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Chechen Republic: Amnesty International condemns public execution

Amnesty International today condemned the public execution of a man and a woman by a firing squad in the centre of Grozny in line with a death sentence handed down by the Chechen Supreme Shari'a Court.

“As more and more countries are abolishing the death penalty, the Chechen Republic continues to carry out this cruel, inhuman and outmoded form of punishment,” Amnesty International said today. “What makes it even more barbaric was that the executions were reportedly filmed by the authorities.”

According to reports, the court found two women and a man guilty of premeditated murder of the husband of one of the women and sentenced the three of them to death. The executions went ahead despite calls by Amnesty International for clemency. The second woman was reportedly not executed because the doctors established at the last moment that she was pregnant.

It has been reported that the Chechen Procurator General and other senior law enforcement officials announced today that a number of executions of death row prisoners will be carried out in the next few days. Although the Chechen Shari'a law reportedly demands that persons executed be buried immediately, President Aslan Maskhadov has issued a decree that the bodies of those executed should be put on public display and should bear placards on their chests with a description of the crime for which they were executed.

It was also reported that recently, President Maskhadov demanded of the Shari'a courts “severe verdicts” and their “immediate enforcement”. According to reports more than 30 people charged with kidnapping and other crimes are awaiting trial in Chechnya and may receive the death penalty. Amnesty International is concerned for their lives and calls on the President to seek alternative punishments for those who may be found guilty.

This is a second public execution in Chechnya, according to Amnesty International's information, after the execution in April of a Chechen man, Ibrahim, from the settlement of Bachi-Yurt.

Amnesty International called on the Chechen President to immediately grant clemency to all prisoners currently on death row in the Chechen Republic. The organization also called for the revision of the provisions of the Chechen Criminal Code which provide for the death penalty and corporal punishments with a view to abolish the death penalty and all acts which constitute of torture and ill-treatment.

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