

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

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## **Afghanistan: Stoning to death -- human rights scandal**

Discrimination against women in Afghanistan will continue to have grave consequences until the government takes concrete steps to end it, said Amnesty International following the killing by stoning of a 29 year-old woman accused of adultery.

The killing, committed last week, is alleged to be the first incident of the execution of a woman for committing adultery since the removal of the Taleban regime in late 2001.

According to eyewitnesses, the 29-year old, named only as Amina, was dragged out of her parent's house in Urgu District, Badakhan province by her husband and local officials before being publicly stoned to death. The man accused of committing adultery with her is alleged to have been whipped a hundred times and freed.

According to reports, Amina was condemned to death by local court and then killed within approximately 48 hours.

"The case of Amina demonstrates the failure of the Afghan government to protect, ensure and dispense justice, particularly for women," said Amnesty International.

"Religious and customary practices cannot be used as an excuse for violating the fundamental human rights of women."

"The Afghan government has the responsibility of protecting women from violence, committed not only by the state but also by private individuals and groups."

Amnesty International welcomes the promised investigation by the Afghan government into Amina's unlawful death and to bring all those responsible to justice.

The organization calls on the death penalty to be abolished. The case of Amina illustrates the irredeemable injustice of the application of the death penalty.

### **Background**

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all circumstances on the grounds that it represents the ultimate cruel inhuman and degrading punishment and violates the right to life.

This is especially pertinent with regards to Afghanistan where the central criminal justice system is

unable to provide adequate safeguards against local court decisions and similarly cannot, as of yet, ensure the minimum standards of a fair trial with due process.

Amnesty International calls upon the Afghan government to uphold its international obligations to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which under Article 7 clearly states that "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment." Under international human rights law, states must exercise due diligence to secure women's rights to equality, life, liberty and security, and freedom from discrimination, torture and cruel and inhuman and degrading treatment.

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