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Iran: Yesterday's bomb attack in Chabahar condemned

Amnesty International condemns yesterday's suicide bomb attack in Chabahar in Iran's Sistan-Baluchistan province in which at least 38 people, mostly worshippers at a mosque, are reported to have been killed and more than 50 injured.

The attack, which appears to have targeted ordinary citizens, is an outrageous crime and cannot be justified under any circumstances. The perpetrators must be brought to justice in full conformity with international law and fair trial standards and without recourse to the death penalty.

According to a report carried on Al Arabiya's website, the Baluchi armed group known as the People's Resistance Movement of Iran (PRMI), or Jondallah, claimed responsibility for the attack.

The attack appears to have been deliberately intended to cause death and injury among worshippers who had gathered at the Imam Hossein Mosque in Chabahar to commemorate Tasoua, part of the Ashoura religious festival. At least three women and a child are among those reported to have been killed. It seems that one attacker was killed as he set off an explosive device while another was killed before he could detonate his.

The PRMI is an armed group opposed to the government which claims support from the Baluchi and Sunni minorities. In 2007, in response to Amnesty International criticism of its conduct, involving hostage taking and killings of prisoners, including civilians, the group asserted that it adhered to "international principles and laws out of respect for human tenets and principles" and claimed that its actions were part of the "legitimate right of defence".

However, the PRMI has since carried out bombings and other attacks, some of which appear to have targeted civilians. For example, it claimed responsibility for an explosion on 28 May 2009 which killed up to 25 worshippers in a Shi'a mosque in Zahedan.

Following previous PRMI attacks, Iranian security forces have sometimes taken peremptory retaliatory action, including executing members and sympathizers of the PRMI and otherwise targeting advocates of greater Baluchi civil and political rights. Less than 48 hours after the explosion on 28 May 2009, three alleged members of the PRMI were hanged in public in Zahedan. Officials said that although the three men were in detention at the time of the bombing, they had "confessed" to bringing

explosives used in the mosque into the country and to involvement in other bomb attacks and kidnappings.

Amnesty International reiterates its call to the PRMI to explicitly commit to ending attacks targeting civilians and to upholding the fundamental principles of humanity derived from international humanitarian law.

Amnesty International also calls on the Iranian authorities to ensure that local security and law enforcement officials fully respect human rights in their response to the latest PRMI attack. They must, in particular, not take abusive measures by way of retaliation.

For further information, see:

- *Iran: Human Rights Abuses against the Baluchi minority* (Index: MDE 13/104/2007), September 2007: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/104/2007>

- *Iran: Amnesty International Condemns Suicide Bomb Attacks on Mosque* (Index: MDE 13/078/2010), 15 July 2010:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/078/2010/en>

- *Iran: Fear of reprisal against Baluch population following suicide attack in Pishin by armed group* (Index: MDE 13/112/2009), 20 October 2009:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/112/2009/en>

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