

Execution of Mr. Yaghoub Mehrnehad

Paris-Geneva, August 6th, 2008. The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) strongly condemn the execution on August 4th, 2008 of **Mr. Yaghoub Mehrnehad**.

Mr. Yaghoub Mehrnehad was a social activist in the southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchistan and journalist for the *Mardomsalari* (Democracy) newspaper. He was also the Executive Director of *Voice of Justice Youth Association*, a local NGO registered with the authorities since 2002.

“This execution follows a blatantly unfair trial held behind closed doors, in the absence of a lawyer and without his family being informed of the hearing”, declared Mr. Karim Lahidji, Vice-President of FIDH. Mr. Yaghoub Mehrnehad had been sentenced to death last February for belonging to the “Jondollah” (Soldiers of Allah), a Baluchi armed group^[1]. The sentence was confirmed by the Supreme Court.

FIDH and OMCT fear that Mr. Yaghoub Mehrnehad may have been sentenced and executed for his peaceful activities advocating for the rights and the autonomy of the Baluchi minority of Iran. *“Over the last years, it's the first time that a journalist and a civil society activist is executed, and this is an additional terrifying setback for human rights in the Islamic Republic”*, added Mr. Lahidji. FIDH and OMCT call the Iranian authorities to release immediately and unconditionally Mr. Mehrnehad's younger brother, Mr. Ebrahim Mehrnehad who has been detained since February 24, 2008, by security forces for having publicized the death sentence against his brother.

The repression against activists belonging to ethnic and religious minorities is dramatically on the rise in Iran; sometimes, they are accused of terrorism, attacks against national security, treason even if there is no concrete evidence against them. *“The authorities do not seem to make any distinction between peaceful advocacy for the right of minorities and terrorist attacks by armed groups”*, said Mr. Eric Sottas, Secretary General of OMCT.

Since January 2008, around 200 persons have been executed in Iran. As recently as July 27, 2008, 29 persons have been executed. At a time when momentum is gathering across the world to end capital punishment, the Islamic Republic of Iran defies international human rights law by the high level of executions under conditions that blatantly violate international human rights standards.

OMCT and FIDH strongly condemn Mr. Yaghoub Mehrnehad's execution, and wish to recall that they are opposed to the death penalty as an extreme form of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and a violation of the right to life, as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments.

Our organisations strongly urge the Islamic Republic of Iran to immediately stop executions of civil

society activists and child offenders, and to appoint a committee of high level jurists to report on the application and conditions of implementation of death penalty in the country. They also urge the Iranian authorities to respect the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), ratified by Iran.

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[1] See OMCT-FIDH Joint Press Release issued on February 26th, 2008.

L'OMCT a son siège à Genève, en Suisse. Elle coordonne le réseau SOS-Torture composé de 282 organisations régionales et internationales dans 93 pays sur cinq continents.

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