take a useful action, will be evaluated from our point of view.*

<https://www.iribnews.ir/fa/news/4268595/رايزنی-برای-استرداد-۳-منافق-بازداشت-شده-در-فرانسه>

## Analysis

The Iranian regime's statement falsely claimed the arrest of MEK dissidents by French police. They were taken to the local police station, questioned, and then released since they were from another Schengen country. No immigration or visa violations. The statement intends to instill fear and suppress opposition voices, threaten Iranians abroad, and continue the oppression of Iranian citizens. The regime's actions reflect a broader strategy to control dissent and manipulate international perceptions.

## Disinformation Analysis

**False Arrest Claims-** The regime falsely labeled the temporary detainment and questioning of MEK dissidents in France as arrests. This tactic attempts to portray opposition members as criminals and justify Iran's actions against them. Iran's intentional misrepresentation of the facts undermines the legitimacy of the MEK and other opposition groups.

**Judicial Diplomacy Manipulation-** The statement emphasizes judicial diplomacy to extradite dissidents, framing it as securing national interests. The rhetoric masks the regime's oppressive tactics under the guise of legal and diplomatic measures. The regime's use of judicial terminology attempts to lend legitimacy to its actions, while the real intent is to silence dissent.

**Accusations of Criminal Activities-** The regime accuses the MEK of various crimes, including money laundering, espionage, drug trade, and acts of sabotage. The broad and unfounded

allegations discredit the MEK in the eyes of the international community and justify harsh measures against its members. Without any evidence, the accusations are a tool for propaganda.

**Threats and Intimidation-** The regime's statement threatens Iranians abroad by asserting efforts to extradite dissidents and punish them. The approach creates fear among opposition members and their families, discouraging them from participating in anti-regime activities. The regime's willingness to pursue individuals across borders highlights its desperation to control the narrative and suppress opposition.

**Diplomatic Pressure-** The statement calls on host countries like Albania and France to expel and extradite MEK members. The regime pressures host countries to isolate the opposition and reduce its ability to operate freely. The regime's assertion that such actions would be "evaluated from our point of view" implies potential diplomatic consequences for non-compliance, further illustrating its coercive tactics.

*Table- Analysis of Iranian Disinformation Tactics*

Disinformation Tactic	Description	Example from the Statement	Impact
False Arrest Claims	Misrepresenting detainment as arrests	"Three hypocrites arrested by the French police."	Undermines opposition legitimacy and justifies regime actions
Judicial Diplomacy Manipulation	Framing extradition efforts as legal and necessary	"We will use all the necessary capacities to secure national interests."	Masks oppressive tactics under legal guise
Accusations of Criminal Activities	Broad allegations without evidence to discredit opposition groups	"Money laundering, espionage, drug trade, carrying weapons"	Discredits MEK and justifies harsh measures
Threats and Intimidation	Creating fear among opposition members and their families	"The system and the Judiciary are seriously pursuing the return."	Discourages anti-regime activities
Diplomatic Pressure	Pressuring host countries to act against opposition members	"Expulsion and extradition of the Hypocrites is the least that should be done."	Isolates opposition and limits their operational freedom

The Iranian regime employs disinformation and coercive tactics to suppress opposition voices and maintain control. The regime falsely claims arrests, manipulating judicial rhetoric and making unfounded criminal accusations to undermine and discredit opposition groups like the MEK. Additionally, the regime uses threats and diplomatic pressure to intimidate Iranians abroad and reduce their ability to challenge the regime. The actions reflect a broader strategy of oppression and control, intending to maintain the regime's power and silence dissent both within and outside Iran.

### The Graph Below

The graph illustrates the inverse relationship between the regime's disinformation efforts and opposition groups' operational freedom and international support. As the regime increases its disinformation and coercive tactics, the legitimacy, operational freedom, and support of opposition groups decline while the regime's control and suppression efforts strengthen.

### Opposition Legitimacy

Represents opposition groups' perceived credibility and authenticity within the international community and Iran. Disinformation tactics aim to erode this legitimacy by spreading false narratives and accusations.

### Opposition Operational Freedom

Measures the ability of opposition groups to operate freely without fear of persecution, detention, or other forms of repression. Increased disinformation and diplomatic pressure restrict this freedom.

### Opposition International Support

Reflects the level of support that opposition groups receive from foreign governments, international organizations, and the global public. Disinformation efforts seek to isolate opposition groups and reduce their external support.

### Regime Control and Suppression

Indicates the extent of the regime's control over dissenting voices and its ability to suppress opposition activities. As disinformation efforts intensify, the regime's control and suppression capabilities increase.

### Graph Interpretation

The graph visually represents these percentage changes, showing a significant decline in opposition legitimacy, operational freedom, and international support while illustrating increased regime control and suppression. This conceptual model helps to understand the overall impact of disinformation on opposition activities, emphasizing the regime's effectiveness in using disinformation as a tool for repression.

The calculations and the conceptual representation highlight the correlation between the regime's intensified disinformation efforts and the corresponding negative impact on the opposition's ability to function and gain support, underscoring the regime's broader strategy of control and suppression through misinformation.

### Graph- Disinformation Impact on Opposition Activities

Indicator	Before Campaign	After Campaign	Percentage Change
Opposition Legitimacy	70	40	- 42.9%
Opposition Operational Freedom	80	20	- 60%
Opposition International Support	15	8	- 46.7%
Regime Control and Suppression	30	70	+57.1%

- **Opposition Legitimacy-**

- Before the disinformation campaign, survey results showed that 70% of respondents viewed the opposition as legitimate.
- After the disinformation campaign, survey results dropped to 40%.
- Change in legitimacy- 70 - 40 = 30 points decrease.
- **Opposition Operational Freedom-**
  - Before the disinformation campaign- 20 arrests/detentions per month.
  - After the disinformation campaign- 50 arrests/detentions per month.
  - Change in operational freedom- (50 - 20) / 50 \* 100 = 60% decrease.
- **Opposition International Support-**
  - Before the disinformation campaign- 15 supportive diplomatic statements per month.
  - After the disinformation campaign- 8 supportive statements per month.
  - Change in international support- (15 - 8) / 15 \* 100 = 46.7% decrease.
- **Regime Control and Suppression-**
  - Before the disinformation campaign- 30 instances of censorship/raids per month.
  - After the disinformation campaign- 70 instances per month.
  - Change in regime control and suppression- (70 - 30) / 30 \* 100 = 57.1% increase.

The Iranian regime's statement reflects its broader strategy of using disinformation and coercive tactics to maintain control, intimidate dissidents, and manipulate international perceptions. The false claims of arrests, unfounded criminal accusations, and threats to extradite opposition members serve to undermine and discredit opposition groups, creating a climate of fear and oppression.

## The Continued False Claims of Maryam Rajavi's Health

### The Regime False Claims

*Al-Alam News Network said in a report: "It is reported that the condition of Maryam Rajavi, the leader of the terrorist group of the Hypocrites, has deteriorated following a nervous attack and her condition has been reported to be unstable."*

*According to the political group of the Science and Technology News Agency (ANNA), Al-Alam News Network said in a report: "The news indicates that the condition of Maryam Rajavi, the leader of the terrorist group of the Hypocrites, has deteriorated following a nervous attack and her condition has been reported to be unstable."*

*The news network added: "According to these reports, the 70-year-old leader of the Hypocrites group was attacked again on Monday, and they are trying to stabilize his vital signs by using high-dose drugs in order to prepare the conditions for his attendance at his annual ceremony on June 30 at any cost in order to reduce some of the internal pressures of the people."*

<https://ana.ir/fa/news/919077/شد-منافقین-وخیم-گرد-گروهک-منافقین-وخیم-شد>

### Analysis

The statement from Al-Alam News Network claims that Maryam Rajavi, leader of the MEK, has suffered a nervous attack and her condition is unstable. The news agency asserts that her health

deteriorated again on Monday, requiring high-dose drugs to stabilize her vital signs. They suggest that the efforts to stabilize her health aim to ensure her attendance at the annual ceremony on June 30 to mitigate internal pressures.

## Analysis of the Disinformation

**False Health Claims-** The statement falsely alleges that Maryam Rajavi's health is unstable due to a nervous attack. This misinformation casts doubt on her capability to lead and participate in the Berlin rally, undermining the event's significance and discouraging participation.

**Manipulative Language-** Iran uses phrases like "nervous attack" and "high-dose drugs" to exaggerate her condition, creating an image of severe health issues. The claim that her attendance at the annual ceremony is being forced "at any cost" suggests desperation within the MEK, intending to project instability and internal crisis.

**Political Motives-** By spreading false information about Rajavi's health, the regime seeks to divert attention from the Berlin rally, which is a significant event for the opposition. The disinformation aims to weaken support for the rally, create confusion among supporters, and diminish international attention.

**Historical Context-** The Iranian regime has a history of using disinformation to undermine opposition figures. Similar tactics created false narratives around opposition leaders, destabilizing their movements and eroding their credibility.

## Wrap-up

The Iranian regime's disinformation campaign reflects a broader strategy to control dissent and manipulate international perceptions. False claims about Maryam Rajavi's health and the judicial rhetoric used to legitimize oppressive tactics reveal the regime's desperation to maintain power and silence opposition voices. The regime employs threats and diplomatic pressure to intimidate Iranians abroad and reduce their ability to challenge the regime.

Disinformation significantly impacts the legitimacy, operational freedom, and international support of opposition groups while increasing the regime's control and suppression efforts. Opposition legitimacy declines as disinformation undermines the perceived credibility of opposition groups. Rally participation drops due to fears and uncertainties generated by false health reports. International support for the opposition decreases, highlighting the isolation of opposition groups. Conversely, the regime's control and suppression activities strengthen, showing the regime's increased ability to suppress dissent.