

PUBLIC

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08 January 2008

UA 09/08 Death penalty

IRAN Behnoud (m), full name not known, aged about 19, child offender

A young man called Behnoud has been convicted of a murder committed before he was 18, and is now believed to be in danger of execution.

Behnoud was convicted of beating to death a 19-year-old man, known only as Ehsan, with a bottle during a street fight in 2005. At the time of the murder, Behnoud was aged about 17. To execute him would be a violation of international law.

Behnoud was sentenced to *qesas* (retribution) by a court in Tehran, and his sentence was upheld by the Supreme Court. According to the Iranian news agency Fars, Ehsan's family are demanding that Behnoud be executed. However, the case has been referred to conciliation in order to allow both families to negotiate the payment of *diyeh* (blood money) in exchange for pardoning Behnoud.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

As a state party to both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Iran has undertaken not to execute child offenders, those convicted of crimes committed when they were under 18. However, since 1990, Iran has executed at least 28 child offenders, six of them in 2007. At least 79 child offenders are now on death row in Iran. This number may be even higher as at least a further 15 Afghan child offenders have reportedly been sentenced to death.

For more information about executions of child offenders in Iran, please see: *Iran: The last executioner of children* (MDE 13/059/2007, June 2007), <http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engmde130592007>

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

- expressing concern that Behnoud is at risk of execution for a crime committed when he was under 18;
- calling on the authorities to commute his death sentence;
- reminding them that Iran is a state party to both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which prohibits the use of the death penalty against those under the age of 18 at the time of offence, and that the execution of Behnoud would therefore be a violation of international law;
- urging the authorities to pass legislation to abolish the death penalty for offences committed by persons under the age of 18, so bringing Iran's domestic law in line with its obligations under international law;
- stating that Amnesty International acknowledges the right and responsibility of governments to bring to justice those suspected of criminal offences, but unconditionally opposes the death penalty.

APPEALS TO:

Leader of the Islamic Republic

His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei

The Office of the Supreme Leader, Islamic Republic Street - Shahid Keshvar Doust Street

Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: info@leader.ir

Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi

Howzeh Riyasat-e Qoveh Qazaiyeh / Office of the Head of the Judiciary

Pasteur St., Vali Asr Ave., south of Serah-e Jomhuri, Tehran 1316814737, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: info@dadgostary-tehran.ir (In the subject line write: **FAO Ayatollah Shahroudi**)

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

President

His Excellency Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

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

Email: dr-ahmadinejad@president.ir

via website: www.president.ir/email

Director, Human Rights Headquarters of Iran

His Excellency Mohammad Javad Larijani

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Email: fsharafi@bia-judiciary.ir (In the subject line: **FAO Mohammad Javad Larijani**)

int_aff@judiciary.ir (In the subject line: **FAO Mohammad Javad Larijani**)

and to diplomatic representatives of Iran accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 20 February 2008.