

PUBLIC

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Fear of execution

IRAN

Naser Qasemi (m), aged 23

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Mohammad Reza Haddadi (m), aged 18

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Reza Hejazi (m), aged 19

] child offenders

Iman Hashemi (m), aged 18

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Naser Qasemi, Mohammad Reza Haddadi and Reza Hejazi are all in prison awaiting execution for murder. The death sentence of Iman Hashemi is expected to be approved imminently. All are all in prison awaiting execution for murder. They were all aged under 18 at the time of their alleged crimes. They could all be hanged at any time. The Head of the Judiciary has the power to issue a stay of execution at this stage.

Naser Qasemi, from Kermanshah province in western Iran, was 15 years old in 1999 when he and an uncle, who was armed, tried to steal some maize from a farm near his home. They were discovered by farm workers, and in the fight that ensued, one of the farm workers was shot and killed. The uncle initially escaped but Naser was arrested and charged with murder. He has been detained for eight years, during which he has faced a number of trials and retrials, as a result of which he was sentenced to death on three occasions. The victim's family have demanded 1,500 million Rials (approximately US \$164,000) as *diyeh* ("blood money"), but Naser Qasemi's family have been unable to raise this amount. The Society for the Right to Life (*Anjoman-e Haq-e Hayat*), an Iranian human rights group has been campaigning on his behalf. It is not clear where he is being held.

Mohammad Reza Haddadi, aged 18, is held in Adelabad prison in the city of Shiraz. He was sentenced to death in January 2004 by a court in Kazeroun for the murder of a man in 2003. He had confessed to the murder, but retracted the confession during his trial, saying he had claimed responsibility for the killing because his two co-defendants had offered his family money if he did so. Mohammad Reza Haddadi stated during the trial that he had not taken part in murder of a man who had offered him and the two others a lift in his car. The two others later supported Mohammad Reza Haddadi's claims of innocence, and withdrew their testimony that implicated him in the murder. His co-defendants, both over 18 at the time of the crime, are said to have received lesser sentences. However, in July 2005, a branch of the Supreme Court upheld the death sentence against Mohammad Reza Haddadi. The case is awaiting final approval by Ayatollah Shahroudi, the Head of Iran's Judiciary.

Juvenile offenders Reza Hejazi and Iman Hashemi are imprisoned in the Central Prison in the city of Esfahan, in central Iran.

Reza Hejazi – then aged 15 - was among a small group of people involved in a dispute with a man on 18 September 2004, which resulted in the man being fatally stabbed. Reza Hejazi was arrested and tried for murder, and on 14 November 2005 he was sentenced to *Qesas* (retribution) by Branch 106 of the Esfahan General Court. The sentence was approved by Branch 28 of the Supreme Court on 6 June 2006, although under Iranian law he should have been tried in a juvenile court. The case was referred for mediation between Reza Hejazi and the victim's family, to try and arrange for the payment of *diyeh*, but no sum has yet been agreed. If no agreement is reached, Reza Hejazi will be executed.

Iman Hashemi was 17 in June 2006 when his brother Majid was arrested for fatal stabbing of a man in a fight. Following his brother's arrest, Iman Hashemi was said to have presented himself to the investigating

authorities and confessed to having murdered the man, though he later implied in court that he had been coerced into confessing. Despite his family's insistence that he was innocent, a court in Esfahan sentenced him to *Qesas* for murder on 13 January 2007. On 26 May 2007, Branch 42 of the Supreme Court upheld the verdict. Distraught, on 29 September 2007 his brother Majid set himself on fire. Four months later he died of his injuries. The verdict has not been approved by the Head of the Judiciary.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Iran is one of only six countries in the world in which child offenders may face execution. This is despite Iran's obligations under international law, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to prohibit the execution of juvenile offenders. In the last four years Iran has executed more child offenders than in all those other countries combined. At least 79 child offenders are now on death row in Iran. This number could be considerably higher since not all sentences may have been made public. 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> Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases, and supports the global trend away from the use of the death penalty, powerfully expressed in the UN General Assembly's resolution calling for a worldwide moratorium on executions on 18 December 2007.

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

- calling for an immediate halt to the executions of Naser Qasemi, Mohammad Reza Haddadi, Reza Hejazi and Iman Hashemi, all convicted of crimes allegedly committed when they were under the age of 18;
- calling on the authorities to declare a moratorium on the implementation of the death penalty as called for by the UN General Assembly in December 2007, and to commute the death sentences passed on Naser Qasemi, Mohammad Reza Haddadi, Reza Hejazi and Iman Hashemi;
- reminding the authorities that Iran is a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which prohibit the use of the death penalty against people convicted of crimes committed when they were under 18.

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 OR via website: www.president.ir/email

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 24 April 2008.