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IRAN

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1 INTRODUCTION

Sixteen years after the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran, government opponents are still facing imprisonment after unfair trial, torture and execution. Even Iranian dissidents who have fled abroad are not safe; several have been tracked down and killed, reportedly by Iranian government agents.

Human rights violations are shrouded in secrecy. Procedures governing arrest, detention and trial are rarely made public. No information is given to detainees about the reasons for arrest and they are not notified of the charges against them until months, and sometimes years, later. Access to lawyers is almost always denied and detainees can spend up to 10 years behind bars before their relatives know where they are. People who speak out against the government or try to publicize human rights violations face severe punishments.

The authorities do their utmost to hide their appalling human rights record from outside scrutiny and repeatedly deny that any violations have occurred. For years they have denied international human rights organizations, including Amnesty International, access to the country. The Iranian Government accused Amnesty International of double standards and selectivity following the publication of a report in November 1993¹, but has not responded to the organization's concerns in any substantial way. Even the Special Representative of the UN Commission on Human Rights, who is mandated by the international community to investigate human rights violations in Iran, has been denied access since 1991. He has been accused of partiality by the Iranian authorities. His last report published in February 1995 was criticized for being "influenced by the allegations of the United States against... Iran."

This report exposes some of the secrets. It shows that large numbers of political prisoners remain in jail, some serving long sentences imposed after grossly unfair trials, others simply being held without charge. Most have been tortured. The report also documents cases of suspected extrajudicial executions of government opponents both inside and outside Iran, and highlights the continuing use of the death penalty.

Before 1993 Amnesty International recorded hundreds, sometimes thousands, of executions every year; Iranian newspapers used to freely report executions for non-political offences. Since 1993, however, newspapers have reported fewer executions allegedly as a result of government directives designed to prevent such information being used by international human rights organizations and by the UN Special Representative on Iran. Nevertheless, unofficial reports of executions leak out and during 1994 Amnesty International recorded 139 executions, including of political prisoners. The true figure is believed to be much higher.

¹ Iran: Victims of human rights violations (AI Index: MDE 13/10/93).
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Amnesty International's concerns in Iran are shared by the UN Commission on Human Rights. In March 1995 the Commission expressed "its deep concern at ... the continued high number of executions, cases of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the failure to meet international standards with regard to the administration of justice, the absence of guarantees of due process of law, the discriminatory treatment of minorities by reason of their religious beliefs, notably the Baha'is, whose existence as a viable religious community in the Islamic Republic of Iran is threatened, lack of adequate protection for the Christian minorities, some of which have been the target of intimidations and assassinations..."².

Over the past 16 years Amnesty International has published numerous reports documenting consistent patterns of gross human rights violations³ and has repeatedly raised these concerns with the authorities. The government has responded to certain cases, albeit unsatisfactorily, and these are referred to in the text. However, most inquiries on cases raised have remained unanswered. Amnesty International once again urges the Iranian Government to respect human rights and bring its law and practices into line with international human rights standards.

2LONG-TERM POLITICAL PRISONERS HELD AFTER UNFAIR TRIALS OR WITHOUT TRIAL

Large numbers of political prisoners remain in jail after years of incarceration in appalling conditions. Some were sentenced to up to life imprisonment after grossly unfair trials before Islamic Revolutionary Courts. Others are being held without charge or trial. Most have reportedly been tortured and many detainees have been denied appropriate medical care. Some were charged with espionage for foreign countries or with the vaguely-worded "activities against the Islamic Republic". Amnesty International believes that such charges may be a pretext to silence critics of the government.

Political trials in Iran fall far short of international standards for fair trial. They are usually held in secret, with summary proceedings and no right of appeal. The defendant has no contact with defence counsel at any stage⁴ and there is no possibility for relatives to attend. Amnesty International has repeatedly urged the Iranian authorities to introduce basic legal safeguards in accordance with Articles 9, 14 and 15 of the ICCPR, which Iran ratified in 1976 and therefore is bound to comply with its provisions.

Abbas Amir Entezam, a former Deputy Prime Minister in the Provisional Government of Mehdi Bazargan, was arrested in December 1979, charged with espionage for the USA and sentenced to life imprisonment by an Islamic Revolutionary Court. He was denied family visits for over three years and is reportedly suffering from various illnesses, including a stomach ulcer, an eye infection, problems with his left knee and an ear infection, all of which were allegedly caused or exacerbated by torture. His ear infection became so severe that the authorities transferred him to a hospital in Tehran for treatment; while

2E/CN.4/1995/L.90. Paragraph 2.

³See for example [Iran: Violations of human rights. Documents sent by Amnesty International to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran](#) (published in 1987); [Iran: Violations of human rights 1987-1990](#) (AI Index: MDE 13/21/90 - published in 1990); [Iran: Imprisonment, torture and execution of political opponents](#) (AI Index: MDE 13/01/92 - published in January 1992); [Iran: Unfair trials of political detainees](#) (AI Index: MDE 13/15/92 - published in July 1992); and [Iran: Executions of prisoners continue unabated](#) (AI Index: MDE 13/18/92 - published in October 1992).

⁴For more information on unfair trials in Iran, see Amnesty International's July 1992 report entitled [Iran: Unfair trials of political detainees](#) (AI Index: MDE 13/15/92).

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there he was chained to his bed and under guard. In February 1995 he was reportedly taken to a heavily-guarded government-owned house in Tehran.

In 1994 he wrote a letter from prison:

"...I spent 15 months in prison before I was told why I had been incarcerated... My own trial took place in Evin Prison; I was denied counsel or a hearing before a jury. In fact, my conviction was decided long before the trial began... I was accused of having betrayed my country in the formal meetings I held, as Vice Premier of Iran, with US diplomats. Yet, I was not permitted to have access to the official records of those meetings..."

"I have personally been subjected to various forms of torture during my captivity. I was repeatedly beaten by my interrogators... A number of times I was told that my execution was imminent and I was instructed to write my final will... When Reynaldo Galindo Pohl, the Special Representative of the UN Human Rights Commission, came to Iran in 1991 to investigate the human rights situation in the country, all political prisoners in our ward were transferred to another location. Nevertheless, Mr Galindo Pohl managed to visit me in the new prison and I informed him of my own situation as well as the general conditions of confinement for other political prisoners. I was severely punished for having revealed these facts to Galindo Pohl. At the time I was suffering from a ruptured eardrum and an ear infection but [the] prison authorities denied me access to medical treatment..."

Abbas Amir Entezam

Amnesty International has expressed grave concern about the torture and the unfairness of the trial of Abbas Amir Entezam. It has repeatedly called for a review of his trial in accordance with international standards for fair trial and his immediate release if there is no evidence that he committed a recognizably

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criminal offence.

The Iranian authorities responded in January 1994 stating that "Mr Amir Entezam was arrested on espionage charges and condemned to life imprisonment. His trial was carried out according to international standards in a fair and just court and he enjoyed all due legal rights and provisions. Mr Amir Entezam is now being kept in the common section of Evin Prison and has access to all medical facilities and care." The government's assurances are clearly at variance with Abbas Amir Entezam's description of his situation and the UN Special Representative's findings⁵.

Ali Bloori, aged 35, was arrested in Mahabad in 1982 while in the final year of high school and was charged with membership of the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI). His family did not know his whereabouts until 1994 when they were informed that he was being held in a prison in Mahabad. It is not known whether Ali Bloori has been tried.

In February 1994 Amnesty International wrote to the Iranian authorities requesting information about the date of Ali Bloori's trial (if he was tried at all), the charges on which he was convicted, his sentence and whether he was allowed access to a lawyer of his own choosing. The organization also requested a copy of the transcript and judgment and sought assurances that he was being humanely treated and had access to his family, and independent medical care if necessary. As of April 1995 no response had been received from the Iranian authorities.

Houshang Amjadi Bigvand, a 55-year-old landowner, married with three grown-up children, and his cousin **Jamshid Amiri Bigvand**, a 56-year-old chemical engineer married with four grown-up children, were arrested in September 1988 by members of the Revolutionary Guards in Tehran and Shiraz, respectively. They spent over one year in incommunicado detention, during which they were reportedly held in solitary confinement for long periods and tortured. Their families were not informed of their whereabouts until mid-1989 when they learned that they were being detained in Evin Prison. They are believed to have been charged with espionage for the USA.

In March 1990 they were tried in secret before an Islamic Revolutionary Court in Evin Prison, in violation of international standards⁶, and sentenced to death. The trial was grossly unfair; at no stage were they represented by a lawyer and they had no right of appeal against the verdict or sentence. Their death sentences were commuted in 1991 to 10 years' and seven years' imprisonment, respectively.

Houshang Amjadi Bigvand has been suffering from a chronic bleeding gastric ulcer which has reportedly progressed to the point where surgery is required. In March 1994 he was allowed 25 days' home leave to seek medical attention, but was returned to Evin Prison before surgery had been performed. In the early

⁵In his January 1995 report on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran pursuant to Commission on Human Rights resolution 1994/73 and Economic and Social Council decision 1994/263, the Special Representative stated: "Of particular concern has been the situation regarding Mr. Abbas Amir Entezam, who was visited by the Special Representative at Evin Prison in December 1991. Despite various illnesses and malnutrition, he is reportedly not allowed to receive food or medicine sent in from outside the prison or buy it. He has been allowed to receive a visit every two weeks, although the visits are said to be frequently and arbitrarily interrupted and brought to an end by prison guards. It is also reported that Mr. Entezam recently rejected a proposal by some officials that he should be given his freedom in return for keeping silent about what he had seen and suffered in prison since 1979." E/CN.4/1995/55 paragraph 96.

⁶Article 14 (1) of the ICCPR states that "All persons shall be equal before the courts and tribunals. In the determination of any criminal charge against him, or of his rights and obligations in a suit at law, everyone shall be entitled to a fair and public hearing by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal established by law...."

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1980s he had spent three years in prison allegedly for political reasons. Jamshid Amiri Bigvand is also reportedly suffering from ill-health. He is reportedly losing his eyesight and has allegedly not received proper medical attention.

Amnesty International wrote to the Iranian Government on three occasions, April 1990, February 1992 and February 1994, requesting clarification of their legal situation, including the charges brought against them and copies of the trial transcript and judgment and urging that Houshang Amjadi Bigvand and Jamshid Amiri Bigvand be given all necessary medical attention. No response had been received from the authorities as of April 1995.

Morteza Afshari-Rad, a 45-year-old farmer, married with two children, was arrested in June 1989, reportedly for membership of an opposition political organization (*Derafsh-e-Kaviani*, Flag of Freedom Organization). He was tried by an Islamic Revolutionary Court in the province of Zanzan in 1991 and sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment. He is believed to be currently held in Qazvin Prison. In April 1993 Amnesty International wrote to the Iranian authorities requesting information about his trial proceedings, including the exact charges levelled against him, whether he was given prompt and regular access to a lawyer of his own choosing and whether he was allowed to appeal against his sentence and conviction to a higher tribunal. The organization also requested a copy of the trial transcript and judgment. However, as of April 1995 no response had been received from the Iranian authorities.

Amnesty International is calling for the immediate and unconditional release of all those imprisoned solely for the non-violent expression of their beliefs. The organization is also calling on the Iranian Government as a matter of urgency to appoint an independent judicial body to conduct a review of the detention of all political prisoners. Such body should be empowered to order the immediate release of those people who have been convicted in trials which do not meet international fair trial standards and against whom there is no evidence that they have committed a recognizably criminal offence.

3 THE DEATH PENALTY

Tens of thousands of suspected government opponents have been executed since the creation of the Islamic Republic in 1979. The death penalty is still widely used for offences such as espionage, undertaking "activities against the Islamic Republic of Iran" which usually refers to membership of opposition groups that aim to overthrow the regime by force. Drug-trafficking, adultery and murder are also capital offences.

Feyzollah Mehubad, a 77-year-old member of the Jewish community, was executed on 25 February 1994. He had been imprisoned in Evin Prison since May 1992 and charged with espionage for the USA and Israel. These charges were reportedly based on telephone conversations he had with relatives and family members based in these two countries. It has been alleged that the real reason for his arrest, detention and subsequent execution is believed to have been his religious beliefs and activities within the Jewish community in Tehran. His body reportedly bore the marks of torture, which included the gouging out of both eyes. According to reports received by Amnesty International, during the last six months of his imprisonment he had been flogged on his back, limbs and face, and beaten repeatedly, resulting in the loss of some teeth and a bruised face.

Amnesty International wrote to the Iranian authorities expressing grave concern at his execution. It sought

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urgent clarification of the date and place of his trial and execution, and requested a copy of the judgment. As of April 1995 no response had been received.

Four members of the KDPI, **Hossein Sobhani**, **Rauf Mohammadi**, **Bahman Khosravi** and **Ghaderi Moradi**, were executed in Kermanshah Prison in February 1994. They were arrested near the village of Kohlah in the region of Javanrood in July 1992 and reportedly tortured in detention. Before the news of their execution leaked out, Amnesty International wrote to the Iranian authorities in February 1994 requesting information about their legal situation, including whether they were tried, the charges brought against them, and copies of the trial transcript and judgment if they were tried. The organization made the same request again in April 1994, but as of April 1995 no response had been received from the authorities.

A number of political prisoners who were sentenced to death after unfair trials by the Islamic Revolutionary Courts in previous years are still on death row. They include **Bihnam Mithaqi** and **Kayvan Khalajabadi**, both Baha'is, who were arrested in Gohardasht in April 1989 and held without charge or trial until December 1993 when an Islamic Revolutionary Court in Tehran sentenced them to death, reportedly because of their beliefs. Their current place of detention is not known.

The Constitution of Iran does not recognize the Baha'i faith, and between 1979 and 1992 at least 200 Baha'is were reportedly executed and hundreds have been imprisoned and tortured because of their religious beliefs. This violates Iran's obligations under the ICCPR, which states: "Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching." (Article 18 (1)) It also states: "No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice." (Article 18 (2))

Salim Saberniah and **Mustafa Ghaderi**, both in their thirties, were sentenced to death by an Islamic Revolutionary Court in Tabriz; their sentences were confirmed by the Supreme Court of Iran on 21 March 1993. They were arrested in late 1990 and charged with "activities against the Islamic Republic" as alleged members of the Kurdish group, *Komala*. Amnesty International has repeatedly called for the commutation of these death sentences which were reportedly passed after an unfair trial. An Iranian official wrote to Amnesty International stating that the two men "having been tried according to the due process of law, were given death sentences that sadly enough cannot be changed, particularly because the legal rights of families of martyrs who have been murdered by them are at stake". This response however does not allay Amnesty International's concern that these death sentences were passed after an unfair trial before an Islamic Revolutionary Court.

Dozens of people have been executed since the beginning of 1994 for criminal offences such as drug-trafficking and murder, while others, including women, have been stoned to death for adultery. A 15-year-old girl, **Mitra Zahraei**, was sentenced to death in December 1993 after having been convicted of murder. Amnesty International appealed to the authorities to commute the sentence. The organization

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reminded the authorities that sentencing a child to death contravenes Article 6 (5) of the ICCPR⁷, which stipulates that "sentence of death shall not be imposed for crimes committed by persons below eighteen years of age..." As of April 1995 no response had been received and it is not known whether the sentence was carried out.

Amnesty International is urging that all trials, including trials in capital cases, should respect, as a minimum standard, the provisions of Articles 6, 9, 14, and 15 of the ICCPR, so as to guarantee the safeguards afforded by a fair trial, including the right to have the conviction reviewed by a higher tribunal and the right to seek pardon or commutation of the death sentence.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all circumstances and is committed to its abolition in all countries. The organization believes that the death penalty is the most extreme form of torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment, and a violation of the right to life proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In his 1995 report, the UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions noted "with deep concern the persistent allegations of violations of the right to life in the Islamic Republic of Iran". He appreciated the information provided to him by the authorities in 1993 and 1994 in reply to some of the cases he raised with them. "However, none of these replies addresses the specific issues of fair trial guarantees in proceedings before the Islamic Revolutionary Courts." He reiterated his "call, expressed in numerous urgent appeals, to respect the rights of those facing the death penalty, as contained in the pertinent international instruments."⁸

4 POSSIBLE EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTIONS

Inside Iran

Amnesty International opposes unreservedly the extrajudicial killing of any individual on political grounds by governments. The organization includes in its definition of extrajudicial executions the killing of specific individuals which can be reasonably assumed to be the result of government policy at any level.

Over the past 18 months four prominent leaders of religious minority groups - three Christians and a Sunni Muslim - were found dead in suspicious circumstances. They were all known to be critics of government policies.

Bishop Haik Hovsepian-Mehr, Superintendent of the Assemblies of God Churches and Chairman of the Council of Protestant Ministers in Iran, went missing on 19 January 1994 while on his way to Mehrabad airport in Tehran to meet a friend. Eleven days later, the Tehran police notified his family of his death. His son was reportedly summoned to the coroner's office to identify the body. Once there, the son was only shown a photograph, from which he identified the body of his father. The date of death was given as 20 January 1994, one day after he had gone missing. Bishop Haik Hovsepian-Mehr, a 48-year-old Armenian,

⁷It also contravenes Article 37 (a) of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, signed by Iran in 1991, which stipulates that "No child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Neither capital punishment nor life imprisonment without possibility of release shall be imposed for offences committed by persons below eighteen years of age."

⁸UN Doc. E/CN.4/1995/61, para.182

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had campaigned against the lack of religious freedom in Iran and for the release of Mehdi Dibaj (see below). He reportedly refused to join a number of leaders of various religious groups in Iran (who had allegedly been put under pressure by the authorities) to publicly condemn two human rights reports issued in November 1993, by the UN Special Representative on Iran and by Amnesty International⁹.

After the death of Bishop Haik Hovsepian-Mehr, **The Reverend Tatavous Michaelian**, a 62-year-old Armenian Christian, assumed the Chairmanship of the Council of Protestant Ministers. He too was found dead in suspicious circumstances on 2 July 1994 after he had allegedly been shot several times in the head. He had not been seen since leaving his home on 29 June 1994 and on 2 July his son was allegedly called by the authorities to identify his body.

Mehdi Dibaj, a Pastor in the Assemblies of God Church, was arrested in 1984 and detained in Sari Prison in Mazandaran until January 1994. During this time he allegedly spent two years in solitary confinement. In December 1993 he was sentenced to death by an Islamic Revolutionary Court in Sari on charges of apostasy - reportedly because of his conversion from Islam to Christianity some 45 years previously - and given 20 days to appeal against the sentence. Amnesty International considered Mehdi Dibaj to be a prisoner of conscience and repeatedly called for his immediate and unconditional release. Although he was released on 16 January 1994, the charges against him were reportedly not dropped. On 5 July 1994 he was found dead in suspicious circumstances. On the same day the *Islamic Republic News Agency* (IRNA) quoted a police official's statement that "while conducting investigations into the death of Michaelian who had disappeared last week, we found an unidentified body later identified by Dibaj's relatives to be the body of Dibaj". He had reportedly not been seen since 24 June 1994.

The Iranian authorities stated publicly on 7 July 1994 that the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI)¹⁰ was responsible for the murder of the two religious leaders. They also said: "On Tuesday 6th July 1994, Ms Farahnaz Anami confessed, in the presence of representatives of religious minorities and Iranian journalists, to murdering Mr Mikhailian [sic]. She has also taken part in the assassination of Mr Mehdi Dibaj. Anami said that she had placed the body in a freezer in order that a safe place and an appropriate time could be found for the burial. Anami said that she had received the instruction for this action directly from Masoud and Maryam Rajavi". The PMOI denied responsibility for the killings and blamed the government. According to press reports, Farahnaz Anami and two other women, all arrested in July 1994, were put on "public trial" starting on 15 March 1995. Amnesty International believes that the truth of the matter will emerge only if a thorough, independent and public investigation is held.

Following the death of the church leaders mentioned above, other church leaders were reportedly put under pressure by the authorities to state publicly on television and radio that the PMOI was responsible for the killings. A few of them refused and managed to leave the country secretly for fear of reprisals.

In July 1994 Amnesty International wrote to the Iranian authorities urging an immediate, thorough and independent investigation into the circumstances surrounding the deaths of the Rev. Tatavous Michaelian and Mehdi Dibaj, and that the methods and conclusions of the investigation be made public, as required by the UN Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-Legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions.

⁹Iran: Victims of human rights violations (AI Index: MDE 13/10/93) which was released on 17 November 1993.

¹⁰The PMOI is the largest opposition group and still maintains several thousand troops, known as the National Liberation Army, in Iraq. The leader of the PMOI is Masoud Rajavi.

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In March 1995 the UN Commission on Human Rights also urged the Iranian Government to "carry out thorough, careful and impartial investigations into the assassination cases of the three Christian ministers..."

Haji Mohammad Ziaie, a 55-year-old Sunni Muslim leader from Bandar-Abbas, died in suspicious circumstances in July 1994. He was reportedly summoned for interrogation at the Security Headquarters in Laar, in Fars province, on 15 July. Five days later, on 20 July, his mutilated body was found beside his car in a valley around the Shah-Mossallam area, some 200 kilometres from Laar. The body was reportedly beheaded and one arm and one leg had been amputated. Security officials in Laar were reported to have attributed the death to a car accident.

Haji Mohammad Ziaie was known to be critical of government policies. He had been arrested in 1981 allegedly for giving an interview to a Kuwaiti magazine in which he highlighted the plight of Sunni Muslims in Iran and condemned the execution of Iranian opposition activists. During the period of his detention in 1981 he was reportedly tortured for several weeks and sentenced to death. Although he was released later, he continued to be harassed. This harassment reportedly increased after the execution of Dr Ali Mozaffarian¹¹ in 1992. Haji Mohammad Ziaie had to travel to Tehran once a month for interrogation. During his last interrogation he was reportedly promised that he could open the Sunni Mosque in Shiraz, which had been closed for some time, and that there would be no need for further interrogations.

Amnesty International wrote to the Iranian authorities in August 1994 urging an immediate, thorough and independent investigation into the circumstances surrounding the death of Haji Mohammad Ziaie, and asking that the findings of the investigation be made public. As of April 1995 no response had been received.

Outside Iran

Over the past 15 years scores of Iranian dissidents based abroad have been assassinated in circumstances suggesting that they may have been extrajudicially executed by Iranian government agents. Others have received death threats or escaped assassination attempts. This pattern of attacks on opposition activists has continued during the past 18 months.

Taha Kermanj, a 35-year-old Iranian refugee in Turkey and an active member of the KDPI, was killed in Corum on 4 January 1994. He was shot dead while walking near his home with his son-in-law who was injured in the attack. He was a recognized refugee awaiting resettlement in a third country. Before moving to Turkey early in 1993, Taha Kermanj had lived in Iraqi Kurdistan where he had allegedly received threats from Iranian agents.

Since 1992 a number of other Iranian dissidents in Turkey have been killed in circumstances suggesting that they may have been extrajudicially executed by Iranian government agents. In August 1993 **Mohammad Ghaderi**, a former member of the KDPI, was abducted from his home. Ten days later his

¹¹Dr 'Ali Mozaffarian, a leading member of the Sunni Community in Fars, was executed in Shiraz in August 1992. He had been charged with spying for the USA and Iraq and accused of adultery and homosexuality. His video-taped "confessions", apparently obtained as a result of physical or psychological pressure, were broadcast on television in Shiraz.

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mutilated body was found. During the same month **Bahram Azadifar**, also a KDPI member, was assassinated in his home.

In September 1992 Iran and Turkey signed a protocol to "guarantee the security of the Turkish-Iranian border, adopt the necessary measures to achieve this and conduct continuous and effective cooperation. In their own countries, Turkey and Iran will prevent the actions, which are considered criminal by that country, of terrorist organisations and of all opposition persons and groups that engage in activities against the state structure, territorial integrity, and legal administration of the other country".

This agreement came only days after the Minister of Information and Security, Hojatoleslam Ali Fallahian, had reportedly said on Tehran television, "We have been able to deal blows to many of the mini-groups outside the country and on the borders. As you know, one of the active mini-groups is the Kurdistan Democratic Party, which operates through two organs, the main group and the auxiliary branch, in Kurdistan. There is also Komeleh [Komala]. We were able to deal vital blows to their cadres last year. The main and auxiliary organizations of both KDP and Komeleh were dealt severe blows and their activities were reduced"¹².

Iranian opposition activists in Iraq have also been targeted for assassination. On 4 August 1994 a senior member of the KDPI and the party's representative in Baghdad, **Ghafour Hamzei**, was shot dead outside his home in Baghdad. The Iranian authorities reportedly denied any responsibility and said the killing was the result of political infighting among "the rebels".

AbuBakir (Kamran) Hedayati, an active member of the KDPI who has been living in Sweden for many years, was severely injured on 17 January 1994 by a letter-bomb delivered to his home in Stockholm. The letter-bomb was reportedly posted from France. He spent two and a half months in hospital. Recently he stated that as a result of the attack, he lost his sight and has no sense of smell. He had plastic surgery on his face and part of his stomach.

AbuBakir (Kamran) Hedayati said that five years ago the Iranian authorities obtained his address and telephone number from his family members in Iran. He was allegedly contacted by telephone and invited to cooperate with the authorities, but he refused.

A follower of Dr Ali Shariati¹³ and a refugee in Sweden who does not wish to have his name publicized, was abducted in 1994. One day in February 1994, as he was about to get into his car outside his home, a van drew up and at least two men got out. They threw a sack over the man's head, beat him on the head and pushed him into the van. Inside the van, the abductors sat on top of him. He thought that there were at least two teams of kidnappers taking turns, at least three men in each team. The leaders spoke Farsi, whereas the others spoke Arabic; they communicated with each other in English.

After about 11 hours the van stopped and the men began to interrogate him about the Shariati movement

¹²Dr Sadegh Sharafkandi, the Secretary General of the KDPI, and three other senior members of the party, were shot dead in a restaurant in Berlin on 17 September 1992. (See Amnesty International's November 1993 report entitled *Iran: Victims of human violations* (AI Index: MDE 13/10/93)). Five men - an Iranian and four Lebanese - were arrested and charged with the assassinations. The trial began on 28 October 1993 and is still continuing.

¹³Dr Ali Shariati, a well known Iranian scholar who wrote extensively on radical Islam, died in Britain in 1977 in mysterious circumstances. Up to 20 of his followers are believed to be still detained in Iran since mid-1990 and three others were executed at the end of 1992. See Amnesty International's November 1993 report, p.6.

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and the activities of Dr Shariati's son. They untied his hands and feet, and replaced the sack with a hood. As they tried to move him into another car he made a sudden dash away from them into the dark. He heard them scream and run after him, but there were no shots, and he was able to get away. He ran for about 45 minutes before he reached a road with traffic and realized that he was in Denmark. He went to a nearby town and reported the kidnapping to the police. The following day he returned to Sweden and a few weeks later he moved elsewhere. Scores of Iranians in exile continue to live in fear of similar attacks.

The threat of extrajudicial execution extends to non-Iranians such as the British writer **Salman Rushdie** and individuals involved in the translation or the publication of his book, *The Satanic Verses*, whose publication in 1989 provoked a *fatwa* (religious edict) urging his murder. Amnesty International has repeatedly called on the Iranian authorities to withdraw their support for any threat to Salman Rushdie's life.

The UN Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities urged Iran in August 1994 to cease involvement in "state-sponsored terrorism" and to withdraw support for "repeated threats to the lives of persons of whose opinions, writings or publications it disapproves".

In March 1995 the UN Commission on Human Rights expressed its "grave concern that there are continuing threats to the life of Mr. Salman Rushdie, as well as to individuals associated with his work, which have the support of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran."

The Commission adopted a resolution which made a number of recommendations, including urging the Iranian Government "to refrain from activities such as those mentioned in the report of the Special Representative against members of the Iranian opposition living abroad and to cooperate fully with the authorities of other countries investigating and punishing offences reported by them."¹⁴

5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Amnesty International is deeply concerned by the continuing gross human rights violations in the Islamic Republic of Iran, and is urging the Iranian Government once again to act decisively to end these violations by introducing the necessary legal and practical measures as set forth by the ICCPR, the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and other

¹⁴The Commission also called on the Iranian Government to "intensify its efforts to investigate and rectify the human rights issues raised by the Special Representative in his observations, in particular with regard to the administration of justice and due process of law, and, in fulfilment of its obligations under Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to take steps to ensure the recognition and enjoyment of human rights of persons belonging to minorities." The Commission decided to extend the mandate of the Special Representative for a further year and called on the Iranian Government to cooperate fully with him, "including by allowing him to make another visit to the country".

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international standards.

The organization calls on the Iranian Government to:

- *Release immediately and unconditionally all prisoners of conscience;
- *Review, through an independent judicial body, the detention of all political prisoners who are held without trial or were unfairly tried, and order the immediate release of all those against whom there is no evidence that they have committed a recognizably criminal offence;
- *Grant all such prisoners prompt and regular access to lawyers of their own choosing and their families, and to medical care if necessary;
- *Set up immediate, thorough and independent investigations into all allegations of torture and make the methods and conclusions of these investigations public. Any members of the security or other forces implicated in human rights violations should be brought to justice;
- *Take effective measures to eradicate the use of torture, including ratifying the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and complying with its provisions;
- *Demonstrate its respect for the inherent right to life by putting an immediate end to executions;
- *Ensure that all trials, including in capital cases, should respect, as a minimum standard, the provisions of Articles 6, 9, 14, and 15 of the ICCPR, so as to guarantee the safeguards afforded by a fair trial, including the right to have the conviction reviewed by a higher tribunal and the right to seek pardon or commutation of the death sentence;
- *Commute all pending death sentences;
- *Conduct immediate, thorough and independent investigations into the circumstances surrounding the death of four religious leaders in 1994, as well as the four killings and two attacks on Iranian dissidents living abroad. These investigations should be carried out in accordance with the UN Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions and should result in the bringing to justice of those responsible;
- *Condemn publicly the practice of extrajudicial executions, and make clear to all authorities and the general public in Iran and abroad that such killings will not be tolerated.