

Iranian regime's police warn against SMS, email protest calls

Friday, 15 January 2010

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran's police chief has warned opposition supporters against using text and email messages to organise rallies, ISNA news agency said Friday, amid reports new demonstrations are being planned.

"These people should know where they are sending the SMS and email as these systems are under control. They should not think using proxies will prevent their identification," Esmail Ahmadi Moghaddam said.

"If these people continue, their (data) records will be examined and those who organise or issue appeals have committed a worse crime than those who come to the streets," he warned.

Iran's cyber-savvy young opposition supporters have used the Internet effectively since unrest erupted in Iran after the disputed June 12 presidential election to organise demonstrations and spread news and pictures.

Despite a heavy crackdown by police, opposition supporters take the streets on every possible occasion to stage anti-government rallies against what they say was massive rigging of the presidential vote to secure hardliner Mahmoud Ahmadinejad a second term in office.

Reports are now circulating that the opposition plans to take to the streets again on the anniversary of the Islamic revolution on February 11.

Iranian authorities have vowed to show no tolerance towards any new protests by opposition supporters, who often hijack official events to stage their rallies.

The authorities have taken to blocking text messaging and slowing down Internet speeds on protest days.