

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Public Statement

AI Index: MDE 13/122/2008
19 August 2008

Iran: Amnesty International condemns the execution of juvenile offender Reza Hejazi

Amnesty International unreservedly condemns the execution today 19 August 2008, at 11am of Reza Hejazi, for a crime he committed when he was below 18 years old. Reza Hejazi was hanged in Esfahan central prison following his conviction for the murder, then aged about 15. His lawyer was not informed that his execution was to be carried out, though under Iranian law a 48 hour notification period is required. Amnesty International calls for the Iranian Judiciary to halt all executions of juvenile offenders and the Iranian government to ban all such executions in line with international law.

Reza Hejazi's family were notified that he had been transferred to a cell for those to be executed within 24 hours, and they informed his lawyer, Mohammad Mostafaei. The lawyer reached Esfahan prison at 4.30am, and attempted to find out when the execution was to be carried out. Prison guards informed him that executions normally took place between 7 and 8am. After attempting for several hours to secure a stay of execution, at around 10am Mohammad Mostafaei was told by the officer supervising executions that Reza Hejazi's execution had been halted. He set off back to his office in the capital, Tehran, a five-hour journey away. While he was travelling, he was informed that Reza Hejazi was hanged at 11am.

Juvenile offender, Reza Hejazi - then aged 15 - was among a small group of people involved in a dispute with a man on 18 September 2004, which resulted in the man being fatally stabbed. Reza Hejazi was arrested and tried for murder, and on 14 November 2005 he was sentenced to *qesas* (retribution) by Branch 106 of the Esfahan General Court. The sentence was approved by Branch 28 of the Supreme Court in Mashhad on 6 June 2006, although under Iranian law he should have been tried in a juvenile court.

The execution of juvenile offenders is prohibited under international law, as stated in Article 6 (5) of the ICCPR and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), of which Iran is a state party to and so has undertaken not to execute anyone for crimes committed when they were under 18.

Since 1990 Iran has executed at least 36 juvenile offenders, including eight in 2007. The execution today of Reza Hejazi brings the number of juvenile executions to five so far in 2008. No other country is known to have executed a juvenile offender in 2008.

The situation of juvenile offenders facing execution in Iran has reached crisis levels, with at least 132 juvenile offenders known to be on death row in Iran, although the true number could be much higher.

The organization urges the Iranian authorities to immediately stop sentencing juvenile offenders to death and commute the sentences of these on death row.

See for further information Urgent Action: *UA 71/08*, AI Index: *MDE 13/049/2008*, 13 March 2008 *Fear of execution*; <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/049/2008>

Press release *Iran: End Execution of Juvenile Offenders*, published on 29 July 2008;

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/103/2008/en>

Press release *Iran: Spare four youths from execution, immediately enforce international prohibition on death penalty for juvenile offenders*, published on 8 July 2008

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/for-media/press-releases/iran-spare-four-youths-execution-immediately-enforce-international-prohi>

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