

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## Public Statement

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### **IRAN: Amnesty International outraged at reported execution of a 16 year old girl**

Amnesty International today expressed its outrage at the reported execution of a girl who is believed to be 16 years old, Ateqeh Rajabi, in Neka in the northern Iranian province of Mazandaran, on 15 August, for "acts incompatible with chastity" (amal-e manafe-ye 'ofat). Ateqeh Rajabi was reportedly publicly hanged on a street in the city centre of Neka.

Amnesty International is alarmed that this execution was carried out despite reports that Ateqeh Rajabi was not believed to be mentally competent, and that she reportedly did not have access to a lawyer at any stage.

The execution of Ateqeh Rajabi is the tenth execution of a child offender in Iran recorded by Amnesty International since 1990. Amnesty International has urged Iran's judicial authorities to halt further executions of child offenders - people who were under 18 years old at the time of the offence. This is to bring Iran's law and practice in line with requirements of international human rights law.

A bill to raise the minimum age for execution to 18 was reportedly under consideration by parliament in December 2003. However, the bill is not believed to have been ratified by the Guardian Council, Iran's highest legislative body.

Amnesty International believes that the execution of Ateqeh Rajabi underlines the urgent necessity that Iran pass legislation removing provision for the execution of child offenders, thereby preventing further execution of child offenders, and bringing Iran into line with its obligations under international law.

Further, the organization is urging the authorities to clarify whether Ateqeh Rajabi had legal representation and whether a legally approved doctor deemed her psychologically fit to stand trial.

#### **Background**

According to report on Peyk-e Iran, Ateqeh Rajabi was sentenced to death approximately three months ago, by a lower court in Neka in the northern Iranian province of Mazandaran, for "acts incompatible with chastity".

During her trial, at which she was reportedly not represented by a lawyer, the judge allegedly severely criticised her dress, harshly reprimanding her. It is alleged that Ateqeh Rajabi was mentally ill both at the time of her crime and during her trial proceedings.

It is reported that although Ateqeh Rajabi's national ID card stated that she was 16 years old, the Mazandaran Judiciary announced at her execution that her age was 22.

The case reportedly attracted the attention of the Head of the Judiciary for the Mazandaran province, who ensured that the case be heard promptly by the Supreme Court. In Iran, all death sentences have to be upheld by the Supreme Court before they can be implemented.

The death sentence was upheld by the Supreme Court, and Ateqeh Rajabi was publicly hanged in the city centre of Neka on 15 August. According to Peyk-e Iran, the lower court judge that issued the original sentence was the person that put the noose around her head as she went to the gallows.

On the same night that she was buried, Ateqeh Rajabi's corpse was reportedly removed from the grave by unknown individuals. The Rajabi family have lodged a complaint and have called for an investigation.

The co-defendant of Ateqeh Rajabi, an unnamed man, was reportedly sentenced to 100 lashes. He was released after this sentence was carried out.

As a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Iran is bound not to execute child offenders. Both treaties provide that capital punishment shall not be imposed for offences committed by persons under 18 year of age at the time of committing the offence.