



**amnesty
international**

INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT
1 Easton Street London WC1X 8DJ
United Kingdom

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

**URGENT
ACTION**

AI Index: MDE 13/23/89
Distr: UA/SC

23 November 1989

Further information on UA 08/89 (MDE 13/02/89, 11 January) and follow-ups (MDE 13/07/89, 24 January, MDE 13/13/89, 15 March, MDE 13/20/89, 24 August and MDE 13/21/89, 15 September) - Death Penalty

IRAN: Mandatory death sentence for possession of drugs

According to a report in the official Iranian newspaper Kayhan, dated 14/11/89, 59 drug traffickers are to be executed in the town of Sari (Mazandaran province), on a date not specified. They appear to form part of a total of 496 drug traffickers, including 30 women, who were recently arrested.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International has now recorded over 1,300 executions for criminal offences in Iran this year, over 900 of which have been for drug-related offences.

The dramatic increase in the number of executions for criminal offences this year may have been facilitated by instructions given to the judiciary by Chief Justice Ardebili in January 1989 recommending that trials in serious criminal cases should take place immediately and that cases be dealt with in a matter of a few days from arrest to execution. Defendants have no right to call witnesses in their defence, and no right to legal representation. Without such safeguards miscarriages of justice are more likely to occur.

The majority of these executions have been carried out as part of a major government initiative aimed at putting an end to drug trafficking in Iran. Despite the hundreds of executions carried out worldwide each year, there is no evidence that the death penalty has had any significant effect in reducing drug trafficking and abuse. Amnesty International is concerned that the anti-drug campaign in Iran has led to increasingly arbitrary arrest and summary trial procedures where standards fall far short of international standards for fair trial.

Amnesty International recognizes the right of governments to seek effective measures to counter illicit drug trafficking, but it does not believe that what amounts to a policy of summary execution has any place among such measures. It opposes the death penalty in all cases as a violation of the right to life and the right not to be subjected to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment, as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Telephone: 01-833 1771 Fax: 01-833 5100 Telegrams: Amnesty London WC1 Telex: 28502

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: Telexes/faxes/airmail letters:

- expressing dismay at the more than 1,300 executions publicly announced since the beginning of 1989;
- requesting details of any trial procedures followed in the cases of the 59 people recently arrested;
- pointing out that the death penalty has not been shown to have a deterrent effect in reducing illicit drug trafficking;
- urging that those recently arrested should not be executed or subjected to any other form of cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment.

APPEALS TO:

H E Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi
Head of the Judiciary
Ministry of Justice
Park-e Shahr
Tehran
Islamic Republic of Iran

Telegrams: Justice Minister,
Tehran, Iran

Telexes: 214231 miti ir
213113 prim ir
marked for attention
Head Judiciary

H E Mokhtar Kalantari
Anti-Drug Campaign HQ
Prime Minister's Building
Pasteur Avenue
Tehran
Islamic Republic of Iran

Telegrams: Anti-Drug Campaign HQ,
Prime Ministers Building, Tehran,
Iran

Telexes: 213369 canh ir
marked for attention Head
Anti-Drug Campaign
Faxes: 669 850

COPIES TO:

H E Ali Akbar Velayati
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Sheikh Abdolmajid Avenue
Kooshk-e Mesri
Tehran
Islamic Republic of Iran

and 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 3 January 1990.

— 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.