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## **Fears grow for Iran stoning case lawyer and son**

Amnesty International today called on the Iranian authorities to immediately release the lawyer and son of Sakineh Mohammadi Ashtiani, an Iranian woman who is at risk of execution by stoning, if they are held solely for trying to pass on information about her case.

The call came amid increased international concern for Sakineh Mohammadi Ashtiani, a 43-year-old mother of two, held on death row since her conviction in 2006 on charges of “adultery while married”.

The Iranian State Prosecutor, in his role as spokesperson for the judiciary, confirmed on Monday that Javid Houtan Kiyan, Sakineh Ashtiani’s lawyer, had been arrested on October 10 and that he was still under investigation for links to “anti-revolutionary groups abroad”. He also said that Javid Houtan Kiyan had been found in possession of three forged or duplicate ID cards.

Media reports have said that Javid Houtan Kiyan was arrested along with Sajjad Ghaderzadeh, the son of Sakineh Mohammadi Ashtiani, and two German nationals.

“We fear that Javid Houtan Kiyan may have been detained for no more than fulfilling his responsibilities as Sakineh Mohammadi Ashtiani’s lawyer, and for talking to foreign nationals” said Hassiba Hadj Sahraoui, Deputy Director of Amnesty International’s Middle East and North Africa Programme.

“His detention – part of the Iranian authorities ongoing targeting of defence lawyers - further undermines an already deeply flawed justice system which has failed Sakineh Mohammadi Ashtiani from the start. She has been left for weeks without legal representation and without access to any family visits, which makes her situation all the more precarious.”

The Iranian authorities have a track-record of bringing politically-motivated trumped up criminal charges against defence lawyers.

The Iranian authorities have not confirmed either the arrest or the whereabouts of Sajjad Ghaderzadeh, Sakineh Ashtiani’s son. Amnesty International has been unable to contact him since and believes he too has indeed been arrested.

The two German nationals appear to have been conducting an interview with Sajjad Ghaderzadeh and Javid Houtan Kiyan in the latter’s office when all four were arrested, according to reports received by Amnesty International.

The State Prosecutor Gholam-Hossein Mohseni-Ejei confirmed on 11 October that two foreign nationals had been arrested. On 1 November he said that the two Germans had been granted consular access.

“It is hard to see that Javid Houtan Kiyan and Sajjad Qaderzadeh have been arrested for any other reason than because they wanted to publicize Sakineh Mohammadi Ashtiani’s continuing plight and to save her life. If so, they are prisoners of conscience and should be released immediately and unconditionally, along with anyone else held for similar reasons” said Hassiba Hadj Sahraoui.

On 12 October, the Foreign Ministry Spokesperson, Ramin Mehmanparast, said that the two German nationals had entered the country on tourist visas and had no journalistic accreditation, adding that they had been arrested because they had a link to a “foreign anti-revolution network”.

“All those detained should be protected from torture or other ill-treatment, and granted immediate access to their families and to lawyers of their choice.” said Hassiba Hadj Sahraoui