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Iran: Amnesty International urges Iranian authorities to prevent executions of three child offenders and join the worldwide trend towards abolition of the death penalty.

Amnesty International is deeply concerned at reports that three child offenders face imminent execution in Iran, in clear contravention of international law. The organization is urging the Iranian authorities to prevent these executions, to cease all executions of child offenders and to join the worldwide trend towards abolition of the death penalty.

The death sentence for murder imposed on Ali Mahin Torabi, for a crime he allegedly committed at the age of 16, has been approved by the Head of the Judiciary and he may be executed within days. Similar sentences imposed on two other child offenders are reportedly before the Head of the Judiciary for approval. More than 70 other child offenders remain on death row in Iran.

The execution on 4 December of Makwan Moloudzadeh, following a grossly flawed trial, brought the total number of child offenders executed in Iran in 2007 to at least six. At least one of these was under the age of 18 at the time of execution. To date, the Iranian authorities have executed more than 300 people in 2007 – a marked increase over the 177 known to have been executed in 2006.

The Iranian authorities regularly execute more child offenders than any other country – they have executed at least 28 since 1990. Saudi Arabia and Pakistan are the only other countries believed to have executed a child offender in 2007.

Executions of child offenders not only contravene customary international law and Iran's obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), but also the spirit of the resolution calling for a worldwide moratorium on executions that the UN is about to adopt next Tuesday. That resolution, already adopted by the General Assembly's Third Committee with a large majority, is an expression of the world-wide trend towards abolition of the death penalty recognized by the UN Secretary-General and the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Background

A UN resolution calling for a moratorium on executions was adopted by the Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly at its 62nd session on 15 November. The General Assembly, sitting in plenary, is expected to endorse the resolution on 18 December.

The resolution calls upon all states that still maintain the death penalty “to establish a moratorium on executions with a view to abolishing the death penalty.” It urges these states “to respect international standards that provide safeguards guaranteeing the protection of the rights of those facing the death penalty” and to “progressively restrict the use of the death penalty and reduce

the number of offences for which it may be imposed". The UN Secretary-General will report to the General Assembly in 2008 on how the resolution is being implemented.

Widespread student demonstrations in Iran in November and December 2007 featured protests against the death penalty.

For more information about Amnesty International's concerns regarding executions of child offenders in Iran, please see:

Iran: The last executioner of children (MDE 13/059/2007, June 2007)

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/059/2007/en>

and *Execution of child offender Makwan Moloudazdeh is a mockery of justice* (MDE 13/141/2007, 6 December 2007)

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/141/2007/en>

and

Iran: Further Information on death penalty/ fear of imminent execution / unfair trial concern: Ali Mahin Torabi (m) (MDE 13/146/2007, 11 December 2007)

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/146/2007/en>

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