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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 OSLO 000067

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AMEMBASSY ASTANA PASS TO AMCONSUL ALMATY  
AMEMBASSY BERLIN PASS TO AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF  
AMEMBASSY BERLIN PASS TO AMCONSUL LEIPZIG  
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE PASS TO AMEMBASSY PODGORICA  
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI PASS TO AMCONSUL ST PETERSBURG  
AMEMBASSY ATHENS PASS TO AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PASS TO AMCONSUL VLADIVOSTOK  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PASS TO AMCONSUL YEKATERINBURG

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2020/02/09  
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [IR](#) [NO](#)  
SUBJECT: SHOCKING ATROCITIES INSIDE A BASIJ ENCAMPMENT: NORWEGIAN  
EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT

REF: 10 STATE 12108

DERIVED FROM: DSCG 05-1 (B), (D)

11. (C) SUMMARY: A kidnapped Norwegian student witnessed shocking atrocities and mass killings occurring inside a Basij camp (see paragraphs 3 and 4), according to Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) officials speaking confidentially. The GON has, separately, called the Iranian Charge d'Affaires to the carpet to object to Iran's execution of the first prisoners in the mass trials currently ongoing. End Summary.

12. (C) Deputy Chief of Mission James T. Heg and Poloff visited MFA officials Jorn Gjelstad and Torunn Viste, Director and Deputy Director, respectively, of the MFA Middle East Section, to deliver refTEL demarche (after a longer discussion of Foreign Minister Stoere's recent trip to the region, reported septel). Near the end of the discussion, Gjelstad said that he wanted to confidentially share an eyewitness account of events inside a Basij camp that had recently come to his attention.

13. (C) Gjelstad said that the account was provided by a Norwegian graduate student who was doing research in Iran during the Christmas-New Year's period. The MFA and other Norwegian agencies believe his account is credible. He is ethnically Norwegian and has no known political motivation to fabricate a story. According to the student, he was riding on a Tehran public bus-not participating in any kind of suspicious or demonstration activity-when a member of the Basij militia entered, saw he was a foreigner, and pulled him off. He was placed on the back of a motorcycle, and a sack was put over his head. He was driven to a Basij encampment and was forced to watch killings and torture. He says he witnessed a group of dissidents put in front of a cement wall, and a riot control truck fitted with a "cowcatcher" (metal bars and screens designed to move crowds) was driven into them, crushing them to death. He says he witnessed people being disemboweled with knives in front of him. He says that a public bus was driven onto the compound, full of protesters, and the bus was doused in gasoline and set ablaze, burning everyone inside to death.

14. (C) The student speaks fluent Persian, and says he overheard two

of the milita having an argument with one another about their methods. One argued that it was improper to damage public property—that is, the public bus—when killing protestors. The other argued that this was justified when defending the revolutionary ideal. Gjelstad said that the Norwegian student appeared to have been allowed/forced to see these things precisely in order to publicize "what could be the outcome if foreigners continue to circulate within Iran" (Gjelstad's words). The student was understandably traumatized and proceeded directly to the Norwegian Embassy upon being released. He then returned to Norway, and spoke with the MFA. He asked the MFA to raise the issue with the Iranian embassy in Oslo, but did not want his name mentioned. The Norwegians raised the issues with the Iranian Charge d'Affaires, who requested the student's name, which of course was not disclosed. Embosffs were shocked at Gjelstad's description of the student's account. Gjelstad referred to the incident as evidence of "institutionalized perversion" in Iran.

15. (C) Gjelstad said that, in the same meeting with the Iranian Charge d'Affaires referred to in paragraph 4, MFA officials protested the execution of the first two "mass trial" defendants, one of whom was convicted of planning the unrest despite having been in jail during the entire period. Gjelstad characterized the current events in Iran as "the beginning of a long and bloody process of dealing with political opponents."

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16. (C) The Iranian Charge responded to the demarche with surprise and indignation. Gjelstad said the discussion was "terse" and the Charge said, "I refuse to accept this demarche." Gjelstad said, however, that the GON has indications that the demarche was in fact reported in Tehran.

WHITE