

17 August 2001

AI Index MDE 13/031/2001 - News Service Nr. 146

### **News Flash**

#### **Iran: Halt the surge of executions**

*Amnesty International today expressed its grave concern over the dramatic increase in executions carried out in Iran.*

*In the last two days alone, more than ten men have been hanged, some of them in public and some for offences which had no lethal consequences. According to media reports from Iran, 100 death sentences have been upheld in the Supreme Court this week alone and many more executions may be imminent.*

*"These developments in Iran fly in the face of international human rights standards -- stating that the death penalty, where it still exists, should only be used for the most serious crimes -- and the worldwide abolitionist trend: 109 states have now abolished the death penalty in law or practice," said Amnesty International.*

*During one public execution in south eastern Tehran on Wednesday, Iranian police fired tear gas into the crowd as they threw sticks and stones in an attempt to prevent the hanging and reportedly appeal for clemency.*

*Amnesty International urges the authorities to urgently consider a moratorium on executions as called for by the UN Commission on Human Rights in 2000 and 2001. The organisation also calls for a review of the cases of all prisoners currently under sentence of death and renews its long-standing appeals for death sentences to be commuted, adding its voice to those of a number of Iranians who have publicly expressed their concern over this punishment.*

*"Judicial authorities must ensure that all prisoners are guaranteed every opportunity to defend themselves, including the right to appeal, and seek commutation of the sentence. International standards require that states that have not abolished the death penalty should only impose it for the most serious crimes, whose scope should not go beyond intentional crimes with lethal or other extremely grave consequences," Amnesty International stated.*

\ENDS

public document

\*\*\*\*\*

For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566

Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW web : <http://www.amnesty.org>