

## Iran Says April 12 blast at Shiraz mosque was terrorism

By Nazila Fathi

Thursday, May 8, 2008

**TEHRAN:** The Iranian authorities said Thursday that a previously reported explosion in the southern city of Shiraz on April 12 that left 14 people dead and more than 200 injured was terrorist sabotage and that the United States and Britain had links to the group responsible for the attack.

Intelligence Minister Gholam Hossein Ejei told reporters that six people involved in the attack had been arrested and their links with foreign countries had been confirmed, Fars news agency reported.

"This group had links with the United States and Britain," Ejei was quoted as saying. "We had already informed these countries through the Foreign Ministry but they did not stop their terrorist moves and continued to support them," he added.

Ejei told reporters that the planner of the explosion had been arrested on Wednesday while trying to leave the country. Ejei did not explain where he had been arrested but that he was armed at the time. He gave no details on the circumstances of the arrests of the other five suspects.

"All these men are Iranian and had been identified and their links with foreign countries had become clear," Ejei said.

The authorities said immediately after the explosion that it had been caused by a handmade bomb. But later they said that the blast was an accident and was caused by ammunition left at a mosque for an exhibition about the 1980-88 war with Iraq.

The minister of interior, Mostafa Pourmohammadi, said in a meeting with the families of the victims that authorities had arrested the suspects in northern Iran when they were trying to plant a bomb. He said they were linked to "royalists," a group of oppositionists in exile who support the son of the former Shah who was deposed after the 1979 revolution.