

EXTRA 16/02

Imminent

IRAN Amir Hoseyn Mashti (m)
Ali Soltani (m)

The two men named above are reportedly to be executed in public on the evening of 20 February, in Kerman, south-eastern Iran. Their death sentences have been upheld by the Supreme Court and the executions will go ahead unless the men are pardoned by the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Sayed Ali Khamenei, or the victims' families. A pardon can be given at anytime, until the moment of execution.

The men were reportedly arrested in November 2001 and convicted of "pursuing satanic thoughts, kidnapping women and girls and creating fear and anxiety among the people in Kerman". They were sentenced to death by hanging by the lower court of Kerman. The sentence was subsequently upheld by the Supreme Court on 9 February 2002.

According to press reports of 19 February, the head of the Justice Department of Kerman, Gholam Hoseyn Heydari, reportedly stated that the two men would be hanged in public "so as to teach others a lesson." He added that two other men, Ali Dozd and Faqir Qanbarzahi, had recently been hanged for similar offences.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International has recorded 18 executions as having been carried out so far this year in Iran, although the true figures for both may be much higher. Last year Amnesty International issued a public statement in which it urged the authorities to urgently consider a moratorium on executions as called for by the UN Commission on Human Rights in 2000 and 2001 (see AI Index MDE 13/031/2001, News Service Nr. 146, 17 August 2001)

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty as the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment, in violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Iran is a state party. Article 6 of the ICCPR states "In countries which have not abolished the death penalty, sentence of death may be imposed only for the most serious crimes". As there were no lethal consequences in this case, the death sentences should be commuted immediately.

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

- recognizing the rights and responsibilities of governments to bring to justice those suspected of criminal offences;
- urging that the death sentences imposed on the two men be commuted immediately and urging that the victims' families be made aware of their right to pardon the men;
- seeking trial details of the two men involved in the case, including details of any appeals against their convictions;
- reminding the Iranian authorities of their commitment to the ICCPR (in particular Article 6) to which they are a state party;
- reminding the Iranian authorities of their commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular Article 3: "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person."

APPEALS TO:

Leader of the Islamic Republic

His Excellency Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei,
The Presidency, Palestine Avenue,
Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Telegrams: Ayatollah Khamenei, Tehran, Iran
Salutation: Your Excellency
Email: webmaster@wilayah.org; (on the subject line write: For the attention of the office of His Excellency, Ayatollah al Udhma Khamenei, Qom)

President

His Excellency Hojjatoleslam val Moslemin Sayed Mohammad Khatami
The Presidency, Palestine Avenue
Azerbaijan Intersection, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Telegrams: President Khatami, Tehran, Iran
E-mail: khatami@president.ir
Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary

His Excellency Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahrudi
Ministry of Justice
Park-e Shahr
Tehran
Islamic Republic of Iran
Telegrams: Head of Judiciary, Tehran, Iran
Faxes: + 98 21 879 6671 (number may be unreliable; please mark "care of Director of International Affairs, Judiciary")
Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES 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 19 March 2002.