AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
PUBLIC STATEMENT

AI Index: MDE 13/120/2009

11 November 2009

Iran: Police call for more amputations a retrograde step

Amnesty International is concerned at a call reportedly made by Asghar Jafari, head of Iran's Police Criminal Investigation department, for a greater reliance on Islamic punishments, especially the amputation of the hands of thieves.

According to the report carried by the Iranian Labour News Agency on 8 November (http://www.ilna.ir/newstext.aspx?ID=88248), Asghar Jafari claimed that if such punishments were implemented, crime could be reduced by 90%, though he produced no evidence to support this assertion.

Punishments such as amputations and flogging constitute cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment amounting to torture and as such are prohibited under international human rights standards. Amnesty International has long campaigned for an end to such punishments and will continue to monitor the implementation of floggings and amputations. The last amputation recorded by the organization in Iran took place in Kermanshah, western Iran in December 2008.

Amnesty International also campaigns for an end to the use of the death penalty in Iran, including an end to the use of stoning as a method of execution, which is a method specifically designed to increase the suffering of the condemned person. The organization has for many years pressed Iran to meet its international obligations and immediately cease the execution of juvenile offenders. The execution of those who commit crimes while under the age of 18 is strictly forbidden by international law. Iran has executed over 40 juvenile offenders since 1990, four of them in 2009.

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