

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 13/100/2006

12 September 2006

Further Information on UA 283/05 (MDE 13/052/2005, 1 November 2005) and follow-up (MDE 13/073/2005, 25 November 2005) - Fear of imminent execution

IRAN

Shahla Jahed (f), aged 36

Shahla Jahed is once again facing imminent execution, after the Supreme Court reportedly upheld her death sentence for the second time. She was sentenced to death for murdering her husband's first wife in 2002. She may have been coerced into confessing to the murder.

Shahla Jahed, a "temporary" wife of Nasser Mohammad-Khani, a former striker for the Iranian national football team and former manager of a team in Tehran, stands accused of stabbing to death Laleh Saharkhizan, her husband's "permanent" wife, on 9 October 2002. She was initially sentenced to death in June 2004 and an appeal by her relatives, at the time, was rejected and the judges of Branch 15 of the Supreme Court upheld the sentence. Shahla Jahed's lawyer reportedly wrote a letter to the Head of the Judiciary, Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi, requesting a review of the execution order in view of the fact that Shahla Jahed's case had not been properly investigated. In November 2005 the Head of the Judiciary reportedly ordered a stay of execution so that the case could be re-examined.

On 11 September 2006, the judges of Branch Seven of the Supreme Court reportedly upheld Shahla Jahed's death sentence by a majority vote. Her lawyer reportedly confirmed that the Supreme Court's ruling had been written and endorsed and that both Shahla Jahed and the family of Laleh Saharkhizan would be formally informed of the decision on 13 September.

Shahla Jahed was said to have confessed to the murder of Laleh Saharkhizan during the initial investigation, but during her trial consistently upheld her innocence. In December 2004, on being told of a previous Supreme Court ruling in the case, Shahla Jahed reportedly said, "Everyone knows the conditions under which I confessed."

The prosecution reportedly claimed that Shahla Jahed had murdered Laleh Saharkhizan out of jealousy. Nasser Mohammad-Khani was himself initially suspected of complicity in the murder and jailed for some months, but was reportedly released.

Amnesty International is concerned that Shahla Jahed's confession may have been made under duress.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Under Iranian law, men and women can have both "permanent" and "temporary" marriages. In a temporary marriage, men and women can commit to be married for a certain period of time, after which the marriage is null and void.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases as the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment, in violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The organization has recorded 108 executions in Iran so far this year, including those of two women, although the true figure may be much higher.

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

- acknowledging that governments have a responsibility to bring to justice those suspected of criminal offences, but stating your unconditional opposition to the death penalty, as the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment and violation of the right to life;
- urging the authorities to stop the execution of Shahla Jahed and to commute her death sentence immediately;
- asking for details of her trial, her appeal and her legal representation;
- expressing concern that Shahla Jahed's confession may have been coerced, and calling for an investigation into the circumstances in which it was made, the methods and findings of which should be made public, and anyone found to be responsible for abuses should be brought to justice;
- reminding the authorities that confessions extracted under duress are prohibited by Article 38 of the Constitution of Iran, which says that "All forms of torture for the purpose of extracting confession or acquiring information are forbidden," and that Iran is a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), or which Article 7 states that "No one shall be subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment".

APPEALS TO:

Leader of the Islamic Republic

His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed Ali Khameni

The Office of the Supreme Leader, Shoahada Street, Qom, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: + 98 251 774 2228 (mark "FAO the office of His Excellency, Ayatollah al Udhma Khameni")

**Email: Info@leader.ir
istiftaa@wilayah.org**

Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary

His Excellency Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi

Ministry of Justice, Park-e Shahr, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Email: Please send emails via the feedback form on the Persian site of the website
<http://www.iranjudiciary.org/contactus-feedback-fa.html>**

The text of the feedback form translates as:

**1st line: name, 2nd line: email address, 3rd line: subject heading
then enter your email into the text box**

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

Speaker of Parliament

His Excellency Gholamali Haddad Adel

Majles-e Shoura-ye Eslami, Imam Khomeini Avenue, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

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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 October 2006.