

PUBLIC

AI Index:MDE 13/008/2002

UA 153/02

Fear of imminent execution/flogging

22 May 2002

IRAN

Up to 20 people, names unknown

Ali Reza (m), age 19

Ramin (m), aged 17

Up to 20 "guilty delinquents and mischievous" people are to be executed in Tehran over the next two weeks, according to a report in the newspaper *Norouz* on 16 May. At least 10 people have reportedly been executed since then, and Amnesty International fears that a wave of executions is underway.

Four men were reportedly hanged at Qasr Prison in Tehran on the day of the *Norouz* report. They had been convicted of murder, and the Supreme Court had rejected their appeals. Three days later, the newspaper *Seda-ye 'Edalat* reportedly published a story that a young man would be executed by hanging imminently; on 20 May, five unnamed "drug smugglers" were reportedly hanged in the northeastern city of Mashhad.

Norouz also reported on 16 May that Ahmad Dolatyari, "a known thief and murderer", had sought forgiveness and reconciliation with the family of his alleged victim. However, he was reportedly executed on 20 May.

Ali Reza was reportedly sentenced to 74 lashes on 21 May, for killing a man in self-defence. He has apparently been given 20 days to appeal.

Seventeen-year-old Ramin was sentenced to 20 lashes for possession of heroin, on 17 May. The sentence was reduced to 15 lashes because he suffers from a thyroid condition, and will be carried out in three years' time.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

At least 139 people were executed in Iran in 2001. At least 285 people were flogged, many of them in public.

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.

Amnesty International considers the punishment of flogging to constitute cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment amounting to torture, also in contravention of the ICCPR.

There was a similar surge in executions in Iran in August 2001. A medical writing action issued on 10 August 2001 (MDE 13/028/2001) asked Amnesty International members to write to the Iranian authorities expressing their concern at the dramatic increase in use of public floggings. One week later, Amnesty International expressed its alarm at the surge of executions in the press release *Iran: Halt the surge of executions* (MDE 13/031/2001).

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

- asking the names of the people reported by the newspaper *Norouz* on 16 May to have been sentenced to death, and whether they have appealed;
- urging the authorities to halt the executions immediately, if the death sentences have been upheld by the Supreme Court;
- expressing your sympathy for the victims of violent crime and recognising the rights and responsibilities of governments to bring to justice those suspected of criminal offences, but stating your unconditional opposition to the death penalty irrespective of the crime for which it is imposed, as the ultimate violation of the right to life;
- urging the authorities to ensure that the victims' families are made aware of their right to pardon the condemned;

- asking whether the men were given every opportunity to defend themselves, including the right to appeal, in keeping with Article 6(4) of the International Covenant on Civil, Political and Cultural Rights, to which Iran is a state party: "Anyone sentenced to death shall have the right to seek pardon or commutation of the sentence. Amnesty, pardon or commutation of the sentence of death may be granted in all cases."

- 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 (inconsistent reliability; please be patient and re-send if your message may be returned)

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:

Minister of Foreign Affairs

His Excellency Kamal Kharrazi
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Abdolmajid Keshk-e Mesri Av
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Telegrams: Foreign Affairs Minister, Tehran, Iran

Faxes: + 98 21 390 1999 (number may be unreliable; please mark "care of the Human Rights Department, Foreign Ministry)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Parliamentary Committee

Chairperson, Article 90 Commission (Komisyon-e Asl-e Navad)
Majles-e Shura-ye Eslami, Imam Khomeini Avenue, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Telegrams: Majles, Tehran, Iran

Telex: 21 42 32 ICAI IR

Faxes: + 98 21 646 1746 (Can be difficult to reach, please be patient)

Salutation: Dear Sir

and to diplomatic representatives of Iran accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.