

UA 136/02

Fear of i

IRANFerdows B (f)

Sima (f)

The two women named above have reportedly been sentenced to be stoned to death.

Sima was sentenced to death by stoning in January this year, and is now in prison awaiting execution, according to reports recently received by Amnesty International.

The Iranian newspaper *Entekhab* reported on 24 April that a woman called Ferdows B has been sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment, to be followed by death by stoning. Another woman who received a similar sentence was stoned to death in May 2001, after eight years in Tehran's Evin Prison. She had been convicted of adultery and "corruption on earth".

The exact charges against Sima and Ferdows B are not known, and there are no details of the trial proceedings or whether they were allowed to appeal.

Two other women were reportedly sentenced to death by stoning a year ago, but it is not known whether these sentences have been carried out. An unnamed woman was sentenced to be stoned to death for murder, in May 2001, and in June a woman named only as Robabeh was sentenced to 50 lashes, to be followed by death by stoning (see EXTRA 05/01, MDE 13/023/2001, 11 July 2001).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The woman put to death in Tehran in May 2001 was one of two women known to have been stoned to death in Iran that year. In July, Maryam Ayoubi was stoned to death in Evin Prison for adultery and murder (see EXTRA 05/01, MDE 13/023/2001, 11 July 2001). At least 35 people have been executed so far this year in Iran.

The Iranian Penal Code prescribes stoning to death for *Hodoud* offences (crimes with fixed as opposed to discretionary punishments) such as adultery and prostitution. The Penal Code is very specific about the type of stones to be used. Article 104 states, with reference to the penalty for adultery: "...the stones should not be too large so that the person dies on being hit by one or two of them; they should not be so small either that they could not be defined as stones".

It is clear that the punishment of stoning is designed to cause the victim grievous pain before death. The UN Commission on Human Rights earlier this month expressed concern at "continued executions [in Iran] in the apparent absence of respect for internationally recognized safeguards, in particular public and especially cruel executions, such as by stoning" (UN Document E/CN.4/2002/L.33 11 April 2002).

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

- expressing concern at reports that two women, Ferdows B and Sima, have been sentenced to death by stoning, and urging the authorities to commute the sentences immediately;
- asking for details of their trial proceedings, and whether they were allowed to appeal;

- asking what has happened to Robabeh and the unnamed woman sentenced to stoning to death in May 2001, and urging that their death sentences be commuted immediately;
- pointing out that the death penalty constitutes cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment amounting to torture, especially when carried out by stoning, and as such violates the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Iran is a state party.
- stating your unconditional opposition to the death penalty irrespective of the crime for which it is imposed, as the ultimate violation of the right to life.

APPEALS TO:

Leader of the Islamic Republic

His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei,

The Presidency, Palestine Avenue,

Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Telegrams: Ayatollah Khamenei, Tehran, Iran

Salutation: Your Excellency

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

President

His Excellency Hojjatoleslam val Moslemin Sayed Mohammad Khatami

The Presidency, Palestine Avenue

Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Telegrams: President Khatami, Tehran, Iran

E-mail: khatami@president.ir

Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary

His Excellency Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahrudi

Ministry of Justice

Park-e Shahr

Tehran

Islamic Republic of Iran

Telegrams: Head of Judiciary, Tehran, Iran

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

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Iran accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.