

PUBLIC

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05 June 2007

Further Information on UA 76/07 (MDE 13/034/2007, 22 March 2007) Fear of imminent execution/ torture

IRAN	Sa'id Qanbar Zahi (m), aged 17]	
	Javad Naroui (m)]	
	Ma'soud Nosrat Zahi (m)]	
	Houshang Shahnavaizi (m)]	members of Iran's Baluchi minority
	Yahya Sohrab Zahi (m)]	
	Ali Reza Brahoui (m)]	
	Abdalbek Kahra Zahi (also know as Abdalmalek) (m)]	

Seventeen-year-old Sa'id Qanbar Zahi was hanged on 27 May inside the prison of Zahedan, the capital of Sistan-Baluchistan province. International law absolutely prohibits the use of the death penalty against child offenders. The other six men named above remain at risk of imminent execution.

All seven men were sentenced to death in March and are members of Iran's Baluchi community. It appears that they may have been arrested because of their family ties to those suspected of involvement in blowing up a bus carrying members of Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps on 14 February in Zahedan, in which at least 14 people were killed.

According to local press reports, Sa'id Qanbar Zahi and four of the other six men "confessed" on Iranian state television to a number of crimes which allegedly took place in Sistan-Baluchistan, including bomb attacks against officials, carjackings and murder. Some or all were also accused of involvement in hostage taking follow a March 2006 bomb attack in the town of Tasuki. The televised "confessions" linked an Iranian Baluchi armed opposition group, *Jondallah*, also known as the Iranian Peoples' Resistance Movement (*Jonbesh-e Moqavemat-e Mardom-e Iran*), to these crimes, and to the 14 February bus bombing. There are unconfirmed reports that the five who "confessed" were tortured: this included having bones in their hands and feet broken; being "branded" with a red-hot iron; and having an electric drill applied to their limbs, shredding their muscles.

There is no new information about Javad Naroui, Ma'soud Nosrat Zahi, Houshang Shahnavaizi, Yahya Sohrab Zahi, Ali Reza Brahoui and Abdalbek Kahra Zahi.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Sa'id Qanbar Zahi was the second child offender to be executed in Iran this year. On 22 April, 19-year-old Mohammad Mousavi was reportedly hanged in Shiraz. He had apparently been sentenced to *qesas* (retribution) for a murder committed when he was 16 years old. The execution of child offenders - those under 18 at the time of the offence - is absolutely prohibited under international law, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Iran is a state party. Despite this, Iran continues to sentence to death, and execute, child offenders. Amnesty International has recorded the executions of 24 child offenders in Iran since 1990, 10 of whom were under 18 when executed. At least four child offenders were executed during 2006.

Iran's Baluchi minority lives mainly in the southeast of the country, and is believed to constitute between one and three percent of the total population of around 70 million. Mainly Sunni Muslims, they have for many years complained of discrimination by the Iranian authorities.

Jondallah has carried out a number of armed attacks on Iranian officials and has on occasion killed hostages. It reportedly seeks to defend the rights of the Baluchi people, though government officials have claimed that it is involved in drug smuggling and terrorist activities and has ties to foreign governments.

There have been widespread arrests of members of the Baluchi minority in the wake of such attacks. According to a 15 March BBC report, Sistan-Baluchistan television stated that at least two people were hanged in connection with the 14 February attack on the bus carrying Revolutionary Guards. At least 17 other people are reported to have been either sentenced to death or executed in connection with the March 2006 attack in Tasuki, in which up to 22 people were reportedly killed. In an interview with the Iranian newspaper 'Ayyaran' on 17 March, parliamentarian Hossein Ali Shahryari stated that prisons in Sistan-Baluchistan province held more than 700 people under sentence of death. In 2006, at least 177 people were executed in Iran. Possibly as many as a third of these were members of Iran's Baluchi minority.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Persian, Arabic, English or your own language:

- condemning the execution of Sa'id Qanbar Zahi, a 17-year-old Baluchi who was put to death in Zahedan prison on 27 May, an act which was in contravention of international law provisions prohibiting the execution of those under the age of 18 at the time of the alleged offence;
- calling on the authorities to implement the recommendations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child by immediately stopping the executions of those who were under the age of 18 at the time of the alleged offence;
- asking for information about the legal status of Javad Naroui, Ma'soud Nosrat Zahi, Houshang Shahnavaei, Yahya Sohrab Zahi, Ali Reza Brahoui and Abdalbek Kahra Zahi, and seeking assurances that they are being treated humanely and calling on the authorities to commute their death sentences immediately;
- stating that Amnesty International recognizes the right and responsibility of governments to bring to justice those suspected of criminal offences, but opposes the death penalty as the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment.

APPEALS TO:

Leader of the Islamic Republic

Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei, Leader of the Islamic Republic

The Office of the Supreme Leader, Shahid Keshvar Doost Street, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: +98 251 774 2228 (mark "For the Office of His Excellency, Ayatollah Khamenei")

Email: via website <http://www.leader.ir/langs/EN/index.php?p=sendletter>

Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi

Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Justice Building, Panzdah-Khordad Square, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: +98 21 3390 4986 (please keep trying)

Email: info@dadgostary-tehran.ir (In the subject line: **FAO Ayatollah Shahroudi**)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Governor of Sistan - Baluchistan province

Mr Dahmarde, Governor

Fax: +98 541 3231990

E-mail: info@sb-ostan.ir

Salutation: Dear Sir

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Iran accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 17 July 2007.