

PRESS RELEASE

IHRDC Calls on the World to Prevent Iran from Executing Prisoners Arrested in Connection with the June 12 Presidential Election

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT – Today, ILNA, an official Iranian news outlet, announced the creation of a special commission to “determine the fate of recent arrestees.” If history is any barometer, the creation of this commission and the men appointed to it, are ominous signs that the regime intends to severely punish, and execute, demonstrators and other human rights activists. The world cannot stand by and watch.

Ayatollah Shahroudi, the Head of the Judiciary who is appointed by the Supreme Leader, directed that members of the commission will include Hojatoleslam Dorri Najafabadi (Iran’s General Prosecutor), Ibrahim Ra’isi (Deputy Judiciary Chief), and Mostafa Pour-Mohammadi (Head of the General Inspection Organization). He also directed the commission to coordinate its activities with the Prosecutor of Tehran, Saeed Mortazavi.

This announcement followed closely on the heels of Friday’s sermon by senior cleric Ayatollah Ahmad Khatami in which he stated that demonstrators are *muharib*, a status that makes them subject to the most severe punishment, including execution. The sermon and creation of the commission follow a familiar deadly pattern, particularly given the men involved.

Mortazavi has been implicated in the death of photo-journalist Zahrah Kazemi, and the arrests and torture of other journalists and bloggers. Two of the named commissioners, Pour-Mohammadi and Ra’isi, were members of special commissions that were created in July 1988 on the orders of the then-Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khomeini. Those commissions, known as Death Commissions, sent thousands of already sentenced political prisoners throughout Iran to their deaths based solely on their responses to a few questions. The Iranian government secretly executed the prisoners and has never acknowledged that they took place. To this day, the exact numbers and identities of those executed remain unknown.

In a pattern eerily similar to today, as the executions were beginning in 1988, the then-Chief Justice Musavi Ardebili delivered a sermon claiming that “[t]he people say they should all be executed without exceptions.”

Given this history involving many of the same powerful men, the creation of special commissions coupled with a call for executions, are clear signs that Iran intends to severely punish, and execute, demonstrators and other human rights activists. The IHRDC calls on the United Nations to prevent this from happening.

IHRDC is a nonprofit organization based in New Haven, Connecticut that was founded in 2004 by a group of human rights scholars, activists, and historians. Its staff of human rights lawyers and researchers produce comprehensive and detailed reports on the human rights situation in Iran since the 1979 revolution. The Center's goal is to encourage an informed dialogue among scholars and the general public in both Iran and abroad. The human rights reports and an archive of documents are available to the public for research and educational purposes on the Center's website www.iranhrdc.org.

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