

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

PUBLIC STATEMENT

12 January 2010
AI Index: MDE 13/007/2010

Iran: Halt executions of Kurdish and other political prisoners

Amnesty International is calling on the Iranian authorities not to execute at least 17 members of Iran's Kurdish minority, including one woman – Zeynab Jalalian - who are on death row after their conviction of political offences. The organization fears that they could be executed at any time, particularly in light of the execution of two other Kurds in Iran in recent months, most recently Fasih Yasmini in Khoy on 6 January 2010.

All were convicted after unfair trials for *moharebeh* (enmity against God) for membership of banned Kurdish opposition groups, mainly the Party for a Free Life in Kurdistan (known by its Kurdish acronym PJAK), an armed group, and Komala, a Marxist organization. Some are reported to have been tortured in detention and to have been denied access to a lawyer.

The executed man, Fasih (Fateh) Yasmini was arrested during clashes between PJAK and Iranian security forces in the village of Hendavan, near Khoy, in or around February 2008. It is not clear whether Fasih Yasmini was involved in these clashes or not. He was reportedly among a number of villagers arrested, including five girls, his father Hossein Yasmini, and another man Fahim Reza-Zadeh, who are said to have been taken to a Ministry of Intelligence detention facility in Khoy, where Fasih Yasmini was reportedly tortured. His family had no news of him for about two months.

Hossein Yasmini is currently serving a two-year prison sentence, while Fahim Reza-Zadeh was sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment to be served in exile. Fasih Yasmini's death sentence by the Khoy Revolutionary court is believed to have been upheld on appeal by Branch 10 of the Appeal Court of West Azerbaijan Province and by the Supreme Court and he was executed without his lawyer being informed – a requirement under Iranian law – on 6 January. Fasih Yasmini's family have not been given his body, possibly to prevent them holding a funeral or memorial service for him. Amnesty International condemns this execution.

Ali Saremi (or Sarami), aged 62, was sentenced to death for *moharebeh* on 29 December 2009 after being convicted of membership of the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI), an opposition group based in Iraq. He was arrested in September 2007 after speaking at a commemoration at the Khavaran cemetery in Tehran for the victims of the 1988 "prison massacre" and has been held since. Amnesty International issued an urgent action on his and six other's behalf in November 2007 (see <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/128/2007/en>).

Held without trial for many months, mostly in Evin Prison, his final court session took place on 16 November in Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court. Two days after demonstrations against the government on Ashoura on 27 December 2009 were violently repressed by security forces, he was told that he had been sentenced to death. The Iranian authorities have blamed various groups for organizing the demonstrations, including the PMOI and a "Marxist grouplet". Ali Saremi has a son in the PMOI who lives in Camp Ashraf, Iraq, whom he has visited. Ali Saremi has spent 23 years in prison for his political activities both before and after the Islamic Revolution in Iran.

Background

Since the unrest which followed the disputed presidential election in June 2009, Amnesty International has documented an increase in the number of executions in Iran, and the Iranian authorities have threatened to try demonstrators for *moharebeh*, moves which appear designed to dissuade people from participating in demonstrations against the government.

The 17 Kurds on death row for political offences are reported to be:

1. Zeynab Jalalian [f]
2. Habibollah Latifi
3. Sherko Moarefi
4. Farhad Vakili
5. Farzad Kamangar
6. Ali Haydarian
7. Hossein Khezri
8. Rashid Akhkandi
9. Mohammad Amin Agoushi
10. Ahmad Pouladkhani
11. Sayed Sami Hosseini
12. Sayed Jamal Mohammadi
13. Rostam Arkiya
14. Mostafa Salimi
15. Anwar Rostami
16. Hassan Talai
17. Iraj Mohammadi

For further information about Kurds on death row, please see Iran: Worsening Repression of Dissent as Election Approaches, February 2009, AI Index: MDE 13/012/2009 at

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/012/2009/en>

and Iran: Death penalty/ torture and ill-treatment, 30 May 2008

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/075/2008/en>

Iran: Further Information on death penalty/torture/ill-treatment, 11 July 2008

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/094/2008/en>

Iran: Death penalty / torture and ill-treatment, 18 December 2008

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/176/2008/en>

Iran: Halt Executions of Kurdish Prisoners, 8 October 2009

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/102/2009/en>

Iran: Kurdish man faces execution on 11 November 2009

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/119/2009/en>

Iran: Further information: Iranian Kurdish man executed

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/121/2009/en>

Iranian authorities must halt imminent execution of Kurdish man, 13 November 2009

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/iranian-authorities-must-stop-imminent-execution-kurdish-man-20091113>

For information about the "prison massacre" see: Iran: The 20th anniversary of 1988 "prison massacre", 19 August 2008, AI Index MDE 13/118/2008,

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/118/2008/en>

END/