

URGENT ACTION

KURDISH MAN AT RISK OF EXECUTION IN IRAN

Habibollah Latifi, a male member of the Kurdish minority in Iran, has been transferred to solitary confinement in Sanandaj prison, Kordestan province, northwestern Iran. The transfer to solitary confinement is often an indication that an execution is going to take place within days. Another Iranian Kurdish man, **Sherko Moarefi**, remains on death row at Saqqez Prison in Kordestan province.

Habibollah Latifi, a law student at Azad University in the south western Province of Ilam, western Iran, was transferred to solitary confinement on 16 January. His lawyer is not known to have been notified of a scheduled execution as is required by law, although in some cases executions have taken place without this notification being issued. His family has not been notified that he will be executed but fear that he is at imminent risk of execution.

Habibollah Latifi was arrested on 23 October 2007 in Sanandaj and sentenced to death by the Sanandaj Revolutionary Court on 3 July 2008 after being convicted of *moharebeh* (enmity against God) in connection with his membership of and activities on behalf of the Kurdish Independent Life Party (PJAK), a proscribed armed group. His trial was held behind closed doors which neither his family, nor his lawyer, were allowed to attend. His death sentence was upheld by the Appeal Court in Sanandaj on 18 February 2009. Another man, **Sherko Moarefi**, was arrested in October 2008 and subsequently sentenced to death and remains on death row in Saqqez Prison.

In October, fears were raised that Habibollah Latifi, Sherko Moarefi and Ehsan Fattahian were at imminent risk of execution after a judge in Sanandaj, the provincial capital, received orders to carry out their executions. Ehsan Fattahian was executed on 11 November 2009.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Persian, Arabic, English, French or your own language:

- Urging the authorities to halt Habibollah Latifi's execution if it has been scheduled;
- Calling on the authorities to commute the death sentences of Habibollah Latifi and Sherko Moarefi and any others imposed for political offences;
- Stating that Amnesty International recognizes the right and responsibility of governments to bring to justice, in conformity with international standards of fair trial, those suspected of criminal offences, but opposes the death penalty as the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 4 MARCH TO:

Leader of the Islamic Republic

Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei
The Office of the Supreme Leader
Islamic Republic Street – End of
Shahid Keshvar Doust Street, Tehran,
Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: info_leader@leader.ir
via website:
<http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/index.php?p=letter> (English)
Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Sadeq Larijani
Howzeh Riyasat-e Qoveh Qazaiyeh
(Office of the Head of the Judiciary)
Pasteur St., Vali Asr Ave., south of
Serah-e Jomhouri, Tehran,
1316814737
Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: **Via website:**
<http://www.dadiran.ir/tabid/75/Default.aspx>
first starred box: your given name;
second starred box: your family name;
third: your email address
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Governor of Kordestan Province
Esmail Najjar
Email: In Persian and Kurdish, send via feedback form on the website:
http://www.ostan-kd.ir/Default.aspx?tabId=150&cv=4@0_1 In English, French or other languages, use the feedback form on the website: <http://en.ostan-kd.ir/Default.aspx?TabID=59>
Salutation: Dear Governor

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the 3rd update of UA 271/09 (MDE 13/102/2009). Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/102/2009/en>, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/119/2009/en> and <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/121/2009/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Kurds, who are one of Iran's many minority groups, live mainly in the west and north-west of the country, in the province of Kordestan and neighbouring provinces bordering Kurdish areas of Turkey and Iraq. They experience religious, economic and cultural discrimination. For many years, Kurdish organizations such as the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI) and the Marxist group *Komala*, conducted armed opposition against the Islamic Republic of Iran. Another armed group, the Kurdistan Independent Life Party (PJAK), formed in 2004, continues to carry out armed attacks against Iranian security forces.

No group has claimed responsibility for the spate of assassinations and attempted assassinations in Kordestan, which targeted mainly religious figures and judges between 9 and 19 September 2009. Those killed included the head of Sanandaj city council, a Sunni cleric who had supported President Ahmadinejad's re-election campaign, and the Kordestan representative to the Assembly of Experts (the body which appoints the Supreme Leader). Two judges were also injured in the attacks. The authorities have variously blamed PJAK, and "hard-line Sunni fundamentalists" linked to foreign intelligence services. According to various Iranian media sources on 28 September 2009, several of those believed to have been responsible for the attacks were arrested at the scene of another attack in which two others were killed. Furthermore, on 18 January 2010, Vali Haji Gholizadeh, prosecutor in the northwestern city of Khoy, was shot dead in front of his home. Four suspects were later arrested. The Iranian authorities blamed PJAK for the killing although PJAK later denied responsibility.

Amnesty International condemns without reservation attacks on civilians, which includes judges, clerics, and locally or nationally-elected officials, as attacking civilians violates fundamental principles of international humanitarian law. These principles prohibit absolutely attacks on civilians as well as indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks. Such attacks cannot be justified under any circumstances.

The scope of capital crimes in Iran is broad, and includes "enmity against God", often imposed for armed opposition to the state, but can include other national security offences such as espionage. At least 16 other Kurdish men and two women are believed to be on death row in connection with their alleged membership of and activities for proscribed Kurdish organizations. They include Farzad Kamangar, Farhad Vakili, Ali Haydarian, Rostam Arkia, Hossein Khezri, Anvar Rostami, Mohammad Amin Abdolahi, Ghader Mohamadzadeh, Zeynab Jalalian and Shirin Alam-Hoei. Some have had their prison sentences increased to death sentences. For further information on some of the Kurds on death row for political offences, including those named in this UA, please see <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/007/2010/en> and <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/012/2009/en>.

In May 2009, three members of Iran's Baluch minority were executed in public in Zahedan less than 48 hours after an attack on worshippers in a mosque in which up to 25 people were killed. Responsibility for the attack was claimed by the People's Resistance Movement of Iran (PRMI - formerly known as Jondollah), an armed political group opposed to the Iranian government. The three men had already been sentenced to death, but their executions were linked to the mosque attack. Officials claimed that following renewed interrogations after the bombing, they had "confessed" to involvement into bringing the explosives into the country. Following a suicide bomb attack on 18 October which killed at least 43 people, including 15 Revolutionary Guards officials, and which was claimed by the PRMI, a PRMI member was executed in Zahedan on 2 November, after conviction of armed kidnapping, "enmity against God" and "corruption on earth". The date of his arrest is not known.

In 1988, thousands of political prisoners, mostly members of the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI) or leftist organizations, were executed in what has become commonly known as the "prison massacres". The executions took place following the ceasefire agreement between Iran and Iraq and an armed incursion a few days later by PMOI members based in Iraq which was repulsed by the Iranian army. Most of those executed were already detained or imprisoned at the time of the incursion and could not have been involved in spying or terrorist activities as the government claimed. No one has ever been brought to account for these mass killings.

Further Information UA: 271/09 Index: MDE 13/009/2010 Issue Date: 21 January 2010

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