

URGENT ACTION

SEVEN MEN AT RISK OF EXECUTION IN IRAN

Seven men, members of Iran's Ahwazi Arab minority, are at risk of imminent execution in Ahvaz city, the capital of Khuzestan province. They were convicted in an unfair trial of "acting against national security" and killing male Shi'a cleric Sheikh Hesam al-Sameyri in June 2007.

Twenty-five year old **Ali Saedi, Walid Naisi**, aged 23, **Majid Fardipour** (name in Arabic: Majid Mahawi), aged 26, **Doayr Mahawi**, aged 50 and his son **Mahe Mahawi**, aged 21, **Ahmad Saedi**, aged 28, and **Yousuf Leftehpour**, aged 25, were arrested on or around 12 August 2007. They were held incommunicado for between three and 15 months in an unknown location by the intelligence services, prior to being transferred to Karoun Prison in Ahvaz city, in the south-west of the country, where they are now held. Torture in intelligence service premises throughout Iran is common, and it is feared these men may have been tortured, possibly in order to extract "confessions".

The men, some of whom were known political activists within the Ahwazi Arab community, were sentenced to death by a branch of the Revolutionary Court in Ahvaz on or around 30 September 2009, in an unfair trial in which they had no access to a lawyer. Two other men were sentenced to prison terms.

Iranian sources fear that these executions may take place shortly.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Persian, Arabic, English, French or your own language:

- √ Urge the Iranian authorities not to execute Ali Saedi, Walid Naisi, Majid Fardipour, Doayr Mahawi, Mahe Mahawi, Ahmad Saedi, and Yousuf Leftehpour, and to commute their death sentences;
- √ Expressing concern that they were tried unfairly and had no access to a lawyer, and reminding the authorities of the need to strictly adhere to fair trial guarantees in death penalty cases;
- √ Urging the authorities to order a moratorium on executions in Iran as a first step towards ending the use of the death penalty.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 02 DECEMBER 2009 TO:

Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Sadeq Larijani, Office of the Head of the Judiciary, Pasteur St., Vali Asr Ave. south of Serah-e Jomhuri, Tehran 1316814737, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: Via website:

<http://www.dadiran.ir/tabid/81/Default.aspx>

1st starred box: your given name; 2nd starred box: your family name; 3rd: your email address

Salutation: Your Excellency

Governor

Sayed Ja'far Hejazi
Khuzestan Governor's office
Palestine Avenue, Imanieh
Ahvaz, Khuzestan, Islamic Republic of Iran

Fax: +98-611-3367313

Email: ostandar@ostan-kz.gov.ir

Salutation: Dear Sir

And copies to:

Director, Human Rights Headquarters of Iran

His Excellency Mohammad Javad Larijani

Bureau of International Affairs, Office of the Head of the Judiciary, Pasteur St., Vali Asr Ave. south of Serah-e Jomhuri, Tehran 1316814737, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: bia.judi@yahoo.com

Email: bia.judi@yahoo.com

Email: bia.judi@yahoo.com

Fax: + 98 21 5 537 8827 (please keep trying)

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Ahwazi Arabs, who are one of Iran's many ethnic minorities, live mainly in Khuzestan province in the south-west of the country. Khuzestan province, which borders Iraq, is strategically important because it is the site of much of Iran's oil reserves. Historically, the Arab minority has been marginalized and it continues to suffer from discrimination in the enjoyment of economic and cultural rights. The Arab population does not feel it has benefited as much from the oil revenue as the Persian population.

Although mainly Shi'a Muslims, some Ahwazi Arabs have converted to Sunnism, leading the authorities to accuse some local activists of being "Wahhabis", (meaning extreme fundamentalist Sunni Muslims). There were mass demonstrations in Khuzestan province in April 2005, after it was alleged that the government planned to disperse the country's Arab population or to force them to relinquish their Arab identity and tension has remained high since. Following bomb explosions in Ahvaz City in June and October 2005, which killed at least 14 people, and explosions at oil installations in September and October 2005, the cycle of violence intensified, with hundreds of people reportedly arrested. There have been reports of torture. Further bombings on 24 January 2006, in which at least six people were killed, were followed by further mass arbitrary arrests. At least 15 men have been executed as a result of their alleged involvement in the bombings. It is not clear if another man was executed or died in custody.

Kuwaiti-born Sheikh Hesam al-Sameyri, who was the Shi'a Imam of the Zahra' mosque in the mainly Arab-populated Hayy al-Thawra district of Ahvaz city, was known for his anti-Sunni views. He was killed by two gunmen who came to his home at 10pm on 24 June 2007. No group claimed responsibility for his killing and sources have suggested that his death was the result of a family dispute.

On 21 August 2007, provincial television reported that the Ministry of Intelligence had stated that six [sic] people who were members of "a terrorist group promoting separatism and sectarianism", had been arrested in Khuzestan in connection with the killing. In September 2008, a bail order of 800 million rials (US\$800,000) was ordered for at least two of those detained: Doayr Mohawi and his son Maher, but their family was unable to pay this amount, so they remained in detention.

Amnesty International recognizes the rights and responsibilities of governments to maintain law and order, and to bring to justice those suspected of recognizably criminal offences, but opposes the death penalty in all cases as a violation of the right to life and the ultimate cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment.

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