

PUBLIC

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24 September 2008**

UA **Death Penalty**
IRAN 273/08 **Zahra**

On 14 September, a woman known only as “Zahra” had her death sentence, for the murder of her husband, sent to the Office for Implementation of Sentences in Tehran to implement the sentence. She is at imminent risk of execution.

Zahra was convicted of killing her 42 year old husband on 30 November 2001. She was sentenced to *qesas* (retribution) by Branch 1601 Penal court in Tehran, and this sentence was later confirmed by Branch 34 of the Supreme Court in Tehran. The family of the victim have requested the implementation of her death sentence as soon as possible.

Zahra is reported to have stated that her husband often drank large quantities of alcohol, struck her when she disagreed with him, and sexually abused her, and that it was for this reason that she 'decided to kill him, and did it with a kitchen knife'.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The family of a murder victim has the right either to insist on execution, or to pardon the person convicted of the murder and receive financial compensation. A convicted murderer has no right to seek pardon or commutation from the state, in violation of Article 6(4) of the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

This year the Iranian authorities have executed at least 244 people, including six juvenile offenders. Amnesty International acknowledges that governments have a duty and responsibility to bring to justice those suspected of criminal offences but they must do so in proceedings that meet international standards for fair trial.

Amnesty International unconditionally opposes the use of the death penalty in all cases and under any circumstances, since it violates the right to life and by its very nature constitutes cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment. The UN General Assembly passed a resolution on 18 December 2007 calling on States “to establish a moratorium on executions with a view to abolishing the death penalty”.

Amnesty International is also campaigning for an end to legislation which discriminates against women in Iran, including in areas such as marriage, divorce and child custody, which Iranian campaigners believe contributes in some circumstances to women committing violent crimes.

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

- calling for the immediate halt to the imminent execution of Zahra;
- calling for the commutation of the death sentence of Zahra;
- urging the Iranian authorities to bring Iranian legislation into line with their international human rights obligations, so that people sentenced to death for murder have the right to seek pardon or commutation of their sentence from the state.

APPEALS TO:

Head of the Judiciary in Tehran

Mr Ali Reza Avaie
Karimkhan Zand Avenue,
Sana'i Avenue, Corner of Ally 17, No 152,
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: avaei@Dadgostary-tehran.ir

Salutation: Dear Mr Avaie

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 Jomhouri, Tehran 1316814737, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: info@dadgostary-tehran.ir (In subject line write: **FAO Ayatollah Shahroudi**)

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

Director, Human Rights Headquarters of Iran

His Excellency Mohammad Javad Larijani
Howzeh Riyasat-e Qoveh Qazaiyeh (Office of the Head of the Judiciary)
Pasteur St, Vali Asr Ave., south of Serah-e Jomhouri, Tehran 1316814737, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: +98 21 3390 4986 (there are problems with this line, please try three times)

Email: int_aff@judiciary.ir (In the subject line: **FAO Mohammad Javad Larijani**)

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 05 November 2008.