

URGENT ACTION

AHWAZI ARAB MEN AT RISK OF IMMINENT EXECUTION

Ghazi Abbasi, a member of Iran's Ahwazi Arab minority has been transferred to solitary confinement sparking fears that his execution may be imminent. He is believed to have been tortured or otherwise ill-treated while in detention.

On 27 September 2013, **Ghazi Abbasi**, an Ahwazi Arab man on death row, was transferred from his cell to solitary confinement in Karoun Prison, in Khuzestan,. He is at imminent risk of execution as death row inmates in Iran are usually put in solitary confinement immediately prior to the implementation of their sentences.

Ghazi Abbasi, along with three other men, **Abdul-Reza Amir-Khanafereh, Abdul-Amir Mojaddami, and Jasim Moghaddam Payam** were sentenced to death on 15 August 2012 by Branch One of the Revolutionary Court of Ahvaz for the vaguely worded charges of "enmity against God" (*moharebeh*) and "corruption on earth" (*ifsad fil-arz*). The charges related to a series of shootings that allegedly led to the deaths of a police officer and a soldier. On 13 February 2013, Branch 32 of the Supreme Court upheld the four death sentences which could be implemented at any time.

All four men have denied any involvement in the shootings, stating that their "confessions" were obtained under torture and other ill-treatment which they reportedly recanted in court. However their claims of torture have not been investigated either by the Revolutionary Court of Ahvaz or the Supreme Court.

Please write immediately in Persian, Arabic, English or your own language:

- Urging the Iranian authorities not to execute the four men sentenced to death (please name them) and order re-trials for all of the men in proceedings which comply with international fair trial standards and without recourse to the death penalty, and to commute all death sentences in Iran;
- Urging the authorities to effectively investigate the allegations that the men were tortured and otherwise ill-treated and disregard as evidence in court any "confessions" that may have been obtained under torture;
- Calling on the authorities to ensure the men are protected from torture and other ill-treatment; are granted all necessary medical treatment; and are allowed immediate and regular contact with their lawyers and families.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 15 NOVEMBER 2013 TO:

Leader of the Islamic Republic

Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei
The Office of the Supreme Leader
Islamic Republic Street – End of Shahid
Keshvar Doust Street,
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: info_leader@leader.ir
Twitter: @khamenei_ir
Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani
c/o Public Relations Office
Number 4, 2 Azizi Street intersection
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: info@dadiran.ir (Subject line: FAO
Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani)
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Secretary General High Council for
Human Rights
Mohammed Javad Larijani
c/o Office of the Head of the Judiciary
Pasteur St, Vali Asr Ave
South of Serah-e Jomhuri
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: larijani@ipm.ir (Subject line: FAO
Mohammad Javad Larijani)

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



URGENT ACTION

AHWAZI ARAB MEN AT RISK OF IMMINENT EXECUTION

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

All four men were arrested, along with three others, at about the same time in 2009. They were held in solitary confinement in the Ministry of Intelligence detention centre in Ahvaz for months without any access to a lawyer or their families.

Their trial by a Revolutionary Court took place behind closed doors and lasted less than two hours. The court found that the defendants had established a "separatist ethnic" group that "used weapons and engaged in shooting in order to create fear and panic and disrupt public security". The judgment primarily relied on the tainted "confessions" of the defendants which they retracted during the trial saying that they had been extracted under torture.

The three other accused men, Shahab Abbasi, Sami Jadmavinejad, and Hadi Albokhanafarnejad, were sentenced to three years imprisonment to be served in internal exile in Ardebil Prison, north-west of Iran, for their alleged limited involvement in the shootings.

Both the lower court and Supreme Court judgements have acknowledged that some of the defendants retracted their "confessions" in court, saying they had been extracted under torture or other ill-treatment. However, both courts failed to order an investigation into the allegations of torture.

The Ahwazi Arab minority is one of many ethnic minorities in Iran. Much of Iran's Arab community lives in the south-western province of Khuzestan. Most are Shi'a Muslims but some are reported to have converted to Sunni Islam, heightening suspicions by the Shi'a-led government about Ahwazi Arabs. Minority members often report that they are marginalized and subject to discrimination in access to education, employment, adequate housing, political participation and cultural rights.

In his March 2013 report, Dr. Ahmed Shaheed, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran, expressed concerns about the arrest, detention, and prosecutions for peaceful activities of members of the Ahwazi Arab community that called for social, economic, cultural, linguistic and environmental rights. He further raised concerns about the frequent reports of lack of due process and the use of incommunicado detention as well as torture and other ill-treatment.

Under Article 38 of the Iranian Constitution and Article 9 of the Law on Respect for Legitimate Freedoms and Safeguarding Citizens' Rights, all forms of torture for the purpose of obtaining "confessions" are prohibited. Iran's Penal Code also provides for the punishment of officials who torture citizens in order to obtain "confessions". However, despite these constitutional and judicial guarantees regarding the inadmissibility of testimony, oath, or confession taken under duress, forced "confessions" are generally accepted as evidence in Iranian courts and are sometimes broadcast on television even before the trial has concluded.

The death penalty is used extensively in Iran. Officially, so far 281 executions have been acknowledged by Iranian authorities for 2013 but reliable sources have reported at least 200 additional executions during the year. Despite the release of a number of political prisoners ahead of Iran's new President Hassan Rouhani's speech at the United Nations General Assembly there have been no indications that his election in June 2013 has led to changes in Iran's reliance on the death penalty.

Amnesty International is opposed to the death penalty in all circumstances without exception. It is a violation of the right to life as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment.

Name: Ghazi Abbasi, Abdul-Reza Amir-Khanafereh, Abdul-Amir Mojaddami, Jasim Moghaddam
Gender m/f: all m

UA: 280/13 Index: 13/040/2013 Issue Date: 4 October 2013