



Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'Homme

ORGANISATION INTERNATIONALE NON GOUVERNEMENTALE AYANT STATUT CONSULTATIF AUPRES DES NATIONS UNIES, DE L'UNESCO,
DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE ET D'OBSERVATEUR AUPRES DE LA COMMISSION AFRICAINE DES DROITS DE L'HOMME ET DES PEUPLES

International Federation
for Human Rights

Federación Internacional
de los Derechos Humanos

الغدرالية الدولية لحقوق الانسان

URGENT APPEAL

URGENT APPEAL TO THE AUTHORITIES OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN August 2007

We, human rights non-governmental organisations from all over the world and members of the International Federation for Human Rights, hereby express our support for our colleagues in the Islamic Republic of Iran, and join their call to the Iranian authorities to put an end to harsh repression against women's rights defenders, student movements, journalists and trade unionists.

We also call upon the Iranian authorities to stop politically motivated executions and the application of the death penalty for sexual offences, including death by stoning.

I. Repression of civil society

FIDH has witnessed with deep concern the dramatic increase of the repression of civil society movements in Iran over the past year.

The **women's rights movement** has borne the brunt of this repression, in particular since the launch of the "One Million Signatures" Campaign, in August 2006.¹ This Campaign seeks to provide education on women's rights at the grassroots level and to obtain the repeal of discriminatory laws against women. To this end, the Campaign collects signatures that it plans to submit to the national Parliament.

Currently, 40 activists are being or have been prosecuted for their involvement in the defence of women's rights; nine have received prison sentences, some with lashes. Their appeals are still pending. In addition, two activists were detained in Evin prison for their involvement in the campaign:

1. Mr. Amir Yaghoub-Ali was arrested on July 11, 2007 while collecting signatures. Our organisations expressed their fear for his physical and psychological safety. He was released on August 9, 2007.

2. Ms. Bahareh Hedayat was held in solitary confinement from July 9 to August 9, 2007, for her involvement in the student movement. Ms. Hedayat was condemned to two years suspended imprisonment on May 26, 2007 for her involvement in the "One million signatures" campaign.

¹ See Urgent Appeals and Press Releases of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint programme of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) on this issue (www.fidh.org).



Ms. Bahareh Hedayat

FIDH is deeply concerned with the fact that women's rights activists who have received the most severe sentences are usually young students (including Ms. Delaram Ali, Ms. Alieh Eghdamdoust and Ms. Maryam Zia) with no significant history in the defence of human rights. Nasim Sarabandi, a 20 year-old student, and Fatemeh Dehdashti were sentenced, on 12th August 2007, to six months imprisonment by the Revolutionary Court of Tehran, for having collected signatures in the subway as part of the women's rights campaign. It seems that the Iranian authorities are resorting to this strategy in order to dissuade young Iranians from joining the movement or to push them to leave it.

The **student movement** has long been the target of the authorities. FIDH deplores the recent (July, 2007) crackdown in Tehran against two student organizations, which resulted in at least 17 arrests. A number of the students arrested were subsequently released on bail.

In addition, the Alumni Association of Iran (Advar Tahkim Vahdat) was closed down, in violation of Iranian law and international human rights standards on freedom of association.

The students arrested had been protesting against the arbitrary detention and the torture of three colleagues, in detention since May 2007:

1. Ahmad GHASSABAN
2. Majid TAVAKOLI
3. Ehsan MANSOURI

Journalists

Newspapers and online publications are regularly closed down in Iran, while repression of journalists is on the rise, with arrests and harsh sentences, especially against those from Iranian-Kurdistan.

1. **Soheil Assefi, journalist at the news website *Roozonline*, was arrested in Tehran on 4 August 2007.**
2. **Farshad Gorbanpour, working also for the news website *Roozonline* and pro-reform newspapers, was arrested on 31 July 2007 and is currently detained, without charge, at Evin prison.**
3. **Adnan Hassanpour was sentenced to death by the Revolutionary Tribunal in Marivan, in Iran's Kurdish northwestern region, on 16 July 2007.**
4. **Abdolvahed "Hiva" Botimar was sentenced to death the same day, by the same tribunal.²**
5. **Ejlal Ghavani of *Payam-e Mardom-e Kurdistan*, a publication suspended in 2004, was arrested on 9 July 2007 after being convicted by a court in Sanandaj of "inciting the population to revolt" and "activities against national security."**

² See Urgent Appeal of the Observatory IRN 007 / 0807 / OBS 092, August 16, 2007.

6. **Mohammad Sadegh Kaboudvand**, *Payam-e Mardom-e Kurdistan's* editor, was arrested on 1 July 2007 and transferred to Evin prison. He has not been officially charged.
7. **Kaveh Javanmard**, of the publication *Karfto*, is currently serving a two-year prison sentence. Arrested on December 18, 2006, he was not allowed access to a lawyer during his trial, which took place behind closed doors.
8. **Said Matinpour** of *Yarpagh* (an Azeri-language publication based in Tehran) has been detained since 28 May, without charge, in Evin prison.
9. **Mohammad Hassan Fallahieh**, a journalist with the public radio Arabic-language service and TV broadcaster *Al-Alam*, has been detained since November 2006. He was tried by a revolutionary tribunal on 29 April 2007 on charges of espionage and was sentenced to three years in prison.
10. **Ali Farahbakhsh**, a contributor to several business newspapers including *Sarmayeh*, was arrested on 27 November 2006 and is being held in Evin prison.

Trade unions, particularly present and active in 2006, are increasingly repressed. Members of the Union of Workers of the Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company (*Sherkat-e Vahed*) have been particularly targeted. Mansour Osanloo, President of the Union, was abducted and severely beaten on July 10, 2007 and is currently detained in Evin prison.³ In 2006, he was held in solitary confinement for over seven months and then released on bail.



Mansour Osanloo, President of *Sherkat-e Vahed*

II. Politically motivated death sentences

While the global trend worldwide is towards abolition, or at least a restriction on the use of the death penalty, executions in the Islamic Republic are on the rise. Since January 2007, more than one hundred people have been executed.

Executions are not only increasing in number; since 2006, the death penalty is also applied to political offences, with a member of the People's Mojahedin Organisation of Iran (PMOI), Mr. Hodjat Zamani, hanged in February 2006 and five members of the Arab minority executed in March 2006, after blatantly unfair trials.

More recently, Ayatollah Kazemeini Boroujerdi and 17 of his followers were sentenced to death on 10 June 2007 by the Special Clerical Court, in which he was denied legal counsel. The date of their executions remains unknown. Detained since October 2006, Ayatollah

³ See Urgent Appeal of the Observatory IRN 005 / 0707 / OBS 077, July 11, 2007.

Kazemeini Boroujerdi espouses the belief that religion and politics should be separate, and thus calls into question the foundations of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In addition to being denied legal counsel and information about the charges against him, Ayatollah Kazemeini Boroujerdi has been denied any contact with his family, despite the death of his mother during his imprisonment. He suffers from Parkinson's disease but has been denied medical treatment.

Mr. Adnan Hassanpour and Mr. Abdoulvahed (also known as Hiwa) Boutimar, two Kurdish journalists were sentenced to death by the Revolutionary Tribunal in Marivan, on 17 July 2007. The two men were convicted on grounds of espionage, attacks upon national security, the diffusion of separatist propaganda, treason and collaboration with Kurdish political opposition parties. There are strong reasons to believe that the charges brought against the two journalists are baseless and rather reflect the authorities' aim to silence any critical voice or defendant of the Kurdish minority in Iran. Since their arrest, the two men - held incommunicado and, until recently, without access to a lawyer - are reported to have been severely tortured.

On 22 July 2007, 12 men were hanged at Evin prison, in Tehran. The men had been arrested, along with hundreds of other Iranians, during a so-called "morality crackdown", which took place in the capital, in May. Those executed had been convicted of "repeated rape, sodomy, and violent assault and battery" as well as drug trafficking offences. It is reported that some of them were actually convicted for defaming religion or for homosexual behaviour. Among those executed was Meysam Lotfi, a student activist first arrested in 1999. This represents the first hanging of a student activist for his political opinions. The Prosecutor of Tehran reportedly confirmed that he will seek the execution of another 17 individuals in the coming days.



On 5 July 2007, Jafar Kiani was stoned to death for adultery in Takistan (province of Qazvin). Jafar Kiani and his partner, Ms. Mokaraameh Ebrahimi, had spent 11 years in prison. They were both condemned to stoning. Stoning is an inhuman and degrading punishment violating Article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, ratified by the Islamic Republic, which states that «[n]o one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment ». Numerous UN bodies, including the UN Human Rights Committee, the UN Committee against Torture and the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture have called for the abolition of capital punishment. In addition, international law requires that

the death penalty be reserved for the most serious crimes only – this can in no way encompass sexual offences.

We call upon the Iranian authorities to ensure that Ms Mokaraameh Ebrahimi not be stoned.

On 2 August 2007, two additional persons were publicly hanged in Tehran, accused of killing a judge of the revolutionary tribunal. This was the first public execution in five years. On 6 August 2007, three persons were hanged in Sistan (South Eastern Iran) for drug-related offences.

WE THE UNDERSIGNED CALL UPON THE AUTHORITIES OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC TO STOP THE CURRENT WAVE OF REPRESSION TARGETING IRANIAN CIVIL SOCIETY.

WE ALSO URGE THEM TO IMMEDIATELY PUT AN END TO THE POLITICALLY MOTIVATED USE OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT AND TO END ITS APPLICATION TO SEXUAL OFFENCES.

WE APPEAL TO THE AUTHORITIES TO HONOUR THEIR OBLIGATIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS STANDARDS AND INSTRUMENTS RATIFIED BY IRAN.

Signatories:

Amman Center for Human Rights Studies, Jordan

Asamblea Permanente de los Derechos Humanos de Bolivia (APDH), Bolivia

Asociacion Pro Derechos Humanos (APRODEH), Peru

Austrian League for Human Rights, Austria

Bahrain Center for Human Rights (BCHR), Bahrain

Bahrain Human Rights Society (BHRS), Bahrain

Centro Nicaraguense de derechos humanos (CENIDH), Nicaragua

Comición Ecuménica de Derechos Humanos (CEDHU), Ecuador

Committee for the Defense of Democracy Freedoms and Human Rights (CDF), Syria

Damascus Center for Human Rights Studies (DCHRS), Syria

Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (HRFT), Turkey

Insan Haklari Dernegi (IHD), Turkey

Fundación Regional de Asesoría en Derechos Humanos (INREDH), Ecuador

Iranian League for the Defence of Human Rights (LDDHI), Iran

Liberia Watch for Human Rights, Liberia

Liga Mexicana por la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos (LIMEDDH), Mexico

Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (PAHRA), Philippines

Ramallah Center for Human Rights Studies, (RCHRS), Palestine

Public Committee Against Torture in Israel (PCATI), Israel

Sudan Organisation Against Torture (SOAT), Sudan
Taiwan Alliance to End the Death Penalty (TAEDP), Taiwan
Union for Civil Liberty (UCL), Thailand
Mouvement Laotien pour les Droits de l'Homme (MLDH), Laos
Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (LICADHO), Cambodia
Comite de Accion Juridica (CAJ), Argentina
Organization Feminina Popular (OFP), Colombia
Comite Permanente por la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos (CPDH), Colombia
Colectivo de Abogados « José Alvear Restrepo », Colombia
Kenya Human Rights Commission, Kenya
Asociación Pro Derechos Humanos de España, Spain
Finnish League for Human Rights (FLHR), Finland
Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), Pakistan
Suara Rakyat Malyasia (SUARAM), Malaysia
The Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association (ADHOC), Cambodia
Vietnam Committee for Human Rights (CVDDH), Vietnam