

AI Index: PRE 01/175/2009
05 May 2009

Iran: Stop Wednesday's execution of two juvenile offenders

The Iranian authorities must halt the execution of two juvenile offenders due to be executed on Wednesday, five days after the execution of Delara Darabi who had been convicted of a crime she was alleged to have committed while still under 18, Amnesty International said today.

“The international consensus against executing child offenders reflects the widespread recognition that because of children’s immaturity, impulsiveness, vulnerability and capacity for rehabilitation, their lives should never be written off – however heinous the crimes of which they are convicted,” said Hassiba Hadj Sahraoui, Deputy Director of Amnesty International’s Middle East and North Africa Programme. “The scheduling of these executions, just days after the appalling execution of Delara Darabi, show that the Iranian authorities have total disregard for international law which unequivocally bans the execution of those convicted of crimes committed under the age of 18.”

Juvenile offenders, Amir Khaleqi and Safar Angooti are both due to be executed on Wednesday 6 May at 4am local time in Evin prison. At least 135 other juvenile offenders are known to be on death row in Iran.

According to their lawyer, Mohammad Mostafaie, Amir Khaleqi killed a man during a fight when he was drunk. Amir does not remember how the incident happened but was so remorseful that he turned himself into the police. He was 16 years old at the time. Amir was eventually convicted, despite the court taking into consideration that he was intoxicated, and a juvenile offender.

The Head of Judiciary granted a two-month stay of execution for Amir in February which has now expired and his execution is scheduled to take place tomorrow, Wednesday 6 May.

Safar Angooti was convicted of murder at age 17. According to the newspaper Etemad, in April 2008 Safar Angooti stabbed a rival suitor who was talking to a girl he liked and was sentenced to death. Safar claimed that he had killed the man but not intentionally.

According to reports, Mohammad Mostafaie was himself arrested this morning when he left a meeting with Judiciary Spokesman, Ali Reza Jamshidi, in which he tried to get the executions halted. He was released after a few hours.

“There may still be time to save the lives of Amir Khaleqi and Safar Angooti who, like Delara, may be killed for crimes they allegedly committed when they were still minors,” said Hassiba Hadj Sahraoui.

The organization urged the Iranian authorities to adopt new legislation that would ban, once and for all, the execution of juvenile offenders, including those convicted of murder (qesas). The compelling need for such legislation has recently been highlighted yet again by the execution of Delara Darabi, and the further prospect

of two other young deaths.

Since January 2009 Iran has executed at least two people for crimes they were alleged to have committed while under 18. No other country has done so since 2007.

Amnesty International's members are launching worldwide activities in front of Iranian embassies to protest the execution of Delara Darabi, hoping the publicity will stop tomorrow's possible execution of Amir Khaleqi and Safar Angooti.

Secretary General Irene Khan will lay white lilies to protest against the execution of Delara Darabi and other juvenile offenders in Iran.