

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 13/13/98

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Further information on EXTRA 13/98 (MDE 13/03/98, 5 February 1998) - Death Penalty / Flogging

IRAN

Helmut Hofer, German businessman

Vahide Ghessemi (f), aged 26 or 27, medical student

The death sentence passed on Helmut Hofer has reportedly been quashed by Iran's supreme court.

Helmut Hofer, who was arrested and imprisoned in September 1997, was sentenced to death following his trial in January 1998 after allegedly having had sexual relations with a Muslim woman, Vahide Ghessemi.

A retrial of Helmut Hofer's case, which commenced 22 July, has been adjourned for at least a month following the non-appearance of his co-accused, Vahide Ghessemi. The judge turned down a request for bail apparently in order to speed up proceedings. Although it is unlikely that he will be sentenced to death a second time he may still receive a prison sentence and/or flogging if found guilty.

Amnesty International has no information concerning the status or whereabouts of Vahide Ghessemi.

Amnesty International will continue to monitor the situation and to keep the Urgent Action network informed of developments in this case. No further action is required at present. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.