

PUBLIC

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Flogging

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IRAN

Seven Women (names unknown)

According to a report in the 15 November 2003 edition of Tehran's *Kayhan* newspaper, seven women, about whom no further details are provided, were each sentenced to 50 lashes by a general Court in Shiraz, south central Iran, for showing disrespect, (in Persian, *hormat shekan*), to the "holy month of Ramadan"

The women were reportedly driving around the streets of Shiraz, listening to loud music, "dancing in the vehicle" and ridiculing those fasting during the month of Ramadan, which is currently underway. Their behaviour aggravated citizens, who made repeated calls to a special police line in order to quickly halt them.

Following their arrest, they reportedly confessed and were sentenced to 50 lashes each. It is not known when the sentence is scheduled to be carried out or whether an appeal has been lodged at this stage.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International considers the punishment of flogging to constitute cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment amounting to torture, in contravention of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) to which Iran is a state party. This year alone, the organisation has recorded 190 floggings as having been carried out in Iran, although true figures may be much higher. In 1997 the United Nations commission on human rights stated that "corporal punishment [such as flogging] can amount to cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment, or even to torture".

On 18 November Canada introduced a draft United Nations (UN) resolution on the situation of human rights in Iran, to the third committee of the United Nations General Assembly. The draft resolution explicitly refers to the practice of flogging, in point d of section 2, in which it expresses serious concern at "The use of torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment, in particular the practice of amputation and flogging".

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Persian, English, French or your own language:

- recognizing the rights and responsibilities of states to bring to justice those suspected of criminal offences;
- expressing concern at the report that seven women have been sentenced to flogging;
- urging the authorities to commute the sentence of flogging;
- noting that Iran is a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Article 7 of the ICCPR states that "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment";
- urging the judicial authorities to implement a moratorium on the use of flogging, which is a cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment, with a view to its eventual abolition

APPEALS TO:

The Office of the Leader of the Islamic Republic

Dr Ali Akbar Velayati MD, Foreign Policy Advisor

Office of the Leader of the Islamic Republic, The Presidency, Palestine Avenue,
Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: webmaster@wilayah.org ; (on the subject line write: For the attention of the Office of
His Excellency, Ayatollah al Udhma Khamenei, Qom)

Salutation: Dear Sir

President

His Excellency Hojjatoleslam val Moslemin Sayed Mohammad Khatami

The Presidency, Palestine Avenue, Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Telegram: His Excellency Hojjatoleslam val Moslemin Sayed Mohammad Khatami, Tehran,
Islamic Republic of Iran

E-mail: khatami@president.ir (please resend your message if it does not get through
the first time)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary

His Excellency Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi

Ministry of Justice, Park-e Shahr, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: irjpr@iranjudiciary.org

Fax: + 98 21 879 6671 (please keep trying; please mark "care of Director of International
Affairs, Judiciary")

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

Spokesperson of the Government of Iran

Mr Abdollah Ramanzadeh

Email: webmaster@information.spk-gov.ir

Salutation: Dear Sir

and to diplomatic representatives of Iran accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if
sending appeals after 1 January 2004.