



For immediate release – 2 July 2010

PRESS RELEASE

Iran: Imminent Execution of Political Prisoner Feared

After the recent execution of four Kurdish political prisoners on charges of moharabeh' (enmity against God), ARTICLE 19 is very concerned that the execution of Zeinab Jalalian and 15 other Kurdish political prisoners convicted of the same charge is imminent.

Zeinab Jalalian was arrested in 2008 in the western Iranian city of Kermanshah because she allegedly wrote and created posters for the Kurdish nationalist group, the Free Life Party of Kurdistan (PJAK) and because of her alleged ties to the group.

On June 26 2009, Kurdish human rights organisations reported that Zainab's death sentence had been finalised and forwarded to the enforcement section. Her lawyer is reporting that she has been moved to another ward in preparation for execution and that it is likely her sentence will soon be carried out. Upon attempting to receive updates on her condition and sentence, her family was told that her file was "lost". In similar cases, the files of other prisoners sentenced to death were also declared lost.

Zainab was denied access to legal counsel at her trial; her plea to say goodbye to her family was met with, "shut up" by the sentencing judge, and she was condemned to death by hanging. This is in direct violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Iran is a signatory, which guarantees defendants access to legal counsel and a "fair and public hearing by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal" (Articles 14 and 10).

ARTICLE 19 condemns the execution of Kurds by the government of Islamic Republic of Iran and calls for immediate action on the part of the Iranian Judiciary to halt all death sentences. Dr. Agnès Callamard, ARTICLE 19 Executive Director said *"The Islamic Republic of Iran must heed calls from the international human rights community to comply with international law and norms, abide by UN treaties, and act immediately to save her life and the life of the other 15 Kurdish political prisoners on death row."*

The other 15 Kurdish political prisoners on death row are: Habibollah Latifi, Shirko Moarefi, Hussein Khazri, Rostam Arkia, Mostafa Salimi, Anvar Rostami, Rashid Akhkandi, Mohammad Amin Agooshi, Ahmad Pooladkhani, Seyed Sami Hussein, Seyed Jamal Mohammadi, Hasan Talei, Iraj Mohammadi, Mohammad Amin Abdollahi and Ghader Mohammadzadeh.

On 9 May 2010, Farzad Kamangar, Ali Heydarian, Farhad Vakili and Shirin Alam-Holi were hanged at Evin prison in Tehran along with Mehdi Eslamian, a non-Kurdish political prisoner. All were convicted of ‘moharabeh’ (enmity against God).

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- ARTICLE 19 is an independent human rights organisation that works around the world to protect and promote the right to freedom of expression. It takes its name from Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees free speech.