

PUBLIC

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Imminent execution

19 November 2004

IRAN

Vahid (m), aged 16, and eight other juveniles

Vahid, aged 16, and at least eight other juveniles are thought to have been sentenced to death by courts in Tehran, Iran. All are reportedly at risk of imminent execution.

The Iranian daily newspaper *Shargh* states that Vahid was sentenced to death for the murder of his friend Mehdi, who allegedly tried to sexually abuse him.

Further reports from within Iran indicate that eight other juvenile offenders are at risk of execution, although their names are not publicly known. Three youths, sentenced to death for murders committed at the ages of 15 and 16, will reportedly be executed when they reach the age of 18. Five further juveniles, also unnamed, who are held in a 'Correctional Facility' in Tehran (the "Association for Reform and Education") are said to be waiting to hear if their death sentences are to be upheld by the Supreme Court.

Very few details of death sentences imposed within Iran are available. Death sentences are required to be upheld by the Supreme Court before executions can take place.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

At least 10 executions of child offenders in Iran have been reported since 1990.

Atefeh Rajabi, a 16-year-old girl, was reportedly publicly hanged on a street in the city centre of Neka, in the northern Iranian province of Mazandaran, for "acts incompatible with chastity" (*amal-e manafe-ye 'ofat*), on 15 August 2004. She was reportedly mentally ill both at the time of her crime and during her trial proceedings. During her trial, some three months before her execution, the judge had reportedly severely criticized her dress, harshly reprimanding her. Her death sentence was later upheld by the Supreme Court. According to *Peyk-e Iran* newspaper, the court judge who issued the original sentence was the person who put the noose around her head as she went to the gallows. For further information, see '*Iran: Amnesty International outraged at reported execution of a 16 year old girl*' (<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGMDE130362004?open&of=ENG-IRN>).

A draft bill to raise the minimum age of executions to 18 is reportedly under consideration in Iran, although details of its legislative status are as yet unclear.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty as the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment, in violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Iran is a state party. Article 6 of the ICCPR states: "Sentence of death shall not be imposed for crimes committed by persons below eighteen years of age"

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

- stating that Amnesty International recognizes the rights and responsibilities of governments to bring to justice those suspected of criminal offences, but strongly opposes the death penalty as the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment;
- urging that the death sentence imposed on Vahid and others at risk of imminent execution be commuted immediately;
- seeking trial details of the case against Vahid and others at risk of imminent execution, including details of any appeals against their convictions;
- urging the authorities to ensure that the victim's family are made aware of its right, under Islamic law, to pardon the condemned;
- reminding the Iranian authorities of their commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular Article 3: Δ Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person. \equiv

APPEALS TO:

Leader of the Islamic Republic

His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei

The Presidency, Palestine Avenue, Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: + 98 21 649 5880 (please mark 'For the attention of the Office of His Excellency, Ayatollah al Udhma Khamenei, Qom)

Email: info@wilayah.org OR webmaster@wilayah.org (on the subject line write: For the attention of the Office of His Excellency, Ayatollah al Udhma Khamenei, Qom)

Head of the Judiciary

His Excellency Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi

Ministry of Justice, Park-e Shahr, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: irjpr@iranjudiciary.org (mark 'Please forward to HE Ayatollah Shahroudi')

President

His Excellency Hojjatoleislam val Moslemin Sayed Mohammad Khatami

The Presidency, Palestine Avenue, Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

khatami@president.ir (please resend your message if it does not get through the first time)

Salutation: Your Excellency

and to diplomatic representatives of Iran accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.