

## Amnesty International probes Baha'i slayings

NEW YORK — Amnesty International and the chairman of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council have issued statements of concern over Iran's most recent imprisonment and execution of members of the Baha'i religious group.

Six Baha'i men, 10 women and a youth were executed in Shiraz, Iran, in June, Amnesty International said, bringing the total of executed Baha'is since February to 21.

At least 151 members of the Baha'is have been killed in Iran since the revolution of 1979, the organization charged.

While Baha'is are usually accused by the Iranian government of espionage, Amnesty International believes the real reason for imprisonment and execution is the members' religious belief, regarded as

heretical by authorities.

Because the 17 singled out in June would not recant their faith, they were hanged.

The executions, said Elie Wiesel, chairman of the Holocaust Memorial Council, are "echoes of the Nazi cruelties (and) we must protest this outrage with all our power."

"It is especially distressing that this occurs in a land ruled by representatives of one of the world's great religions — Islam. Believers in God of all men should spread compassion, not persecution, understanding, not hate."

Amnesty International said reports of 5,195 executions in Iran have been received since the revolution. Others have been referred to officially as deaths occurring during clashes with security forces.



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