



**amnesty  
international**

INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT  
1 Easton Street London WC1X 8DJ  
United Kingdom

**URGENT  
ACTION**

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: MDE 13/07/89  
Distr: UA/SC

24 January 1989

Further information on UA 08/89 (MDE 13/02/89, 11 January) - Death Penalty

**IRAN: Mandatory death sentence for possession of drugs**

=====  
At least 66 people have been executed for drug offences since the beginning of 1989 in Iran as part of a new clampdown on drug abuse. Government statements indicate that there could be many more as Iranian leaders turn increasingly to the death penalty in an attempt to solve Iran's chronic drug problems.

Ten drug traffickers were hanged in Tehran on 7 January, and a further 56 in Tehran and other towns and cities on 16 January.

Numerous articles in the Iranian press have reported government plans to fight drug abuse by use of the death penalty. Chief Justice Ayatollah Ardebili said at a seminar on combatting drug abuse in Tehran on 8 January:

"Our Islamic and revolutionary duty makes it necessary for us to go into action, and to try to eradicate drug smuggling without any leniency or mercy."

The government's attitude to executing convicted drug traffickers was perhaps shown most clearly in a statement by Prosecutor General Hojatoleslam Mohammad Khoeniha who said:

"We have no worries about the increasing number of executions [of drug offenders] because those who are punished are far fewer than those who would otherwise fall into the narcotics trap."

Press reports have stated that executed drug traffickers had been declared corrupt on earth and at enmity with God. Such offences fall under the jurisdiction of Islamic Revolutionary Courts (IRCs) where Amnesty International is concerned by procedures which fail to comply with international standards for a fair trial. It is not clear from press reports whether defendants sentenced to death have been given the right to appeal against verdict and sentence. Amnesty International has received many reports of trials before IRCs being extremely summary with defendants not being permitted to call witnesses in their defence, nor to be represented by a lawyer. Without such safeguards there is a strong likelihood that miscarriages of justice may occur.

Amnesty International recognizes the right of governments to seek effective measures to counter illicit drug trafficking. However, the organization is opposed to the death penalty in all circumstances as the ultimate cruel inhuman and degrading punishment and a violation of the right to life. Despite the hundreds of executions carried out worldwide each year there is no evidence that the death penalty has had any identifiable effect in alleviating drug trafficking and abuse.

Telephone 01-833 1771    Telegrams: Amnesty London WC1    Telex: 28502

PM000061

Amnesty International is an independent worldwide movement working for the international protection of human rights. It seeks the *release* of men and women detained anywhere because of their beliefs, colour, sex, ethnic origin, language or religious creed, provided they have not used or advocated violence. These are termed *prisoners of conscience*. It works for *fair and prompt trials* for all *political prisoners* and works on behalf of such people detained without charge or trial. It opposes the *death penalty* and *torture* or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of all *prisoners*.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/express and airmail letters:

- urging that the death penalty for drug offences be replaced by some other punishment, and that no mandatory death penalty for any category of offenders should be introduced;
- expressing regret at the 66 executions of drug offenders which have taken place in 1989, and requesting details of the court and trial procedures followed in such cases;
- inquiring in particular whether defendants in drug trafficking cases are given a fair trial in accordance with international standards for a fair trial where, among other things, they have the right to be represented by a lawyer, to call witnesses in their defence and to appeal against verdict and sentence.

APPEALS TO:

H.E. Mir Hussein Musavi  
Prime Minister  
Pasteur Avenue  
Palestine Intersection  
Tehran  
Islamic Republic of Iran

H.E. Mohammad Khoeniha  
Prosecutor General  
Ministry of Justice  
Park-e Shahr  
Tehran  
Islamic Republic of Iran

Telegrams: Prime Minister  
Musavi, Tehran, Iran  
Telexes: 212777 prim ir  
212332 ir

Telegrams: Prosecutor General  
Khoeniha, Tehran, Iran  
Telexes: 214231 miti ir  
213113 prim ir

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Iran in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 28 February 1989.

— Please take action as soon as you receive this Urgent Action appeal. Carefully read the recommended action. If possible, send a telegram or express letter immediately to one or more of the addresses given. Other letters can be sent afterwards.

— Telegrams and letters should be brief and courteous. Stress that your concern for human rights is not in any way politically partisan. Refer to relevant provisions in international law, such as the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

Article 3 — "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person."

Article 5 — "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."

Article 9 — "No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile."

— The name of Amnesty International may be used, although letters written in a private or personal capacity may be more effective.

— Copies of appeals should be sent to relevant diplomatic representatives in your country.

— In Urgent Action cases, Amnesty International has to act rapidly to prevent the ill-treatment of prisoners. An appeal is issued when Amnesty International believes it has received reliable and accurate information in such cases. It is not always possible to verify all details independently and in some instances the situation outlined in the appeal may change. Urgent Action participants are always notified of any significant new facts.

— Copies of any replies received from government authorities should be sent immediately to your section's Urgent Action coordinator or direct to the Campaign and Membership Department of the International Secretariat. If appropriate, thank the official who has replied and ask to be kept informed about the case.