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Iran: Horrifying execution of young protester exposes authorities' cruelty and risk of further bloodshed

The Iranian authorities executed today of a young protester, Mohsen Shekari, after he was convicted and sentenced to death in proceedings that bore no resemblance to a meaningful trial for participating in the ongoing popular uprising across the country, said Amnesty International today.

"We are horrified that the Iranian authorities have executed Mohsen Shekari, less than three weeks after they convicted and sentenced him to death in a grossly unfair sham trial. With the Iranian authorities brutally acting on their public threats to expedite capital proceedings and carry out executions swiftly, we fear that other protesters under death sentences or charged with capital offences are at imminent risk of being sent to their deaths, said Diana Eltahawy, Amnesty International's Deputy Director for the Middle East and North Africa.

"The shocking way Mohsen Shekari's trial was fast-tracked through Iran's judicial system without allowing him the chance of a meaningful trial and appeal process is yet another illustration of the fact that the authorities are resorting to the death penalty as a weapon of political repression. The clear aim is to instil fear among the public in a desperate attempt to cling to power and end the popular uprising."

The authorities convicted Mohsen Shekari of the vague and overly broad charge of "enmity against God" (*moharebeh*) in connection with accusations of "blocking a street in Tehran, creating fear and depriving people of freedom and security, and intentionally wounding a security agent with a cold weapon (knife)", in contravention of international law which requires that the death penalty be used only in the most serious crimes involving intentional killing.

Amnesty International fears that many others in Iran could face the death penalty in relation to the popular uprising, given the thousands of people arrested and indicted. Amnesty International has identified at least 18 others at risk of execution in connection with the protests and at different stages of the criminal justice process.

12 people under sentence of death: **Sahand Nourmohammad-Zadeh, Mahan Sedarat Madani, Manouchehr Mehman Navaz, Mohammad Boroughani, Mohammad Ghobadlou, Saman Seydi, Hamid Ghare Hasanlou, Akbar Ghafarri, Unnamed – Alborz, Unnamed – Alborz, Unnamed – Alborz, Unnamed – Alborz.**

People on trial and/or charged with crimes carrying the death penalty: **Abolfazl Mehri Hossein Hajilou, Mohsen Rezazadeh Gharegholou, Saeed Shirazi, Ebrahim Rahimi, Majidreza Rahnavaard, Toomaj Salehi.**

"Given that the Iranian authorities are adamant on continuing their killing spree, both on the streets and through sham trials, it falls on the international community to urgently take action to stop

further executions. The international community must go beyond expressions of outrage and condemnation and take all necessary measures to pursue accountability for all officials including those in security, intelligence, prosecutorial and judicial positions involved in crimes under international law and other grave violations of human rights, including the right to life. This should include exercising universal jurisdiction to investigate all those suspected of such crimes and issuing arrest warrants when there is sufficient evidence," said Diana Eltahawy.

Background

Even before the uprising began in mid-September, Amnesty International [warned](#) of a horrifying spike in executions in Iran, with the authorities killing at least 251 people in the first six months of 2022. The organization opposes the death penalty 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.