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AMPUTATION AND FLOGGING

IRAN

Amnesty International has received reports that Mohammad Reza Zandi, a young man of 18, recently had the four fingers of his right hand amputated in punishment for theft. The amputation, which took place in the city of Qom, is said to have been carried out in addition to other punitive measures. According to a report which appeared in the newspaper Keyhan on 10 April 1988 he also received 40 lashes and a sentence of three years' imprisonment and two years' internal exile. The newspaper report stated that he had been charged with 25 counts of theft and some "sexual offences". Amputation of the fingers of the right hand as punishment for repeated theft is provided for in Iranian legislation, based on Islamic law (Shari'a).

Two other press reports of amputations have come to Amnesty International's attention since the beginning of 1988. The newspaper Jomhuri-e Eslami reported on 6 January 1988 that a man named Sayid Hassan Qadiri had the four fingers of his right hand amputated. A further amputation was reported on 21 March 1988 by Keyhan as having taken place in Tehran. This latter article quoted the Iranian Prosecutor General as saying that "more amputations will follow if more thieves are caught".

At the end of 1984/beginning of 1985 an Iranian-designed machine for the purpose of amputation was introduced into Evin prison in Tehran. A police official announcing the introduction of this machine was quoted in press reports as saying that both the Tehran Faculty of Medicine and individual forensic experts had been consulted about its design. Amnesty International does not, however, have details of the frequency with which amputations are carried out in Iran.

Amnesty International holds amputation to be a cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment, and thus prohibited internationally by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations Convention against Torture or Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

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