

STATEMENT

THE IRAN HUMAN RIGHTS DOCUMENTATION CENTER URGES U.N. HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS TO VISIT IRAN

February 22, 2011

NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT – The Islamic Republic of Iran executed at least ten people last week – at the same time its security forces were brutally suppressing street demonstrations. Two more were executed yesterday. The official and semi-official Iranian press reported that all twelve people were executed for drug trafficking, a crime that does not warrant the death penalty under international law. Also alarming is the fact that, amid calls for the execution of opposition leaders Mehdi Karroubi and Mir Hossein Mousavi, the authorities placed both men under house arrest.

The ten executions were merely the latest in a steady stream of executions. The Islamic Republic has always had a high rate of executions – for many years it has held the number two spot following only China. While some executions are officially announced, many are never made public, making it difficult to know the full extent of this practice. However, the rate of executions began accelerating last fall to the point where in January 2011 alone, 79 people were officially reported to have been executed. At least 60 people were executed for alleged drug offenses, one for apostasy, and four who were charged with Moharebeh (“enmity against God”) for their alleged political activities.

The executions are merely one piece of the regime’s concerted effort to suppress all forms of dissent, real or imagined. Although last week’s demonstrations were some of the first to take place since December 2009, the regime has spent the last year systematically dismantling civil society organizations, arresting lawyers and students, and shutting down communications within Iran and with the outside world. The government’s suppression of dissent, including its shutdown of communications, together with the house arrests of opposition leaders and the continued high rate of executions is alarming in its broad scope and shocking brutality.

IHRDC continues to condemn all executions and calls on Iran to stop further executions as they violate international human rights law. Iran must allow Iranians the freedom to express their opinions, gather together, demonstrate, and communicate both within Iran and with the outside world. IHRDC also urges the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay to visit Iran and condemn the ever-worsening condition of human rights in that country.

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 a database of documents relating to human rights in Iran are available to the public for research and educational purposes on the Center's website. www.iranhrdc.org.

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