

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## Media Briefing

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## Execution of Child offenders: Updated facts and figures

Between 1990 and 2003 Amnesty International has documented 34 executions of child offenders around the world, carried out in China (1), Democratic Republic of Congo (1), Iran (7), Nigeria (1), Pakistan (3), Saudi Arabia (1) Yemen (1) and the USA (19). On 25 January 2004 another child offender was executed in Iran.

Since 2000 Amnesty International has documented 15 executions of child offenders: China (1), Democratic Republic of Congo (1), Iran (3), Pakistan (1) and the USA (9).

Child offenders are currently under sentence of death in at least two other countries: the Philippines and Sudan.

Since 1989 at least five countries have changes their laws to eliminate the execution of child offenders: Barbados, China, Pakistan, Yemen and Zimbabwe. The Democratic Republic of Congo has abolished the special military courts which led to the execution of a child offender in 2000. In December 2003 a bill to raise the minimum age for imposition of the death penalty to 18 was approved by the Iranian parliament. The bill still requires approval by the highest legislative body, the Guardian Council, in order to become law. The recent execution in Iran makes ratification and implementation of this bill an urgent necessity to prevent further executions of child offenders.

In the USA, 16 of the 38 states whose laws retain the death penalty exclude its use against child offenders as well as the federal government. Only three states: Oklahoma, Texas and Virginia -- have executed child offenders since 2000. Bills to raise the minimum age to 18 are currently pending in the state legislatures of Kentucky, New Hampshire and South Dakota.

On 26 January 2004, the US Supreme Court agreed to revisit the decision it made in 1989 (*Stanford v Kentucky*) allowing the execution of people for crimes committed when they were 16 or 17 years old. The appeal is expected to be heard later this year. Despite this development, four executions of child offenders remain scheduled to take place in the first half of 2004. Amnesty International will continue to campaign against these executions.

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For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566

Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW. web: <http://www.amnesty.org>

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