

# URGENT ACTION

## MAN AT GRAVE RISK OF PROTEST-RELATED EXECUTION IN IRAN

Iranian Kurdish man Reza (Gholamreza) Rasaei is at imminent risk of execution in relation to the September-December 2022 nationwide protests. On 16 December 2023, Branch 17 of the Supreme Court upheld his conviction and death sentence for “murder”, which were issued by a criminal court following a grossly unfair trial that admitted his torture-tainted forced “confessions” as “evidence”. On 31 December, his sentence was sent for implementation, amid an ongoing alarming spike in executions across the country.

**TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER**

*Head of judiciary, Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei*

*c/o Embassy of Iran to the European Union, Avenue Franklin Roosevelt No. 15, 1050 Bruxelles, Belgium*

*Dear Mr Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei,*

*Reza (Gholamreza) Rasaei, aged 34, from Iran’s oppressed Kurdish and Yaresan ethnic and religious minorities, respectively, is at imminent risk of execution in Dizel Abad prison in Kermanshah province in relation to the “Woman Life Freedom” nationwide protests which took place between September and December 2022. In a ruling dated 16 December 2023, Branch 17 of the Supreme Court upheld his conviction for “murder” and death sentence. According to informed sources, on 31 December 2023, his sentence was sent to the Office for Implementation of Sentences at the criminal court of Kermanshah province; raising fears that his execution may be carried out at any time. On 7 October 2023, Branch Two of Criminal Court 1 in Kermanshah province sentenced Reza Rasaei to death in connection to the killing of an agent, identified as a member of the Revolutionary Guards by Iranian state media, on 18 November 2022 during a protest in Sahneh, Kermanshah province. Reza Rasaei has repeatedly denied involvement and stated, including during trial, that his forced “confessions” were made under torture and other ill-treatment. Despite this, both the criminal court and the Supreme Court admitted his forced “confessions” as “evidence”. No investigations are known to have been carried out into his torture claims.*

*Reza Rasaei was arrested on 24 November 2022 in Shahriar, Tehran province, by the investigation unit of Iran’s police (Agahi) and subsequently transferred to an Agahi detention facility in Sahneh. According to an informed source, during interrogations there, Agahi agents subjected Reza Rasaei to torture and other ill-treatment, including electric shocks, suffocation by putting a plastic bag over his head and severe beatings to compel his forced “confessions”. Reza Rasaei only met his lawyer for the first time at trial, which took place over three sessions, with the final hearing held on 21 September 2023. His right to a fair trial was flagrantly violated, including to access a lawyer of his choosing from the time of arrest, to meaningfully challenge the legality of his detention, to not self-incriminate and to be tried by an independent, competent and impartial tribunal.*

***I urge you to immediately halt any plans to carry out Reza (Gholamreza) Rasaei’s execution and quash his conviction and death sentence. If charged with a recognizable criminal offence, proceedings must meet international fair trial standards without recourse to the death penalty and exclude “confessions” obtained under torture. I urge you to immediately grant Reza Rasaei access to his family, independently chosen lawyer, and adequate medical care. I urge you to protect him from further torture and other ill-treatment and investigate his torture allegations, bringing anyone found responsible to justice in fair trials. Finally, I urge you to grant independent observers access to capital trials connected to protests and immediately establish an official moratorium on executions with a view to abolishing the death penalty.***

*Yours sincerely,*

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

From September to December 2022, an unprecedented popular uprising against the Islamic Republic system took place across Iran sparked by the death in custody on 16 September 2022 of Jina Mahsa Amini days after her arbitrary arrest by Iran's "morality" police. Iranian authorities extensively and unlawfully fired live ammunition, metal pellets and tear gas and subjected protesters to severe beatings. Hundreds of protesters and bystanders were unlawfully killed by security forces, including dozens of children, and thousands sustained injuries for which many did not seek medical care due to fear of arrest. More than half of those killed belonged to the oppressed Baluchi minority in Sistan and Baluchestan province and the Kurdish minority in the provinces of Kurdistan, Kermanshah and West Azerbaijan. From early November 2022, Kurdish human rights groups reported a "highly securitized atmosphere" in Kermanshah province marked by the extensive deployment of security forces. This development underscored the authorities' increased repression in anticipation of protests between 15-19 November 2022 to commemorate the protest killings of November 2019.

To date, the authorities have arbitrarily executed eight people in connection with the protests of 2022 after grossly unfair trials marred by torture allegations. On 23 November 2023, authorities executed Milad Zohrevand, ten days after the Supreme Court upheld his conviction and death sentence for "murder" in relation to the death of a Revolutionary Guards agent during the protests. According to human rights activists based outside Iran, after his arrest in connection to a protest in Malayer, Hamadan province, he was denied access to a lawyer.

Torture is a violation of international law and its use is prohibited under all circumstances. Statements elicited as a result of torture, ill-treatment or other forms of coercion must be excluded as evidence in criminal proceedings, except those brought against suspected perpetrators of such abuse. In view of the irreversible nature of the death penalty, the proceedings in capital cases must scrupulously observe all relevant international standards protecting the right to a fair trial. Anyone arrested or detained on a criminal charge must be treated in full compliance with Iran's human rights obligations including rights to a fair trial. These include the rights to choose one's own lawyer; to access effective legal assistance from the time of arrest and throughout the pre-trial and trial proceedings; to be brought promptly before an ordinary civilian judge; to challenge the lawfulness of detention before an independent, impartial tribunal; to be presumed innocent; to remain silent and not to be compelled to incriminate oneself or to confess guilt; to obtain full access to relevant evidence; to not be detained on vague charges; to examine and cross-examine witnesses; to receive a fair, public hearing before a competent, independent and impartial tribunal; and to be provided with a public, reasoned judgement. Amnesty International has consistently documented a pattern of systematic violations of the rights to a fair trial in Iran from the time of arrest and throughout the investigation, trial and appeal proceedings. Courts routinely ignore allegations of torture and other ill-treatment, without ordering an investigation, and rely on torture-tainted "confessions" to issue convictions and sentences, including in death penalty cases. Under international law, the imposition of the death penalty following an unfair trial constitutes an arbitrary deprivation of life.

Ethnic and religious minorities in Iran suffer entrenched discrimination in law and in practice. Iranian authorities curtail the access of ethnic minorities to education, employment and political office. Religious minorities, including Yaresan, also are subjected to discrimination in law and practice, including in access to education, employment, child adoption, political office and places of worship.

The Iranian authorities have recently embarked on another alarming execution spree, executing at least 115 people in November 2023 alone or almost double the number of executions carried out in November 2022. This spike comes against the backdrop of the Iranian authorities intensifying their use of the death penalty as a tool of political repression, including against protesters, dissidents and members of oppressed ethnic minorities. For instance, on 2 January 2024, the authorities arbitrarily executed Iranian Kurdish man [Davoud Abdollahi](#), sentenced to death for "corruption on earth" following a grossly unfair torture-tainted trial. The authorities are using this ultimate cruel and inhuman punishment to torment and terrorize people in Iran and impose silence and subservience through brute force. Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases without exception. The death penalty is a violation of the right to life and the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment. Amnesty International has consistently called on all states that retain the death penalty, including Iran, to establish an official moratorium on executions, with a view to completely abolishing the death penalty.

**PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET:** Persian, English

You can also write in your own language.

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL:** 29 February 2024

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

**NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN:** Reza (Gholamreza) Rasaei (his/him)

**LINK TO PREVIOUS UA:** <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/7381/2023/en/>