

## **Iran: UN experts urge Iran to halt immediately execution of a juvenile offender, scheduled for tomorrow**

GENEVA (18 February 2015) – The United Nations Special Rapporteurs on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ahmed Shaheed, and on extrajudicial executions, Christof Heyns, today urged the Islamic Republic of Iran to halt immediately the execution of Saman Naseem, a juvenile offender, reported to be scheduled for tomorrow.

Mr. Naseem was convicted of *Moharebeh* ('enmity against God') and *Ifsad fil Arz* ('corruption on earth') for his alleged involvement in armed activities on behalf of the Party of Free Life of Kurdistan (PJAK). Mr. Naseem, 17 at the time of his arrest in 2011, was allegedly subjected to torture and made to confess to a crime before he was sentenced to death in April 2013. The Supreme Court reportedly upheld the sentence in December 2013.

“Regardless of the circumstances and nature of the crime, the execution of juvenile offenders is clearly prohibited by international human rights law,” the independent experts stressed. The experts also recalled repeated assertions by the Iranian authorities that confessions obtain under torture were inadmissible under Iranian law.

The experts requested the Iranian authorities to halt the execution of Mr Naseem in strict compliance with its international human rights obligations, under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which the country is a party.

The experts expressed serious concerns over the increasing number of executions, including of women and political prisoners and renewed their call on the Government to immediately stop them. Over 700 persons, including 14 women and at least 13 juveniles are believed to have been executed last year. At least 60 persons, including four women have reportedly been executed in January 2015 alone, with a considerably large number of people including juveniles currently at risk of execution.

Appalled by the surge in executions, the Special Rapporteurs urged the Government to immediately establish a moratorium on the execution with a view to abolishing the death penalty all together. “The imposition of the death penalty in Iran contrasts the current international trend of abolishing the death penalty in law and in practice,” they noted.

## ENDS

**Ahmed Shaheed** (the Maldives) is a Visiting Professor at Essex University, UK; a former member of the Maldivian presidential Commission Investigating Corruption; and a foreign policy advisor to the President of the Maldives. Mr. Shaheed was Foreign Minister of the Maldives from 2005 to 2007 and from 2008 to 2010. He led the country's efforts to sign and ratify all nine international human rights Conventions and to implement them in law and practice. He was appointed as the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran in June 2011 by the UN Human Rights Council. Learn more, visit: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/AsiaRegion/Pages/IRIndex.aspx>

The Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, **Christof Heyns** (South Africa), is a director of the Institute for International and Comparative Law in Africa and Professor of Human Rights Law at the University of Pretoria, where he has also directed the Centre for Human Rights, and has engaged in wide-reaching initiatives on human rights in Africa. He has advised a number of international, regional and national entities on human rights issues. Learn more, log on to: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Executions/Pages/SRExecutionsIndex.aspx>

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<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CCPR.aspx>

And the Convention on the Rights of the Child: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>

UN Human Rights, Country Page – Iran: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/AsiaRegion/Pages/IRIndex.aspx>

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