

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 13/10/98

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Further information on UA 30/98 (MDE 13/01/98, 29 January 1998) and follow-ups (MDE 13/05/98, 9 February 1998, MDE 13/06/98, 18 March 1998 and MDE 13/07/98, 11 May 1998) - Death penalty / Fear of imminent execution / Possible prisoner of conscience

IRANMorteza Firouzi, aged 43, former editor-in-chief of the English-language daily, *Iran News*

Amnesty International has recently learned that the death sentence against Morteza Firouzi has been returned to the court of the first instance for re-examination. He is no longer therefore believed to be at risk of imminent execution.

Morteza Firouzi was sentenced to death in January 1998, reportedly on charges of "spying" and "adultery", following a secret trial. In February his appeal against the sentence was rejected by the Supreme Court and there were fears that he was to be hanged within days. Subsequent reports suggested both that his death sentence may have been lifted following intervention by the President of Iran but also that his case would be returned to the Supreme Court for reconsideration. In May there was grave concern at press reports that the Supreme Court had upheld the death sentence against him.

In the absence of clarification from the Iranian authorities concerning the details of the charges against Morteza Firouzi Amnesty International is concerned that the charges brought against him may be politically motivated and that, if this is the case, he may be a prisoner of conscience.

No further action is therefore required by the Urgent Action Network. Thanks to all those who sent appeals on his behalf.