

AI Index: PRE 01/179/2009
06 May 2009

Iran: Amnesty head condemns executions at Delara Darabi ‘flowers’ protest

Speaking at a gathering of anti-death penalty protestors outside the Iranian embassy in London today, Amnesty International Secretary General Irene Khan said:

“The earth on Delara Darabi's grave has not dried yet as the Iranian authorities prepared to execute two more people who, like her, were accused of having committed crimes when they were still under 18. They were granted a one-month stay of execution this morning. This might not save them from the gallows considering that Delara was executed in spite of a stay of execution by the Head of the Judiciary in Iran.

“The Iranian authorities must put an end to capital punishment - this horrific and inhuman punishment denies both the victim and the perpetrator of their humanity.

“While the world has been moving towards a complete abolition of the death penalty, Iran has been steadily imposing and carrying out capital punishment in defiance of the world trend and to calls from its own people to end the death penalty

“Iran is a party to international treaties that forbid the execution of persons for crimes committed before age 18 - regardless of the crime they may have committed, including murder. Iran must respect its international obligations, stop breaching international law and accept that it is wrong to execute those who may have committed crimes when they were underage.

“Children deserve protection and rehabilitation, not death.”

Amnesty supporters were protesting this afternoon at the scheduled execution in Iran earlier today of two people - Amir Khaleqi and Safar Angooti - who faced execution despite having been convicted of offences that occurred when they were below the age of 18. Such executions are prohibited under international law. In the event, both executions were reportedly postponed for a period of a month.

Just last week, however, Delara Darabi, a 22-year-old Iranian woman who had been convicted of a crime she allegedly committed while aged 17, was executed despite a two-month stay in her case. Her execution has sparked international outrage. Today's event saw Amnesty laying white lilies in remembrance of Delara Darabi at the door of the Iranian embassy. Irene Khan and scores of Amnesty activists were joined by Alistair Carmichael, Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Abolition of the Death Penalty.