

URGENT ACTION

EXECUTION LOOMS FOR IRANIAN KURDISH PRISONER

Iranian Kurdish prisoner Ramin Hossein Panahi, sentenced to death in January 2018, is at imminent risk of execution. The Office for Implementation of Sentences has said that his execution will be carried out soon after the end of the Muslim month of Ramadan on 15 June. He was convicted and sentenced to death after a grossly unfair trial.

Ramin Hossein Panahi's lawyer learned on 17 May that his case had been referred to Branch Four of the Office for Implementation of Sentences in Sanandaj, Kurdistan province, for his death sentence to be carried out. Prison officials subsequently told Ramin Hossein Panahi on 19 May that his execution would be carried out after 15 June, when the Muslim month of Ramadan ends. Ramin Hossein Panahi's execution was previously scheduled for 3 May and he was transferred to solitary confinement in preparation for it. However, following a public outcry, the authorities postponed the execution and returned him to the prison's general ward.

Ramin Hossein Panahi, a 22-year-old man from Iran's Kurdish minority, was convicted and sentenced to death after a grossly unfair trial on 16 January that lasted less than an hour. His family told Amnesty International that he appeared before the Revolutionary Court in Sanandaj with torture marks on his body, but that the court failed to order an investigation into his claims that he had been forced to "confess" to the crime. According to his lawyer, the court convicted and sentenced him to death for "taking up arms against the state" (*baqi*) merely based on his membership of the banned Kurdish opposition group Komala. No specific evidence was provided linking him to activities involving intentional killing, which is the required threshold defining the "most serious crimes" to which the use of the death penalty must be restricted under international law. Between his arrest and trial, he was allowed one brief meeting with his lawyer, which took place with intelligence officials present. The Supreme Court upheld the conviction and death sentence in March 2018.

Ramin Hossein Panahi was first arrested on 23 June 2017. Following his arrest, he was forcibly disappeared for four months. According to him, during this period and a further two months of solitary confinement, Ministry of Intelligence and Revolutionary Guard officials repeatedly tortured him, including through beating him with cables, kicking and punching him in the stomach and hitting his head against the wall. They also deliberately denied him adequate medical care for the injuries he sustained from being shot at the time of his arrest.

1) TAKE ACTION

Write a letter, send an email, call, fax or tweet:

- Halt plans to carry out the execution of Ramin Hossein Panahi immediately;
- Ensure that his conviction and death sentence are quashed and that he is released unless there is sufficient evidence not obtained through torture or other ill-treatment to charge him with a recognizable criminal offence and grant him a fair trial, without recourse to the death penalty;
- Order a prompt, independent and impartial investigation into his enforced disappearance, prolonged solitary confinement and allegations of torture and other ill-treatment, bringing to justice anyone found responsible in fair trials.

Contact these two officials by 2 July, 2018:

High Council for Human Rights
Mohammad Javad Larijani
Esfandiar Boulevard, Niayesh Intersection
Vali Asr Avenue, Tehran, Iran
Salutation: Your Excellency

H.E. Gholamali Khoshroo, Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations
622 Third Avenue, 34th Floor
New York, NY 10017
Phone: (212) 687-2020 | Fax: (212) 867-7086
Email: iran@un.int
Salutation: Your Excellency

2) LET US KNOW YOU TOOK ACTION

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Article 287 of the Islamic Penal Code states: "Any group that takes up arms against the foundations of the Islamic Republic of Iran is considered *bagi* and in the event of resorting to the use of arms, its members shall be sentenced to the death penalty." However, Article 288 notes, that if members of the group are arrested before using arms, they shall be sentenced to imprisonment. The circumstances around Ramin Hossein Panahi's arrest are unclear to Amnesty International. Komala initially issued a statement noting that he and three other Komala members had engaged in an armed clash with the Revolutionary Guards in the neighbourhood of Shalman in Sanandaj. Komala is an armed Kurdish opposition group which has been engaged in armed activities against the Islamic Republic of Iran since the 1980s. During the incident, Ramin Hossein Panahi was severely injured and the other three men were shot dead. However, Ramin Hossein Panahi and his lawyer have since claimed that shots were only fired by the Revolutionary Guards. This claim is supported by a report published on 17 July 2017 by Akam News, a media outlet affiliated with the Ministry of Intelligence, which stated that the Revolutionary Guards ambushed the men and opened fire on them, and that the men were not able to fire any shots back. In an official statement issued on 23 June 2017, the Revolutionary Guards said that they had not suffered any casualties in the incident.

Ramin Hossein Panahi was held in solitary confinement in detention centres run by the Revolutionary Guards and Ministry of Intelligence from his arrest on 23 June 2017 until 9 January 2018, when he was transferred to Sanandaj's Central Prison. During the four months in which he was forcibly disappeared, his elderly parents reported making strenuous efforts to locate him by visiting various government offices in the cities of Sanandaj and Qorveh, and the village of Dehgolan, all in Kurdistan province, but said that officials refused to disclose his fate or whereabouts. Instead, officials threatened and insulted them, describing their son as a "terrorist". On 31 October 2017, the branch of the Ministry of Intelligence in Sanandaj contacted Ramin Hossein Panahi's mother and instructed her to go to Sanandaj's bus terminal. From there, Ministry of Intelligence officials took her to an undisclosed location to meet with her son. His mother said that the intelligence officials initially wanted to take photos and videos of the family visit but removed the cameras after Ramin Hossein Panahi objected. His family has also reported that, on several occasions, Ministry of Intelligence officials visited him in prison and said that his death sentence would be commuted to imprisonment if he agreed to make televised "confessions" denouncing Kurdish opposition groups as "terrorists". Hours after Ramin Hossein Panahi's arrest on 23 June 2017, the Revolutionary Guards stormed his parents' house and arrested his brother, Afshin Hossein Panahi. They raided the house again on 24 June and arrested three other members of his family: Ahmad Hossein Panahi (his brother-in-law); Zobeyr Hossein Panahi (a distant relative); and Anvar Hossein Panahi (a cousin). Information received by Amnesty International suggests that none of these men had any involvement with the armed clashes and were instead arrested apparently to exact retribution. In October 2017, Afshin Hossein Panahi was sentenced to eight and a half years in prison, which he is currently serving in Sanandaj's Central Prison. Ahmad Hossein Panahi and Zobeyr Hossein Panahi were sentenced to five and six years in prison respectively. They were all convicted of national security offences connected to their involvement with Komala. On 1 May, Ahmad Hossein Panahi was arrested to begin serving his sentence. Zobeyr Hossein Panahi has not yet been summoned to begin serving his sentence.

Under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Iran is a state party, all people brought to trial have the right to fair proceedings. Given the irreversible nature of the death penalty, international human rights law requires that proceedings in capital cases scrupulously observe all relevant international standards protecting the right to a fair trial. Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases without exception, regardless of the nature of the crime, the characteristics of the offender, or the method used by the state to kill the prisoner. The death penalty is a violation of the right to life and the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment.

Name: Ramin Hossein Panahi
Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 171/17 Index: MDE 13/8457/2018 Issue Date: 21 May 2018