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Iran – Halt execution scheduled for Monday 22 October 2012

The mother of Saeed Sedeghi, a shop worker due to be executed on 13 October for a drugs offence in Iran, was called to Evin Prison for ‘a final meeting’ with her son today.

Judicial officials told her on Sunday that he would be executed in the early hours of Monday, 22, October, in Evin Prison.

“Iranian authorities know full well that executing people for drugs offences is contrary to international human rights standards. Executing Saeed Sedeghi and possibly others in a few hours’ time, in Tehran’s Evin Prison, will do nothing to solve Iran’s ever-growing drugs problem but will inflict needless suffering on Iranian families,” said Ann Harrison, Deputy Director of Amnesty International’s Middle East and North Africa Programme.

“Halting the execution of Saeed Sedeghi and others now, only hours from his hanging could be the start of a new approach to drugs offences in Iran and I urge judicial officials to seize this opportunity.”

“Even at this late hour we urge the Iranian authorities to commute the death sentence passed on Saeed Sedeghi and that of anyone else on death row,” Ann Harrison said.

On 13 October, it appeared that Saeed Sedeghi had been granted a stay of execution. It appears his family was not informed of his whereabouts afterwards until today.

While Iran’s security forces have a right to prosecute individuals for offences connected to the production and supply of illegal drugs, drugs offences do not meet the threshold of “most serious crimes” to which the death penalty must be restricted under international law. Death sentences should not be mandatory for such offences.

Iran is second only to China in the number of executions carried out annually.