

Supreme leader rebukes Iranian president

by UPI

TEHRAN - Iran's supreme religious leader has publicly rebuked President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad by ordering him to distribute gas to rural areas enduring a frigid winter. The speaker of Iran's Parliament appealed to Ayatollah Khomeini after the president refused to implement a law aimed at assisting rural Iranians through one of the coldest winters the country has had in several years, the BBC reported Tuesday. A letter giving Khomeini's order was read in Parliament. Cold weather and severe snowstorms have caused at least 64 deaths in Iran. In much of the country, gas supplies have run low, leading to cuts in pressure, and some places have no gas at all. Ahmadinejad has come under fire for failing to respond to the crisis. The British network also reported many Iranians feel more free to criticize the president given the apparent reduced threat of a military strike by the United States or Israel.

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