

PUBLIC

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EXTRA 44/03 Fear of imminent execution

IRAN Afsaneh Nouroozi (f), aged 32

Amnesty International has recently learned that Afsaneh Nouroozi is at imminent risk of execution after the death sentence against her was upheld by the Supreme Court. The Supreme Leader of Iran, Ayatollah Sayed >Ali Khamenei, is the only authority able to grant clemency at this stage.

Afsaneh Nouroozi was reportedly arrested in 1997 after killing the Head of Police Intelligence in Kish, Southern Iran. She allegedly acted in self-defence in order to protect herself from being raped. At her trial, her defence lawyer cited Article 61 of the Islamic Criminal Law which states: "If whilst defending one's life, honour, chastity, property or freedom against any immediate or imminent aggression, one makes an action which is an offence, provided that all of the following conditions are met, one will not be prosecuted and punished: a – The defence is proportionate to danger or aggression; b – the action is not excessive; c – calling the governmental forces is not possible immediately, or calling them is not effective in repelling the aggression or danger." Afsaneh Nouroozi was nevertheless sentenced to death for the crime.

The death sentence against Afsaneh Nouroozi was reportedly upheld by the Supreme Court in August 2003. In an open letter to an Iranian newspaper, three young women stated that "If [Afsaneh Nouroozi] was to be executed today, we would not be executing one woman but the symbol of our families of which women are the integral part".

Afsaneh Nouroozi is being held in Bandar Abbas prison in southern Iran, which is notorious for its poor conditions. In August 2003, her husband, Mostafa Jhangiri, complained to Article 90, a parliamentary commission where citizens' complaints and grievances are examined, about the conditions in which she is detained.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International has recorded 83 executions so far this year in Iran, although the true figure may be much higher.

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: AIn countries which have not abolished the death penalty, sentence of death may be imposed only for the most serious crimes@.

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

- recognizing the rights and responsibilities of governments to bring to justice those suspected of criminal offences;
- urging that the death sentence imposed on Afsaneh Nouroozi be commuted immediately;
- seeking trial details of the case of Afsaneh Nouroozi, including details of any appeals against her convictions;
- urging the authorities to ensure that the victim's family is made aware of its right, under Islamic law, to pardon the condemned;
- reminding the Iranian authorities of their commitment to the ICCPR (in particular Article 6) to which they are a state party;

- reminding the Iranian authorities of their commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular Article 3: "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person."

APPEALS TO:

Leader of the Islamic Republic

His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed >Ali Khamenei,
The Presidency, Palestine Avenue,
Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Telegram: His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

E-mail: webmaster@wilayah.org (on the subject line write: For the attention of the office of His Excellency, Ayatollah al Udhma Khamenei, Qom)

Salutation: Your Excellency

President

His Excellency Hojjatoleslam val Moslemin Sayed Mohammad Khatami
The Presidency, Palestine Avenue
Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Telegram: His Excellency Hojjatoleslam val Moslemin Sayed Mohammad Khatami, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

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

Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary

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

Telegram: Head of the Judiciary, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: + 98 21 879 6671 (unreliable; please mark "care of Director of International Affairs, Judiciary")

Email: lrjpr@iranjudiciary.com (Public Relations Office of Judiciary; please mark for the attention of HE Ayatollah Shahrudi)

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

Minister of Foreign Affairs,

His Excellency Kamal Kharrazi
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Abdolmajid Keshk-e Mesri Av
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: + 98 21 390 1999 (unreliable; please mark "care of the Human Rights Department, Foreign Ministry)

Salutation: Your Excellency

and to diplomatic representatives of Iran accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.