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**Mass execution of political prisoners
including Drs Ahmad DANESH and Borsu BAGHERI**

IRAN

Amnesty International has learned of the recent execution of Drs Danesh and Bagheri, about whom there was concern after a spate of executions began in Iran some five months ago. The two doctors were imprisoned in Evin prison in the capital Tehran accused of membership of the banned Tudeh (communist) party; Dr Bagheri had been arrested in early 1982 and Dr Danesh in 1983.

Amnesty International is deeply concerned by the recent executions which appear to have continued unabated since July 1988 and constitute the largest wave of executions since the early 1980s. The killings have been taking place in prisons throughout Iran, including Evin and Gohardasht in Tehran, and in Tabriz, Mashhad and Shiraz. Many of those killed had been imprisoned without trial or were serving long prison sentences after unfair trials. Political trials, which are carried out before Islamic Revolutionary Courts, are summary, sometimes lasting only a few minutes and before a single judge. Defendants are not allowed to present any evidence or to produce any witnesses in their defence and Amnesty International knows of no single instance since the 1979 Revolution in which a person accused in a political case has been allowed access to a defence lawyer or to a legally qualified person.

Amnesty International has received information on more than 300 people reported to have been executed since July 1988, but believes that the actual number is far higher and fears that it could run into thousands. Most victims have been left-wing political activists and sympathizers, predominantly members of the People's Mojahedine Organization of Iran (PMOI), but also members of other groups and factions such as Rahe Kargar, the People's Fedaiyan Organization, the Tudeh Party and members of Kurdish opposition groups. The executions began following an incursion into Iran from Iraq by members of the PMOI-led National Liberation Army in July 1988; since then they have escalated dramatically. The men and women executed include secondary school students arrested in the early 1980s for distributing leaflets, professionals and also mullahs suspected of supporting Ayatollah Montazeri, designated to succeed Ayatollah Ruholla Khomeini.

The Iranian authorities initially denied reports of mass hangings and shootings, but public statements made by the authorities in the last few days have in effect confirmed the deaths. Reports have been received of the bodies being buried in shallow mass graves.

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Amnesty International is an independent worldwide movement working impartially for the release of all prisoners of conscience, fair and prompt trials for political prisoners and an end to torture and executions. It is funded by donations from its members and supporters throughout the world. It has formal relations with the United Nations, Unesco, the Council of Europe, the Organization of African Unity and the Organization of American States.

When the executions began, family visits to prisons were banned, making it difficult to obtain firm information on what was happening to the thousands of political prisoners in Iran. Although it was stated that all visits would be resumed at the end of October, this is believed to have been allowed in some cases only.

Amnesty International has sent numerous appeals to the Iranian authorities to halt the executions and is sending a list of names of political prisoners recently executed to the Iranian Government for comment.