

INTERNAL (for AI members only)

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1989 CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE DEATH PENALTY: COUNTRY APPEALS SERIES

CIRCULAR NO. 17A: RECOMMENDED ACTIONS AND ADDRESSES FOR IRAN

1. CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVES

1. Since July 1988 Amnesty International (AI) has recorded the names of over 1,000 political prisoners, real and alleged members or supporters of many opposition factions, executed in Iran. Among them are prisoners of conscience, prisoners serving sentences of imprisonment, or whose terms of imprisonment had expired without their being released, and prisoners who had never been tried or sentenced.

In this campaign AI hopes that international public opinion will bring pressure on the Iranian authorities at the United Nations and in bi-lateral diplomatic contacts in order to stop the present wave of executions and prevent any future recurrence.

2. AI wants to bring to the Iranian authorities' attention all of its concerns about the use of the death penalty in Iran and to get a clear response from them as to their obligation to observe internationally agreed safeguards and restrictions on the death penalty including the right to a fair trial.

2. MAIN DEMANDS - the Iranian authorities should:

1. Stop all executions.

2. Ensure that anyone charged with an offence punishable by death is afforded all facilities for a fair trial including the assistance of a lawyer and the right of appeal.

3. Make public full information on trial procedures followed and judicial, and other, safeguards observed in all death penalty cases.

3. POINTS FOR APPEALS

Please consult the letter-writing guide (campaign circular number 9).

1. Express grave concern about the reports of hundreds of executions over the past months in Iran and call for an immediate cessation of all executions.

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2. Explain that AI is conducting a worldwide campaign against the death penalty and mention some of the other countries AI is appealing to including Iraq, the USA and other countries.
3. Express particular concern that prisoners in Iran have been executed in secret after summary trials, or sometimes without trial, in circumstances where there is little to prevent the occurrence of miscarriages of justice.
4. Remind the authorities of their obligation to observe internationally agreed human rights standards and restrictions on the death penalty including those contained in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which Iran has ratified.
5. Seek assurances that every prisoner accused of an offence punishable by death is afforded all facilities for a fair trial before an independent, competent and impartial tribunal.
6. Express concern about the use of the death penalty for drug offences, following trials by Islamic Revolutionary Courts which do not meet international standards for a fair trial. In particular express concern at the high number of people already executed in 1989 for drug related offences. For example, AI has received reports that at least 75 people were executed for drug related offences in January 1989 alone. Reiterate the fact that the death penalty has not been proven to be a unique deterrent for any crime.
7. Urge that the death penalty not be used against people who were under 18 years old at the time of the offence.
8. Express concern about the reported use of methods of execution which prolong the suffering of the prisoner during the execution such as stoning and hanging by strangulation.
9. Groups who were asked to participate in the Pre-Campaign Death Penalty Action on Iran (campaign circular number 8, AI Index: MDE 13/03/89) who have not received a reply to their letters should renew their request for information on the prisoners assigned to their group.
10. The IS will provide EXTERNAL information about executions in Iran throughout the campaign and groups can use this for publicity and general campaigning purposes.

4. PUBLICITY AND OTHER RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. Please publicize AI's concerns about the use of the death penalty in Iran widely.
2. Members of the public can be asked to send appeals to Iran. These appeals can be based on the Focus issue of the May 1989 AI Newsletter.
3. The EXTERNAL paper can be given to local journalists, radio and television stations, along with a copy of the country entry from the death penalty report and any recent Urgent Actions asking them to do a story about it. (Groups should coordinate these activities with their section office.)