

PUBLIC

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Death penalty

IRAN

Hajar Vafi (f), aged 19

Hajar Vafi, from the town of Lahijan, in northern Iran, has reportedly been sentenced to death for the murder of her aunt. It is not clear whether there will be an appeal, or whether the sentence will go directly to the Supreme Court for ratification, after which she could be executed at any time.

According to the Iranian daily *Jomhuri-ye Eslami* of 12 September, Hajar Vafi, also known as Katam, was sentenced to death (as *qesas* or retribution) after Branch 102 of the Criminal Court in Langaroud, near her home town, convicted her of murdering her maternal aunt, 73-year-old Fatemeh Pourhamzeh, in January or February 2005. Hajar Vafi, who is married with a two-year-old child, reportedly confessed to killing her aunt, by stabbing her to death. In her confession, the young woman reportedly admitted that the reason for the killing was a "financial dispute" with the victim.

Amnesty International has recorded 58 executions in Iran so far this year, although the true figure may be much higher.

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

- urging the authorities to commute the death sentence imposed on Hajar Vafi immediately;
- asking for details of her trial and any appeals, and of her legal representation;
- acknowledging that governments have a responsibility to bring to justice those suspected of criminal offences, but stating your unconditional opposition to the death penalty, as the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment and violation of the right to life.

APPEALS TO: (It may be difficult to get through to Iranian fax numbers, but please keep trying)

Leader of the Islamic Republic

His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei

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

Fax: + 98 21 649 5880 (please mark 'For the attention of the Office of His Excellency, Ayatollah al Udhma Khamenei)

Email: info@wilayah.org

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 (mark 'Please forward to HE Ayatollah Shahroudi')

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

Speaker of Parliament

Gholamali Haddad Adel

Majles-e Shoura-ye Eslami (Parliament)

Imam Khomeini Avenue,

Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

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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 26 October 2005.