

PUBLIC

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Fear of imminent execution

13 November 2006

IRAN

Abdullah Suleymani (m) aged 27,
Abdulreza Sanawati Zergani (m),
Qasem Salamat (m) aged 43,
Mohammad Jaab Pour (m),
Abdulmir Farjallah Jaab (m),
Alireza Asakreh (m),
Majed Alboghubaish (m),
Khalaf Derhab Khudayrawi (m),
Malek Banitamim (m) aged 30

The nine men named above, all members of Iran's Arab minority, are believed to be at imminent risk of execution. According to reports the men have been convicted of being *mohareb* (at enmity with God) in connection with involvement in bomb explosions in the city of Ahvaz, in Khuzestan province, which took place in October 2005.

On 9 November, the head of the Khuzestan Prosecutor's offices, Abbas Ja'afari Dowlat Abadi, reportedly announced that the Supreme Court had upheld the death sentences against 10 out of 19 people involved in bomb explosions in Khuzestan and that they would be publicly hanged. There are fears these executions will be carried out in the coming days. The tenth man sentenced to death, Ali Matouri-Zadeh, is the subject of a separate Urgent Action (see UA 107/06, MDE 13/042/2006, 28 April 2006 and follow up MDE 13/127/2006, 13 November 2006).

According to information received by Amnesty International, Khalaf Derhab Khudayrawi was reportedly shot by the security forces on or around 2 March 2006 before being taken away. His family believed he had died in the shooting, but a few days later received a phone call from the authorities informing them that he had been transferred to the Sepidar detention centre. His wife Soghra Khudayrawi and four-year-old son Zeidan son were arrested in Ahvaz on 7 March 2006. (See UA 65/06, MDE 13/028/2006, 23 March 2006) and Iran: Appeal Case: *Four women and two children prisoners of conscience*, AI Index: MDE 13/059/2006, 17 May 2006).

Abdullah Suleymani, Mohammad Jaab Pour and Abdulmir Farjallah Jaab were also reportedly arrested on 7 March 2006.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Much of Iran's Arab community lives in the province of Khuzestan which borders Iraq. The Province is strategically important because it is the site of much of Iran's oil reserves, but the Arab population does not feel it has benefited as much from the oil revenue as the Persian population. Historically, the Arab community has been marginalised and discriminated against. Tension has mounted among the Arab population since April 2005, after it was alleged that the government planned to disperse the country's Arab population or to force them to relinquish their Arab identity. Hundreds were arrested and there have been reports of torture. Following bomb explosions in Ahvaz City in June and October 2005, which killed at least 14 people, and explosions at oil installations in September and October, the cycle of violence intensified, with hundreds people reportedly arrested. Further bombings on 24 January 2006, in which at least six people were killed, were followed by further mass arrests. Two men, Mehdi Nawaseri and Ali Awdeh Afrawi, were executed in public on 2 March after they were convicted of involvement in the October bombings. Their executions followed unfair trials before a Revolutionary Court during which they are believed to have been denied access to lawyers, and their confessions, along with those of seven other men, were broadcast on television. At least 13 other Iranian Arabs are also reportedly under sentence of death, accused of

involvement in the bombings, distributing material against the state, having contact with dissident organizations operating abroad, and endangering state security. Amnesty International recognizes the right and responsibility of governments to bring to justice those suspected of criminal offences, but is unconditionally opposed to the death penalty as the ultimate violation of the right to life. Please see *Iran: Death Sentences appeal case – 11 Iranian Arab men facing death sentences*, AI Index MDE 13/051/2006, May 2006).

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

- expressing grave concern that the nine men (naming them) may be in imminent danger of execution;
- urging the Iranian authorities to commute their death sentences immediately;
- asking for details of the men's trial proceedings, including the specific charges against them, whether they have been granted access to independent lawyers of their choice, and of any appeals they may have made against their sentences;
- acknowledging that governments have a responsibility to bring to justice those suspected of criminal offences, but stating your unconditional opposition to the death penalty, as the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment and violation of the right to life.

APPEALS TO:

Leader of the Islamic Republic

His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei, The Office of the Supreme Leader
Shoahada Street, Qom, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: info@leader.ir OR istiftaa@wilayah.org

Fax: +98 251 774 2228 (mark "FAO the Office of His Excellency, Ayatollah al Udhma Khamenei")

Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary

His Excellency Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi
Ministry of Justice, Park-e Shahr, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: info@iranjudiciary.com

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Iran accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.