

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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## Iran: Amnesty International deplores the execution of Kurdish boy

Amnesty International unreservedly condemns the execution yesterday, 10 June 2008, of Mohammad Hassanzadeh, a Kurdish boy believed to be 16 or 17 years old at the time of execution. Mohammad Hassanzadeh was hanged in Sanandaj prison following his conviction for the murder, when aged about 15, of another boy, then aged 10. A 60 year-old man, Rahim Pashabadi, also convicted of murder, was executed alongside him.

This latest execution of a juvenile offender is yet another blatant violation by the Iranian authorities of their international obligations under the UN's International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child not to sentence to death those under the age of 18 at the time of the offence. It runs against hopes created by yesterday's decision by the Head of Iran's Judiciary to grant a one month reprieve to two juvenile offenders to allow more time to seek a resolution with the families of the victims.

Amnesty International has recorded the names of at least 85 other juvenile offenders at risk of execution in Iran, and fears there may be many others also at risk, like Mohammad Hassanzadeh, whose case was not previously known to the organisation. Iran remains by far the most prolific executioner of juvenile offenders. In recent years, only two other countries – Saudi Arabia and Yemen – have carried out such executions. The organization urges the Iranian authorities to immediately stop sentencing juvenile offenders to death and commute the sentences of these on death row.

### Background

On 9 June, reports from Iran indicated that 11 individuals, including two juvenile offenders, would be executed today, 11 June 2008. While the two juvenile offenders, both now over the age of 20, were granted a reprieve on Tuesday, Fars news agency reported that eight men were hanged today, 11 June, in Tehran's Evin Prison. So far in 2008, Amnesty International has recorded 128 executions; the true figure could be considerably higher.

At least one other juvenile offender has been executed in 2008. On 26 February 2008 Javad Shoja'i, who was sentenced to qesas, or retribution, for a murder he carried out at the age of 16, was executed in the central city of Esfahan. In 2007, Iran executed at least seven individuals who were sentenced to death for crimes carried out while they were under the age of 18.

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