

ANNUAL REPORT ON THE DEATH PENALTY IN IRAN

2014



*Ensemble
contre
la peine
de mort*

**IRAN
HUMAN
RIGHTS**

Cover picture: A public execution in Mianeh (Northwestern Iran), August 18, 2014. Asghar Azizi was sentenced to death charged with drug trafficking and “Corruption on earth”. *Photo by Salar Pouyan, Mehr News Agency*

This report has been prepared by Iran Human Rights (IHR).

The organizations Iran Human Rights (IHR) and Together Against the Death Penalty (ECPM) have been collaborating since 2011 for the international release and dissemination of the annual reports on the death penalty in Iran.



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PREFACE

The seventh annual report of Iran Human Rights (IHR) on the death penalty gives an assessment of how the death penalty was implemented in 2014 in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

In addition to providing the number of executions that were conducted, the report also looks at the trends compared to previous years, the methods of execution, geographical distribution, the charges that were used by authorities to justify the executions and the articles in the penal law that were used to issue the death sentences. Lists of the women and juvenile offenders executed in 2014 are also included.

Because the report is being published just weeks before the debate and adoption of the UPR (Universal Periodic Review) outcome on Iran at the Human Rights Council, special attention will be given to UPR. A full list of the recommendations that Iran received on the death penalty is provided in Annex 3. Some of the recommendations are also mentioned within the report.

This report examines the use of the death penalty during the 18 months after the election of Hassan Rouhani as Iran's president, followed by the revival of Iran's diplomatic relations with the West; it then compares it to the 18 months before the presidential elections. We will inquire whether the presidency of Rouhani and improving relations with the West have led to any improvements, what power the president has to reduce the number of the executions and what he has in fact done. Finally, we look at what can be done to limit the use of the death penalty in Iran.

Like with our previous reports, the 2014 report is the result of hard work from IHR members and supporters who took part in the reporting, documenting, collecting, analyzing and writing of its content. Due to the lack of transparency and the obvious risks and limitations that human rights defenders face in the Islamic Republic of Iran, the present report does not give, by any means, a complete picture of the use of the death penalty in Iran. However, we believe that this report gives the most complete and realistic figures possible under the present circumstances.

ANNUAL 2014 REPORT AT A GLANCE

- 753 people were executed in 2014 (10% increase compared to 2013)
- 291 cases (39%) were announced by official sources
- 49% (367) were executed for drug-related charges
- 32% (240) were executed for murder charges
- 53 executions were conducted in public spaces
- At least 14 juvenile offenders were among those executed
- At least 26 women were executed
- At least 4 people were resuscitated after being hanged



INTRODUCTION

The present report is being published while diplomatic relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the international community are at their strongest following the election of Hassan Rouhani as Iran's president in June 2013.

In 2014 there have been high level meetings between the Iranian authorities and governments of many Western countries. In addition to visits by hundreds of lawmakers and politicians from the Western countries, top EU officials and foreign ministers of several countries including Norway, Sweden, Italy, Spain and Austria have visited Tehran. Dozens of high level meetings involving Iranian leaders have taken place on the international stage.¹

In spite of this level of engagement, the data collected by Iran Human Rights (IHR) and published in this report show that the number of executions conducted in 2014 is the highest in more than 15 years. Moreover, a comparison of the execution rates in the 18 months before and after the election of Mr. Rouhani shows a significant increase in the use of the death penalty after Rouhani's election. There has also been the highest number of reported juvenile executions since 1990. In addition, Iranian authorities continue execution for non-violent civil and political activists. Executions of Arab teachers, Hadi Rashedi and Hashem Shabani, who belonged to an Arabic cultural group called "Al-Hiwar" (dialogue)², Gholamreza Khosravi, charged with giving economic support to a banned opposition group³ and Mohsen Amir Aslani charged with insulting the Prophet Jonah and heresy⁴, are just few examples of this practice. Recently the Iranian Supreme Court upheld the death sentence for Soheil Arabi, for insulting the Prophet on Facebook and he remains in danger of execution⁵.

This report raises the question whether the use of death penalty has been an issue in the bilateral dialogue between Iran and the countries which are the main promoters of abolition of the death penalty on the international scene. If the death penalty is an important issue in these talks, why are the execution numbers rising at the same time as the diplomatic relations are increasingly flourishing? And more importantly, what specific measures are the international community going to take in order to counteract this trend?

Commenting the report Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam, the director and spokesperson of IHR said, "Despite the improving relations between the international community and Iran, the situation of the death penalty has deteriorated significantly during the presidency of Hassan Rouhani. This trend cannot continue. Restriction of the use of the death penalty must be one of the top demands in any dialogue between the international community and Iran. It is time to show that human rights also benefit from these dialogues."

The present report is being published just days before the debate on Iran's UPR at the Human Rights Council (HRC) where Iran will be responding to more than 290 recommendations, among them 39 specific recommendations on the death penalty. At the same time, public opposition to the death penalty is increasing inside Iran. There is an ongoing open debate on the issue of public executions. Further, some Iranian officials have indicated a need for change in the Anti-narcotic Law in order to decrease the execution numbers for drug related offences. Further change in the legislation regarding the death penalty for juvenile offenders has also been mentioned. At the same time, a forgiveness movement is forming in Iran, where the families of the murder victims increasingly denounce the use of the death penalty as punishment.

1 <http://iranprimer.usip.org/blog/2014/dec/15/diplomacy-2014-better-ties-no-deal>

2 <http://iranhr.net/2014/01/two-ahwazi-activists-hadi-rashedi-and-hashem-shabani-have-been-executed/>

3 <http://iranhr.net/2014/06/iranian-political-prisoner-gholamreza-khosravi-was-executed-this-morning/>

4 The Guardian: Iran hangs man for heresy, September 29, 2014

5 <http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/12/02/iran-death-sentence-facebook-posts>

Raphaël Chenuil-Hazan, the executive director of ECPM⁶ said, “Diplomatic relations and the UPR are good opportunities to improve the situation of the death penalty in Iran. But it demands a stronger will from the international community and Iran’s dialogue partners, particularly the European Union and its members.”

IHR and ECPM believe that extending the mission of the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Iran, close monitoring of the UPR recommendations accepted by Iran, conditioning further improvement of the relations with Iran on a reduction in the use of the death penalty and strengthening the Iranian civil society struggling against the death penalty, are the means by which the international community can contribute to restriction of the death penalty in Iran.

IHR and ECPM further believe that abolition of the death penalty for juvenile offenders, public executions and death penalty for drug-related offences are the areas where significant progress can be made in 2015. In the current improvement of the diplomatic relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran, IHR and ECPM remind that Norway and the EU have a key role to put death penalty at the top of the agenda in the dialogue with Iran.

SOURCES

Many executions that have been carried out have not been announced by the official Iranian media. Therefore, we distinguish between the “official” and “unofficial” numbers. Official executions are those announced by official websites of the Iranian judiciary, Iranian police, the National Iranian Broadcasting Network, official or state-run news agencies and national or local newspapers. Unofficial executions include the cases that have not been announced by official sources, but have been confirmed by IHR through unofficial channels and communications. These include other human rights NGOs or IHR’s sources within Iran. The sources of unofficial reports are often eyewitnesses, family members, lawyers, sources within the prisons and the Iranian judiciary. IHR has only included unofficial reports that have been confirmed by two independent sources.

Due to the lack of transparency in the Iranian judicial system and the pressure put on the families, many of the execution reports IHR has received could not be verified. Therefore, these cases are not included in the present report.

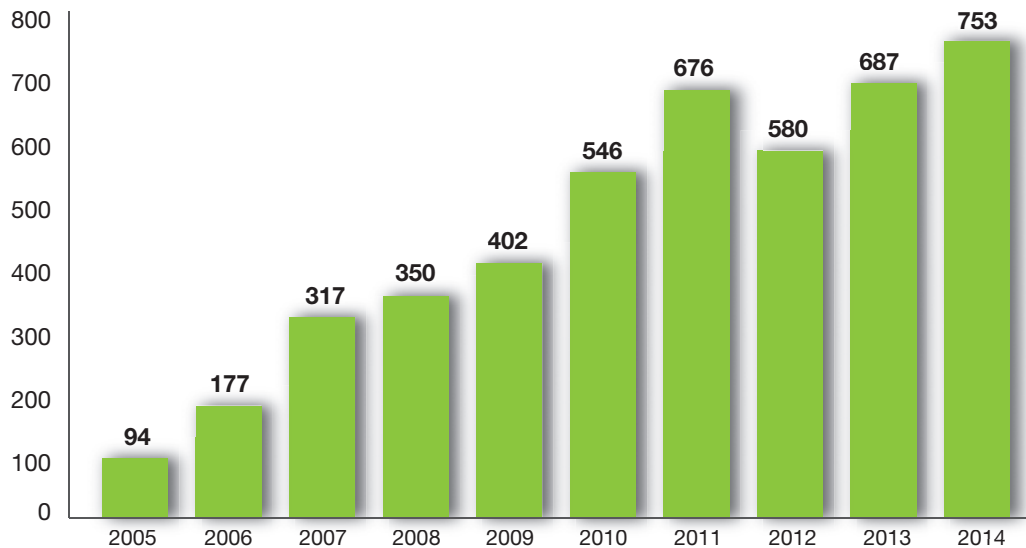
This report does not include extra-judicial killings of porters (Kolbaran) and “Kasebkaran” in the border area, who were shot dead by Iranian authority security forces near the western or eastern borders of Iran.

6 Ensemble Contre la Peine de Mort, <http://www.abolition.fr/>



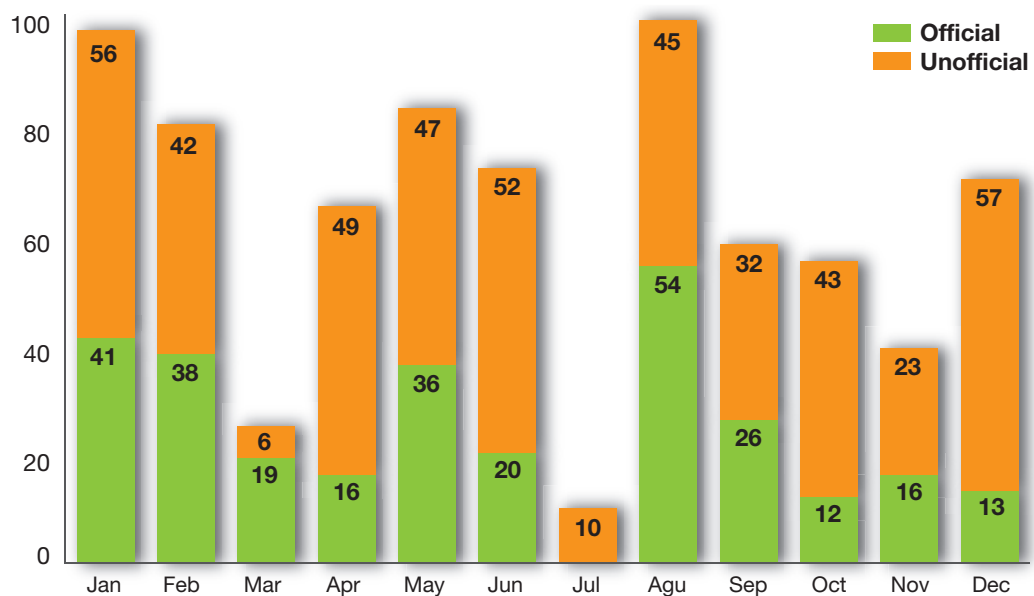
FACTS AND FIGURES

ANNUAL EXECUTION NUMBERS IN THE LAST 10 YEARS



The diagram above shows the number of annual executions based on reports published by Amnesty International (2005-2007) and IHR (2008-2014). These include confirmed cases only. Every year there are dozens of execution cases that are not included in the annual numbers due to a lack of details. The number of executions in 2014 is higher than in previous years and is possibly one of the highest since the early 1990s.

MONTHLY OVERVIEW OF EXECUTIONS IN 2014



The diagram above shows the monthly variations in the number of executions in 2014. Both official (green) and unofficial (orange) executions are indicated. The execution numbers are particularly low in March (the Iranian New Year) and July (Muslim holy month of Ramadan).

METHODS OF EXECUTIONS



A man standing on the ground before being pulled up by the crane; Public execution, Mianeh, August 18, 2014.

All reported execution cases in 2014 were carried out by hanging. In most cases, public executions are carried out using cranes (Picture). In the case of both public executions and those performed inside the prison, the prisoners are either pulled up by the crane or the object that they are standing on is removed from underneath them; however, the fall is not severe enough to cause dislocation of the neck and sudden death. In this case, the prisoners die of suffocation and strangulation and it often takes several minutes until death occurs. In several cases where the execution was interrupted

after a few seconds or minutes, the prisoners survived. In the case of *qisas* (retribution for murder), a member of the victim's family is encouraged to carry out the execution. In some prisons, such as Rajai Shahr in Karaj, the execution begins when a button that leads to releasing the trap door beneath the prisoner is pushed. However, in most cases, prisoners stand on a chair which is then pulled out from underneath them.

IHR has received several reports from different prisons where prisoners are executed one by one and are forced to watch each execution before it is their turn.⁷

CASES OF SURVIVAL AFTER HANGING

In 2014 there were at least four *qisas* cases where the execution was interrupted after several seconds or even minutes.

On April 21, a man identified as "F.M." who was convicted of murder, survived an execution in the prison of Bandar Abbas (Southern Iran). He was pardoned by the victim's parents after being hanged for 1-2 minutes.⁸

On April 23, a 31-year-old man identified as "Hossein" was convicted of murdering his friend and sentenced to death by hanging. After three minutes of being hanged, he was pardoned by the victim's family. Hossein was resuscitated and taken to the hospital. After three days in the hospital, he was transferred back to the Tabriz prison⁹.

On May 17, a 28-year-old woman identified as "Fereshteh," who was convicted of murdering her mother-in-law, was hanged in the prison of Noshahr. After 10 seconds of being hanged, she was pardoned and the execution was halted. The execution was carried out by her sister-in-law. A few hours later while she was still in shock and speaking with difficulty,

⁷ Personal testimony of a witness to IHR

⁸ <http://www.dadhor.ir/Default.aspx?tabid=1761&articleType=ArticleView&articleId=83840>

⁹ <http://hamshahronline.ir/details/257385>

she told the Mehr news agency: "I was really in the other world; I can't believe that I am back and alive again. This is a miracle."¹⁰

On December 14, a man who was convicted of murdering another man in a village near Kazeroun (Fars Province) six years ago, was pardoned by the victim's family 14 seconds into the execution.¹¹

PUBLIC EXECUTIONS



Children at a public execution scene in Shiraz
(February 13, 2014)



The execution that children
in the picture above were
watching. Two men are
hanged one by one.

In 2014, at least 53 cases of public hangings were reported by the Iranian media. Three additional cases were reported by unofficial sources. These cases have not been included in the annual report as we are unable to verify the exact place and date of the executions.

As mentioned above, public hangings are often carried out in a way that it takes several minutes until death occurs (as a result of strangulation). Public executions, and specifically those performed in Iran, are deplored by the Human Rights Committee and constitute inhuman and degrading treatment.¹² Furthermore, children have witnessed these public executions and in September 2013, an eight-year-old boy died while staging an execution during playtime.¹³

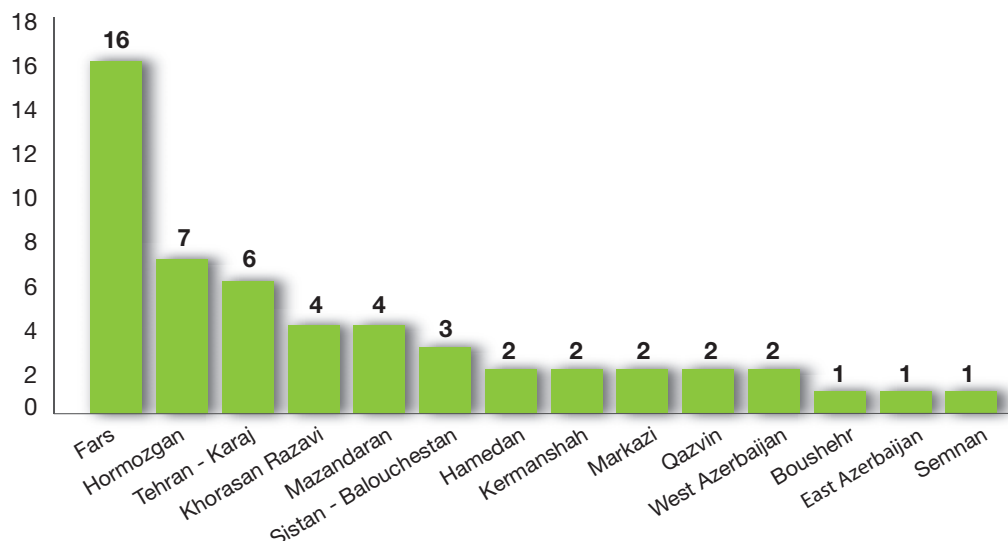
¹⁰ Fraru, 18. May 2014: Woman pardoned few seconds after being hanged.

¹¹ <http://www.parsine.com/fa/print/213169>

¹² Human Rights Committee, *Concluding Observations on the Islamic Republic of Iran*, §8, UN Doc. CCPR/C/79/Add. 25 (Aug 3, 1993).

¹³ Iran Human Rights, *Annual Report on the Death Penalty in Iran-2013*, page12 (citing <http://www.roozonline.com/persian/news/newsitem/archive/2013/september/04/article/-de12bcf75b.html>).

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLIC EXECUTIONS



In keeping with previous years, in 2014, Fars is still the province with the highest number of public executions.

DEBATE ON PUBLIC EXECUTIONS IN IRANIAN SOCIETY¹⁴

In recent years, the Iranian community has shown increasing attention toward the negative effects of public execution on society, including psychological, social and even religious aspects. There is an ongoing debate regarding this issue among Iranian jurists and judicial officials based on the utility and disadvantages of public executions^{15, 16}. Islamic clergies have been asked about the necessity of public executions. The views of legal and religious experts have been mainly negative in regards to public executions; some take into consideration the harmful consequences of witnessing the execution scene for children, while others are concerned with the negative image of Islam and the Islamic Republic that public executions demonstrate to the international community.¹⁷ Some Islamic scholars (mujtahid) have even given fatwas about public executions. They generally believe that public execution is not a religious necessity and adults can and should prevent children and juveniles from watching. Moreover, they believe that if public executions spread negative impressions about Islam, it is a sin and should therefore be banned.¹⁸

UPR RECOMMENDATIONS ON PUBLIC EXECUTIONS

Public executions in Iran have received massive attention in the international media and it has also led to international reactions. In the second round of Iran's UPR the following recommendations were made about the public executions:

- Put a complete moratorium on the use of the death penalty and, short of such a decision, prohibit the death penalty for juvenile offenders and abandon the practice of public executions (Hungary);

14 Tabasom Fanaian and Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam: Public executions in Iran: an unfit measure in a modern society. In: ECPM Review on the death penalty in Iran, pp. 84-90, 2014.

15 <http://www.khabaronline.ir/detail/177795/society/judiciary>

16 <http://etemadnewspaper.ir/Released/91-11-17/229.htm>

17 Question from Bayat Zanjani about public execution

18 http://www.jamahan.ir/fa/NewsContent-id_36903.aspx

- Take immediate measures to abolish the death penalty for crimes committed by persons when they were under the age of 18, and place a moratorium on public executions (Norway);
- Immediately end all public executions (Germany).

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE GOVERNMENT IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PUBLIC EXECUTIONS¹⁹

According to the Iranian constitution, the government, led by the President, doesn't have the authority to issue and implement executions. The judiciary is the body directly involved, and it is the head of the judiciary (appointed by the Supreme leader) or the General Prosecutor in drug-trafficking cases, who sign the execution orders. However, public executions seem to be the exception to this rule. According to the law regarding responsibilities and authority of governors (who represent the government and not the judiciary), the Council for the Security of the Province (headed by the local governor) is specifically responsible for public order and tranquility.²⁰ Therefore, besides the judiciary (represented by the local judges), the government (represented by the local governor) does have the authority to decide whether an execution should be carried out in public or not. For example, in 2014, the governor of the Sistan and Baluchistan Province (Southeastern Iran) had initially disagreed with the public execution of three alleged terrorists in his province.²¹ This decision was later changed (possibly due to political pressure) and the prisoners were hanged in public. This means that although the judiciary makes the initial decision of carrying out the executions in public, the government, if willing, can in fact prevent public executions. Therefore, the government, led by the President, is equally responsible for the high numbers of public executions in Iran.



A young man is flogged before being publicly executed on 6 August 2014 in Karaj. The government of Mr. Rouhani can according to the Iranian law stop implementation of punishments in public spaces.

19 Tabasom Fanaian and Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam: Public executions in Iran: an unfit measure in a modern society. In: ECPM Review on the death penalty in Iran, pp. 84-90, 2014.

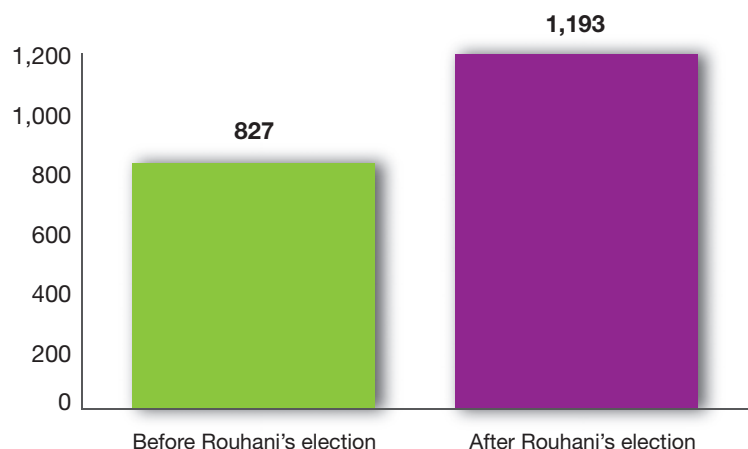
20 <http://rc.majlis.ir/fa/law/show/94932>

21 <http://asrehamoon.ir/vdcjvaei.uqevmzsfu.html>

EXECUTION TRENDS BEFORE AND AFTER THE ELECTION OF PRESIDENT ROUHANI

Despite the optimism and hope after the election of Mr. Hassan Rouhani as the Iranian president, there are few indications that the human rights situation in the country has improved. In fact, a comparison of the 18 months before and after the presidential elections of June 2013 shows that the use of the death penalty has in fact increased.

EXECUTIONS IN THE 18 MONTHS BEFORE AND AFTER ROUHANI'S ELECTION



The diagram shows that the number of executions in the 18 months after the election of Hassan Rouhani as president (1. July 2013 - 31 December 2014) is 31% higher than the numbers in the 18 months before (1. January 2012-31 June 2013).

Even worse, the number of juvenile offenders executed in 2014 is at its highest annual rate since 1990.²²

The number of public executions shows a modest reduction. The annual number of public executions is still dramatically higher than in 2008-2010 when the judiciary ordered a restriction on the use of public executions (See chart next page). On one occasion, the decision of the public execution of two prisoners was changed and they were hanged in the prison.²³ It is not known whether this was a political decision or whether there were other reasons as to why the executions were not carried out publicly. The numbers in 2015 will show to what extent the decrease in the number of public executions is related to the government's politics.

²² Amnesty International, Executions of Juveniles Since 1990,
<http://www.amnesty.org/en/death-penalty/executions-of-child-offenders-since-1990>

²³ <http://www.tabnak.ir/fa/news/457331/>

PUBLIC EXECUTIONS 2008-2014

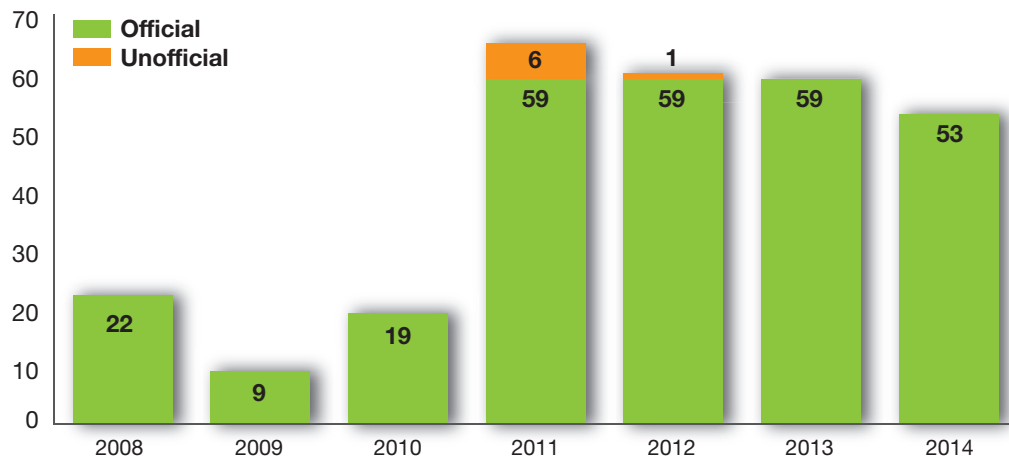


Diagram above shows the reported number of public executions since 2008. There is a dramatic increase in the number of public executions since 2011- The trend continues in 2014.

ROLE OF THE PRESIDENT AND HIS GOVERNMENT IN USE OF THE DEATH PENALTY IN IRAN

As mentioned in the previous section, the President, via his governors, has direct influence on the implementation of public punishments such as flogging, amputation and executions (see page 11). Although we have observed a slight decrease in the number of public executions, Iran is among the very few countries that implement public executions.

In fact, Iran is, together with Saudi Arabia, on top of the list of countries implementing public executions.

On the other hand, there is an increase in the total number of executions during the presidency of Hassan Rouhani. Although the judiciary, and not the government, have the authority to issue and implement death sentences, neither the President nor his government representatives have even once criticized the high number of executions in Iran.

It seems that Mr. Rouhani's government is not preoccupied with the issue of the death penalty. However, this can be changed if the countries involved in a dialogue with Iran put it on the agenda. The government is normally the counterpart in the dialogue between Iran and the international community.



The governor of Sistan and Baluchistan Province had initially disagreed with the public execution of the three prisoners who were eventually hanged on April 26 in Zabol.

CHARGES

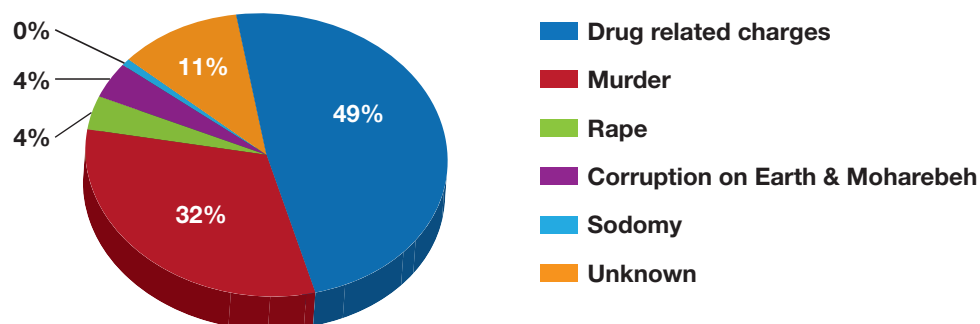
The number of crimes carrying the possibility of execution in Iran is among the highest in the world. Charges such as “adultery, incest, rape, sodomy, insulting the Prophet Mohammad and other great Prophets, possessing or selling illicit drugs, theft for the fourth time, premeditated murder, moharebeh (waging war against God), ifsad-fil-arz (corruption on earth), fraud and human trafficking” are capital offenses.²⁴ Many of the charges are not considered as the most serious crimes and therefore do not meet the ICCPR minimum standards.²⁵

An overview of the new Islamic Penal Code (IPC) and offences punishable by death was given in the 2013 annual report.²⁶

EXECUTIONS IN 2014 BASED ON CHARGES

As in previous years, possession and trafficking of narcotic drugs, murder, rape, and “corruption on the earth” and “moharebeh” were the main charges used for those executed in Iran. The most noticeable change regarding the charges in 2014 is the dramatic increase in the number of executions for murder charges. For the first time in five years, the official number of executions for murder charges is almost equal to the executions for drug-related charges.

CHARGES FOR ALL EXECUTIONS



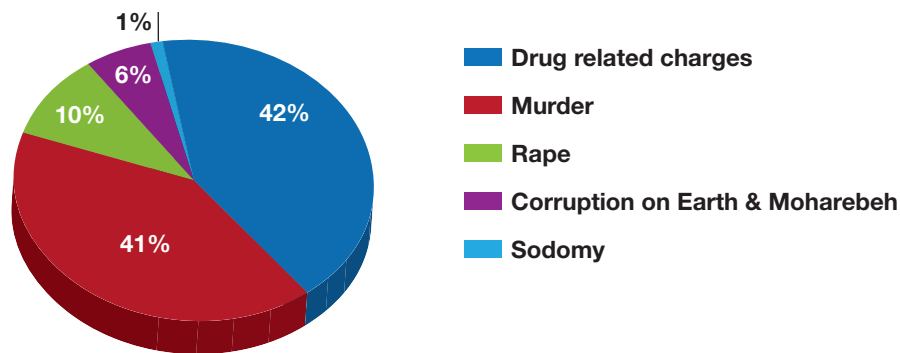
The chart above shows what charges were used for both official and unofficial executions in 2014. Moharebeh and corruption on earth were used for a wide range of charges ranging from kidnapping and armed robbery to political and ideological affiliation and heresy.

24 United Nations, *Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran: Report of the Secretary-General*, U.N. Doc. A/68/377, Sept. 10, 2013, ¶ 14.; see also Iran Human Rights and Together Against the Death Penalty, *Annual Report on the Death Penalty in Iran – 2013*, 15-18.

25 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 6

26 *Annual Report on the Death Penalty in Iran – 2013*, 10-13

CHARGES FOR THE OFFICIAL EXECUTIONS



The chart above shows the charges used only for the officially announced executions (official). For the first time in the last five years, the number of the executions for drug-related charges were similar to those of murder.

It is important to emphasize that the charges mentioned in this report are those issued by the Iranian judiciary. Many of the trials leading to death sentences are unfair according to the international standards. The use of torture to force confessions is widespread in Iran. Due to lack of transparency in the Iranian judiciary, most of the charges mentioned in this report have not been confirmed by independent sources. There is also evidence that charges were fabricated against some prisoners.

DRUG-RELATED CHARGES

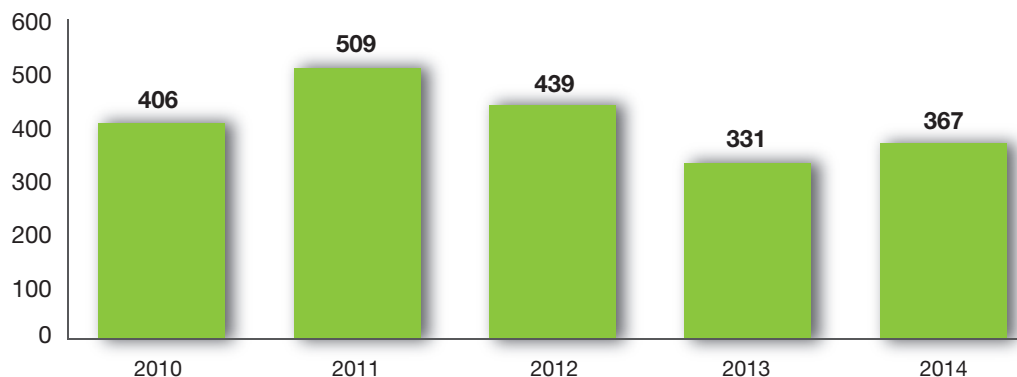
ANTI-NARCOTICS LAW

The Anti-Narcotics Law requires the death penalty on the fourth conviction for drug-related offences in several instances including: planting opium poppies, coca plants or cannabis seeds with the intent to produce drugs; smuggling more than 5 kilograms of opium or cannabis into Iran; buying, possessing, carrying or hiding more than 5 kilograms of opium and the other aforementioned drugs (punishable on third conviction); smuggling into Iran, dealing, producing, distributing and exporting more than 30 grams of heroin, morphine, cocaine or their derivatives.

The Anti-Narcotics Law clearly violates the right to appeal, as required under the International Human Rights Law. Under Article 32, death row prisoners convicted on drugs-related offences do not have the right to appeal.

EXECUTION FOR DRUG-RELATED CHARGES

DRUG-RELATED EXECUTIONS 2010-2014



During the past five years, drug-related charges have counted for the majority of executions in Iran.²⁷ Based on IHR's death penalty reports, at least 2052 people have been executed for drug-related charges since 2010 in Iran. In 2013, there was a relative decrease in the number of drug-related executions compared to the previous three years. However, the decrease didn't continue. In 2014, at least 367 people were executed for such charges. 123 of these executions were announced by the official sources.

Iranian authorities claim that many of those sentenced to death for drug-related charges are involved in organized, armed smuggling. However, there is a general lack of transparency in the Iranian judicial system and all those convicted for drug-related charges have been tried by the Revolution Courts behind closed doors, and most of those executed are not identified by name. Human rights groups have received many reports on unfair trials and confessions under torture. An example is Saeed Sedighi²⁸ who was executed in October 2012 despite calls from the UN Special Rapporteurs to halt the execution.²⁹ Furthermore, many of those executed belonged to the most marginalized parts of society.

THE INTERNATIONAL FIGHT AGAINST DRUG TRAFFICKING AND EXECUTIONS

The United Nations' Office for Drugs and Crimes (UNODC) has cooperated with Iran in the fight against drug trafficking for the past decades. Several European states have provided millions of dollars worth of support through UNODC to counter-narcotics forces in Iran. A recent report by Reprieve provides a direct link between the UNODC funding and thousands of executions in Iran.^{30, 31} Together with several human rights groups, IHR and ECPM have urged the UNODC on several occasions to freeze its counter-narcotic funding^{32, 33} to Iran or condition it to a stop in drug-related executions. Several countries such as Denmark, Ireland³⁴ and the UK have stopped their counter-narcotic aid to the

27 <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE13/090/2011/en/0564f064-e965-4fad-b062-6de232a08162/mde130902011en.pdf>

28 <http://iranhr.net/2012/10/urgent-saeed-sedighi-and-several-other-prisoners-scheduled-to-be-executed-tomorrow-ih-urges-un-and-eu-to-react-now/>

29 <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=12688&LangID=E>

30 European Aid for Executions – Reprieve, 2014

31 Daily mail, Special report, 14. December 2014

32 <http://iranhr.net/2014/12/human-rights-groups-urge-un-to-freeze-funding-of-iran-counter-narcotic-efforts/>

33 <http://iranhr.net/2012/10/rights-groups-urge-un-to-cease-anti-drug-trafficking-funding-iran-death-penalty/>

34 <http://www.thejournal.ie/ireland-iran-drugs-1166152-Nov2013/>



UNODC programs in Iran. However, the UNODC continues praising Iranian authorities for their efficient struggle against trafficking without taking into account the several hundred who are executed every year for such charges in Iran. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the UNODC, told reporters that “Iran takes a very active role to fight against illicit drugs,”³⁵ before an international meeting on global efforts to combat narcotics in Vienna on March 13-14. “It is very impressive,” Fedotov said referring to the reports showing that in 2012, Iran seized 388 tons of opium, the equivalent of 72 percent of all such seizures around the world. Commenting on Mr. Fedotov’s praise of Iran’s fight against drugs, IHR spokesperson Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam said: “The amount of seized drugs is the only positive result UNODC and the Iranian authorities can present. But there is no evidence that the UNODC cooperation with Iran has led to a decrease in drug trafficking. Besides, UNODC cannot be indifferent to the indiscriminate execution of hundreds of prisoners under the pretext of fighting the drug trafficking. UNODC must take its share of responsibility.”³⁶

Although there has not been a significant reduction in the number of executions for drug-related charges, the growing international attention seems to have some impact on the Iranian authorities’ rhetoric regarding this issue.

CHANGE IN THE ANTI-NARCOTIC LAW: A CHANGE IN RHETORIC OR PRACTICE?

In previous years, Iranian authorities proudly presented the high number of executions for drug offences as a sign of their efficient struggle against international drug trafficking. As late as March 2014, referring to the drug-related executions, Javad Larijani, head of the Iranian Judiciary’s “Human Rights Council” said: “We expect the world to be grateful for this great service to humanity”. He continued: “Unfortunately, instead of celebrating Iran, international organizations see the increased number of executions caused by Iran’s assertive confrontation with drugs as a vehicle for human rights attacks on the Islamic Republic of Iran.”^{37, 38}

However, the rhetoric has clearly changed in the last months of 2014. On December 4, in an English-language interview with France 24, Javad Larijani said, “No one is happy to see that the number of executions is high.” Javad Larijani continued, “We are crusading to change this law. If we are successful, if the law passes in Parliament, almost 80% of the executions will go away.”³⁹ This is big news for us, regardless of Western criticism.” Interestingly, his statement was published also by the state-run Fars News Agency.⁴⁰

This has been echoed by the judiciary. Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani, Javad Larijani’s brother and the head of Iran’s Judiciary, addressed the need to change the country’s drug laws. During a December 2 meeting of judiciary officials, he said, “On the issue of drugs and trafficking, it seems necessary that we need a change in the legislation because the ultimate goal of the law should be implementing justice, while in reality, this goal is often not realized”.^{41, 42}

35 <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/03/11/uk-iran-drugs-un-idUKBREA2A0PA20140311>

36 <http://iranhr.net/2014/03/despite-328-executions-for-drug-related-charges-in-2013-unodc-praises-irans-drug-fight/>

37 <http://www.tasnimnews.com/Home/Single/302871>

38 <http://www.iranhumanrights.org/2014/03/larijani-executions/>

39 Mohammad Javad Larijani’s interview with France24, December 4, 2014

40 <http://www.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=13930914000637>

41 <http://www.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=13930912000412>

42 <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/12/iran-end-death-penalty-drug-cases.html#>

Based on these statements, one can conclude that the Iranian authorities have at least publicly admitted that the executions have not been an efficient mean in the fight against drug trafficking.

However, it remains to be seen to what extent these statements represent a real willingness for policy change and are not just a change of rhetoric by the Iranian authorities. Iran's response to the UPR recommendations regarding the drug-related executions will be indicative of where Iran is heading.

UPR RECOMMENDATIONS ON DRUG-RELATED EXECUTIONS

Several countries have recommended Iran to respect the ICCPR, which restricts the death penalty for the most serious offences. Below are the recommendations that directly mention the drug-related executions.

- Amend the Penal Code to exclude drug-trafficking related crimes from those punished by the death penalty (Spain);
- Consider introducing a moratorium on the death penalty, with a view to its abolition, in particular for drug-related offences and other crimes that cannot be labelled as “most serious” according to international standards (Italy).

MURDER CHARGES – QISAS

QISAS LAW

Qisas refers to retribution in kind. The *qisas* death sentence has been retained for murder in the new IPC. Because murder is specifically punished under *qisas*, the penal code of Iran does not specifically state that convicted murderers are subject to the death penalty, but rather to “*qisas*” which means “retribution in kind” or retaliation. The state effectively puts the responsibility of the executions for murder on the shoulders of the victim's family.

In addition, under the Iran Penal Code (IPC), the death penalty is generally subject to discriminatory application.⁴³

QISAS EXECUTIONS IN 2014

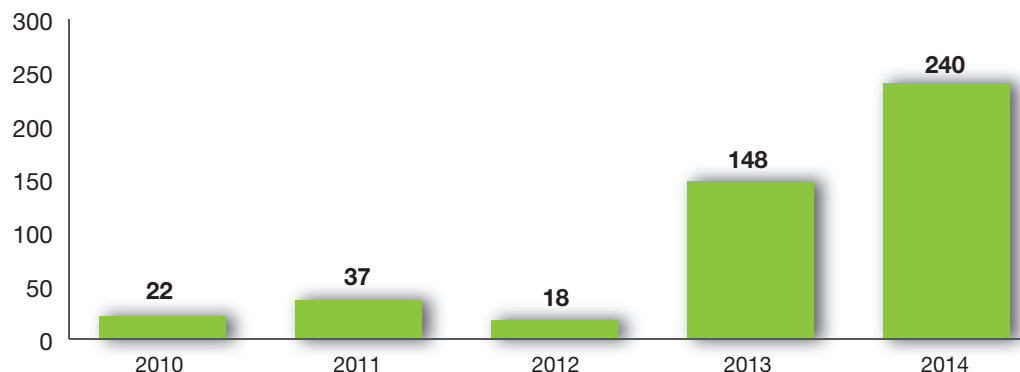
There has been a dramatic increase in the number of “*qisas*” executions since 2013. With 148 executions for murder charges, the number of executions in 2013 was 7 times higher than the average numbers for the period of 2010-2012.⁴⁴ This increase continued in 2014. At least 240 people were executed for murder charges in 2014. 50% of these executions (120) were announced by the official media.

The increase in the implementation of *qisas* executions appears to be correlated and can be observed in all the major Iranian prisons.

43 Annual report on the death penalty in Iran- 2013, page 11.

44 <http://iranhr.net/2014/03/report-death-penalty-iran-2013/>

EXECUTIONS FOR MURDER CHARGES (QISQS) 2010-2014



The diagram shows the reported executions for murder charges in the last five years. The execution numbers in 2014 are almost twice as high as the numbers in 2013, and about 9 times higher than the average of the numbers in 2010-2012.

FORGIVENESS: CITIZENS' WAY OF SAYING NO TO THE DEATH PENALTY

Since Iranian law (IPC) puts the responsibility of execution for murder charges on the victim's family, it also gives them the choice to forgive. With the dramatic increase in issuing death sentences for those convicted of murder, we have observed a wave of forgiveness throughout the country.

On December 26, 2014, the head of Iran's "State Prisons Organization," Asghar Jahangiri told the Fars News Agency: "We have had 681 cases of forgiveness since the beginning of the Iranian year 1392 (March 20, 2013)".⁴⁵

Iran Human Rights will soon be publishing a new report on "qisas and forgiveness" in Iran.

MOHAREBEH, CORRUPTION ON EARTH AND REBELLION

Due to their vague definition, the charges of "Moharebeh" (waging war against God) and "Ifsad fel Arz" or "Corruption on Earth" are used against a wide range of offences. Furthermore, there is a considerable subjectivity in regards to issuing these charges.

MOHAREBEH, CORRUPTION ON EARTH AND REBELLION IN THE LAW

Article 279 of the new IPC defines *mohareb* (a person who fights God) as someone who takes up arms in specific cases. This includes bandits, robbers and smugglers who take up arms (Article 281).

Article 282 delivers a death sentence in the case of *moharebeh* (fighting God). However, the judge has the option of imposing an alternative punishment of crucifixion, amputation of the right hand and left foot or internal exile away from the defendant's home town.

Under the previous IPC, which was in force until May 2013, the charge of *moharebeh* was frequently used against political dissidents and people with relations to the opposition

45 <http://www.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=13931003001081>

groups abroad, even if they were non-violent. The new penal code has provided for their punishment under the notion of “corruption on earth and rebellion.”

The new IPC has introduced a new concept of “rebellion” that did not exist in the previous Code. This chapter has expanded the scope of the death penalty for all those who are convicted of “corruption on earth.”

Article 286 defines “corruption on earth” as “a person who commits a crime on an *extensive level* against the physical integrity of others, the domestic or external security, spreads lies, disrupts the national economic system, undertakes arson and destruction, disseminates poisonous, microbiological and dangerous substances, establishes corruption and prostitution centers or assists in establishing them.”

Corruption on earth has been especially been used by Iranian judges in cases where a death sentence would otherwise be difficult to justify based on other charges and available evidence.

EXECUTIONS FOR MOHAREBEH AND CORRUPTION ON EARTH IN 2014

At least 30 people were executed in 2014 in Iran on charges of moharebeh and/or corruption on earth. A larger portion of these prisoners were convicted of armed robbery. However, since all these prisoners were tried behind closed doors by the Revolution Courts, the charges can't be confirmed by independent sources.

However, there are several people who were sentenced to death on charges of moharebeh and/or corruption on earth for their political and ideological affiliation or for national security reasons.

Political and ideological affiliation

Since 2010, at least 60 people have been executed in Iran because of their political or ideological affiliations. Authorities have used charges such as “moharebeh” (waging war against the God), *Ilsad fel Arz* (corruption on earth) or rebellion against them. In most of these cases, there were no instances of being directly involved in acts of violence. Many of them have been non-violent political dissidents, members of banned opposition groups or family members or relatives of armed opposition combattants. Members of ethnic minorities, such as Kurds, Arabs, and the Baluch, are overrepresented in this group.⁴⁶ There are reports of unfair trials, torture and forced confessions for most of the cases. In many cases, the executions were conducted secretly without a lawyer or the family being informed. The bodies of those executed are often not handed over to their families.

46 Iran Human Rights Review, *The Death Penalty in Iran: Fighting Crime or an Instrument to Spread Fear?* by Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam and Tabassom Fanaian (Jan. 2014) (citations omitted); Iran Human Rights, *Annual Report on the Death Penalty in Iran-2012*, accessed April 2013, <http://iranhr.net/spip.php?article2740>; Death Penalty Worldwide (citing Intl. Campaign for Human Rights in Iran, “Iran Should Halt as Rate of Hangings Accelerates,” accessed Jan. 23, 2013, <http://www.iranhumanrights.org/2013/10/executions/>; Intl. Fed. For Human Rights, *Death Penalty in Iran: A State Terror Policy- Special Update for 11th World Day Against the Death Penalty*, Oct. 9, 2013; Sonya Angelica Diehn, *Arab Activists Face Execution on Iran's Death Row*, Deutsche Welle, March 5, 2013, <http://www.dw.de/arab-activists-face-execution-on-irans-death-row/a-16728569>.

• **Hadi Rashedi and Hashem Shabani: promoting their mother tongue**



In 2014, two Arab teachers, Hadi Rashedi and Hashem Shabani, belonging to an Arabic cultural group called “Al-Hiwar” (dialogue) were convicted of moharebeh and executed. Their execution led to widespread

condemnation by international human rights groups.⁴⁷ Prior to his execution, Shabani retracted his confession he made under torture and stated that he sought to “[defend] the legitimate right that every nation in this world should have, which is the right to live freely with full civil rights. With all this misery and tragedy, I have never used a weapon to fight these atrocious crimes except with a pen.”⁴⁸

• **Ali Chebeishat and Khaled Khosravi: tortured to confess**

Ali Chebeishat, Sayed Khaled Mousavi, and Salman Chayani were arrested in November 2012 and held incommunicado for seven months at the Ministry of Intelligence Detention Centre in Ahwaz in South West of Iran while denied access to a lawyer and their family members.



There, they were allegedly tortured. On November 16, 2013, they appeared on the Press TV, “confessing” participation in the Chogha Zanbil gas pipeline bombing. Apart from these “confessions,” there is no evidence in relation to the explosion of the Chogha Zanbil natural gas pipeline; furthermore, the authorities initially declared that the explosion was an accident. Nonetheless, on September 9, 2013, Judge Sayed Mohammed Baqir Mousavi of the Second Branch of the Ahwaz Revolutionary Court sentenced Mr. Chebeishat and Mr. Mousavi to death. In March 2014 they were transferred from Dezfoul prison (where they were being held) to an unknown location. Despite calls from UN experts⁴⁹ and international rights organizations, Ali Chebeishat and Khaled Khosravi were executed, and in June 2014, their families were informed of the location where they were buried.⁵⁰

47 <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/feb/13/iran-middleeast>

48 *Two Ahwazi Activists, Hadi Rashedi and Hashem Shabani, Have Been Executed*, Iran Human Rights, Jan. 29, 2014, <http://iranhr.net/2014/01/two-ahwazi-activists-hadi-rashedi-and-hashem-shabani-have-been-executed/>

49 Ahmed Shaheed’s official website: Urgent appeal to halt execution of Ahwazi Arab men, 21 May 2014

50 <http://iranhr.net/2014/06/the-two-ahwazi-arab-activists-have-been-executed/>

- **Gholamreza Khosravi gave economic support to banned opposition group**



Gholamreza Khosravi Savadjani was arrested in 2007 and sentenced to 6 years in prison for having given information and economic support to the banned opposition group Mujahedin-e-Khalgh/People's Mojahedin organization (MEK/PMOI). In 2010, he was tried again for the same charges and sentenced to death on charges of moharebeh. This is a clear violation of international and Iranian laws. Reports indicate that he was subjected to physical and psychological torture. He was executed on June 1, 2014.⁵¹

- **Sunni muslims in danger of execution**

Among the religious minorities, Sunni Muslims are the ones mostly targeted by the Iranian authorities. In December 2012, six Sunni Kurds were executed in the Ghezelhesar prison of Karaj.⁵² At least 33 Sunni prisoners are on death row and several of them in danger of execution.⁵³ IHR has warned about the danger of the execution of four Sunni Kurd prisoners identified as **Jamshid and Jahangir Dehgani (brothers), Hamed Ahmadi and Kamal Molayee**, who were arrested in 2009.⁵⁴ They were accused, along with six others, of being involved in the assassination of a senior Sunni cleric with ties to Iranian authorities. They have denied any involvement, saying that their arrest and detention preceded the assassination by several months. They were sentenced to death by the Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran, convicted of moharebeh (enmity against God) and "acts against the nation's security."⁵⁵ Jamshid and Jahangir Dehgani, Hamed Ahmadi Kamal Molayee, and two other prisoners; Sedigh Mohammadi and Hadi Hosseini also belonging to the Sunni Kurdish minority in Iran and with similar charges were executed on March 4, 2015, in Rajaishahr prison of Karaj.

- **Ethnic prisoners sentenced to death for their political or religious belief**

Kurdish prisoners are the largest group of prisoners on the death row for their religious and political affiliations. According to a database on political prisoners, there are 62 Kurdish prisoners on the death row⁵⁶. According to this database there are 2 Azeri (Turk), 14 Baluch and 3 Arab political prisoners on the death row in Iran. The actual number might be higher.

On 19. February 2015 six death row prisoners were transferred from their wards in the central prison of Urmia. Five of the prisoners were sentenced to death for affiliation to banned Kurdish opposition groups: Saman Naseem, arrested when he was 17 year old, Habibollah and Ali Afshari (brothers), Sirwan Najavi and Ebrahim Shapouri.⁵⁷ Unofficial reports indicate that Habibollah and Ali Afshari and probably Saman Naseem might have been executed. However, at the time of writing this report there are no confirmed reports about the whereabouts of these prisoners.

Yunes Aghayan, of Azerbaijani ethnicity and member of Yarsan was among the six death row prisoners transferred to an unknown location on February 18. He was arrested in 2004 and sentenced to death in 2009 convicted of Moharebeh.⁵⁸

51 <http://iranhr.net/2014/06/iranian-political-prisoner-gholamreza-khosravi-was-executed-this-morning/>

52 <http://iranhr.net/2013/01/ihr-strongly-condemns-executions-of-salafi-kurd-prisoners-in-iran/>

53 <http://iranhr.net/2014/06/iran-halt-execution-of-33-sunnis/>

54 <http://iranhr.net/2014/06/urgent-four-sunni-prisoners-of-conscience-scheduled-to-be-executed-tomorrow/>

55 <http://iranhr.net/2013/10/four-kurdish-sunni-prisoners-of-conscience-in-imm>

56 <http://united4iran.org/political-prisoners-database/>

57 <http://iranhr.net/2015/02/increasing-concern-that-iranian-authorities-have-executed-saman-naseem/>

58 <http://iranhr.net/2012/06/death-row-political-prisoner-yunes-aghayan-is-awaiting-justice/>

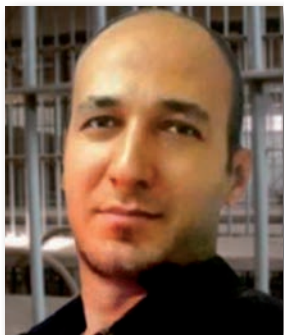
Zanyar and Loghman Moradi are also death row prisoners who were reportedly tortured into “confessing” to the 2009 murder of the son of a senior cleric in Marivan, Kurdistan Province, and participating in armed activities with a Kurdish opposition group.⁵⁹

- **Mahafarid Amir-Khosravi: executed on charges of corruption on earth for economic fraud**

Amir-Khosravi was executed on May 24 charged with economic corruption. The office of Tehran’s public prosecutor announced that Mahafarid Amir-Khosravi, one of four people given the death sentence in 2012 for their roles in embezzling the equivalent of \$2.6 billion, was hanged inside Tehran’s Evin prison. At the time the scandal was revealed, much of the blame was directed at the government but ultimately no officials were convicted.⁶⁰



- **Mohsen Amir-Aslani: executed on charges of corruption on earth and heresy**



Mohsen Amir-Aslani, 37, was executed on September 24, 2014 on charges of corruption on earth, insulting Prophet Jonah and heresy.⁶¹

He was arrested for his activities that the authorities deemed heretical. He was engaged in psychotherapy but also led sessions reading and reciting the Qur’an and providing his own interpretations of the Islamic holy book. For instance, he interpreted Jonah’s story in the Qur’an as a symbolic tale.⁶² Iran’s judiciary, which was responsible for the handling of his case, has since denied that Amir-Aslani’s execution was linked to his religious beliefs. Instead, the authorities allege that he had illicit sexual relationships with a number of people who participated in his sessions. However, according to the court documents to which IHR has access, the alleged witnesses in Amir-Aslani’s sexual charges cases withdrew their statements and the Supreme Court ruled out the death sentence three times. According to legal experts, Mohsen Amir-Aslani’s case is a textbook example of arbitrariness and politicization of Iran’s judiciary.⁶³

59 Amnesty International: Lives of two Kurdish death row prisoners at risk, 18 October 2013

60 <http://iranhr.net/2014/05/man-hanged-charged-with-economic-corruption/>

61 <http://iranhr.net/2014/09/mohsen-amir-aslani-executed-this-morning/>

62 The Guardian: Iran hangs man for heresy, September 29, 2014

63 http://www.academia.edu/10364918/Chronicle_of_an_Execution_The_Case_of_Mohsen_Amir_Aslani

APOSTASY AND OTHER “RELIGIOUS CRIMES”

Article 262 stipulates the death sentence for cursing the Prophet of Islam and any of the other grand prophets. Recently, the Iranian Supreme Court upheld the death sentence of Ruhollah Tavana for insulting the Prophet. Apostasy, sorcery, witchcraft and other such issues have not been explicitly mentioned in the new IPC, although apostasy has been specifically referred to in the Press Code (Article 26). Under sharia law, the punishment for apostasy is death, which a judge is able to impose.

• Soheil Arabi: in danger of execution for insulting the Prophet on Facebook

Soheil Arabi, 30, was sentenced to death for insulting the Prophet on Facebook.⁶⁴ He was arrested in his home in November 2013. A Tehran criminal court had convicted him in August of *sabb al-nabbi*, or “insulting the prophet,” referring to the Prophet Muhammad, which carries the death penalty. In addition, the judges charged him with corruption on earth. In November 2014, Iran’s Supreme Court upheld his sentence. He remains in danger of execution. Soheil Arabi’s death sentence has led to international outrage. The World Coalition against the Death penalty, of which ECPM and IHR are members, stated that “the death sentence is a clear violation of Iran’s obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to respect the right to freedom of expression” and called for Soheil Arabi’s release.⁶⁵

SODOMY AND SAME-SEX RELATIONS

According to the new penal code, a death sentence shall be imposed on the “active party” only if he is married or has forced a sexual act, but the “passive party” shall receive the death penalty regardless of marital status. A non-Muslim “active party” involved in a sexual act with a Muslim party shall also receive a death sentence (Article 234). The non-Muslim “active party” in same-sex relations not involving penetration shall also be sentenced to death. In 2014, two people were executed on charges of “Lavāt” (sodomy). According to the Iranian state media, on August 26, 2014, two men identified as “Abdollah Gh. Ch.” and “Soleiman Gh. Ch.” were hanged publicly in Shiraz. According to the official website of the Iranian judiciary in Fars Province and the official Iranian news agency IRNA, they were sentenced to death on charges of sodomy.^{66, 67}

64 <http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/12/02/iran-death-sentence-facebook-posts>

65 <http://www.worldcoalition.org/iran-soheil-arabi-facebook-insult-prophet-death-penalty-violation.html>

66 <http://iranhr.net/2014/08/five-executions-in-public-and-one-in-the-prison-two-men-executed-for-sodomy/>

67 <http://www.irna.ir/fa/News/81261787/>



JUVENILE EXECUTIONS

Iran executes more juvenile offenders than any other country in the world. According to IHR's annual reports, at least 42 juvenile offenders have been executed in the period of 2008-2014 in Iran. 8 juveniles were executed in 2013, 4 in 2011, 2 in 2010, 5 in 2009 and 9 juvenile offenders were executed in 2008.⁶⁸ There are currently about 160 juvenile offenders on the death row in Iranian prisons.⁶⁹ In practice, the government of Iran typically holds juvenile offenders on death row until they reach or surpass 18 years of age before executing them.⁷⁰ Reports indicate that between five and nine executions of juvenile offenders took place in 2013.⁷¹ For example, the UN Secretary-General notes in his report that, in January 2013, a 21-year-old male was executed for an alleged crime committed at the age of 17.⁷² In September 2013, an 18-year-old male was hanged in the prison of Kazeroun (Southern Iran) for an alleged murder committed at the age of 14.⁷³

EXECUTION OF JUVENILE OFFENDERS ACCORDING TO IRANIAN LAW

The new penal code explicitly defines the "age of criminal responsibility" for children as the age of maturity under *shari'a* law, meaning that girls over nine years of age and boys over fifteen years of age are eligible for execution if convicted of "crimes against God" (such as apostasy) or "retribution crimes" (such as "intentional murder").⁷⁴ Juvenile offenders under the age of 18 who commit *hodoud* or *qisas* offenses may not be sentenced to death, if the judge determines the offender lacked "adequate mental maturity and the ability to reason" based on forensic evidence.⁷⁵ The accompanying legislative note allows, but does not mandate, the judge to seek an expert forensic opinion or other source, to make that decision.⁷⁶ Article 88 provides that children who commit "*ta'zirat*" or "discretionary crimes," are not eligible for capital punishment.⁷⁷

The new penal code did not clarify whether the exclusion of the death penalty for "discretionary" (*ta'zir*) crimes committed by persons under the age of 18 extends to drug-related offences, which are considered *ta'zir* crimes punishable by death under Iran's Anti-Narcotics Law. In an advisory opinion dated May 31, 2014, the Legal Office of the judiciary upheld that children convicted of capital drug-related offences must be sentenced in accordance with the alternative measures set out in the new penal code.⁷⁸ However, it is not yet clear if Iran's revolutionary courts, which have jurisdiction over drug-related offences, have adopted this interpretation.

68 <http://iranhr.net/2009/02/iran-human-rights-at-least-350-executions-in-2008-in-iran/>

69 <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=14780&LangID=E>

70 International Federation for Human Rights, Iran: death penalty, (April 2009), 28; Iran Human Rights, *Annual Report on the Death Penalty in Iran – 2013*, (forthcoming), 19.

71 Death Penalty Worldwide (citing the International Federation for Human Rights, *Death Penalty in Iran: A State Terror Policy-Special Update for 11th World Day Against the Death Penalty*, (Oct. 2013), 9); Iran Human Rights, *Annual Report on the Death Penalty in Iran – 2013*, (forthcoming), 30.

72 *Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran: Report of the Secretary-General*, ¶17, U.N. Doc. A/68/377, (Sept. 10, 2013).

73 Iran Human Rights, "Execution of Juveniles in Iran: prisoner executed for murder committed at age 14; another juvenile offender scheduled for execution tomorrow," accessed March 11, 2014, <http://iranhr.net/2013/09/execution-of-juveniles-in-iran-prisoner-executed-for-murder-committed-at-age-14-another-juvenile-offender-scheduled-for-execution-tomorrow/>

74 *Id.*, Art. 147, (2013); Human Rights Watch, *Codifying Repression: An Assessment of Iran's New Penal Code* (Human Rights Watch, 2012), 21-22. The ages of 9 and 15 years is according to the lunar calendar.

75 *Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran: Report of the Secretary-General*, ¶17, U.N. Doc. A/68/377 (Sept. 10, 2013); Iran Penal Code (2013), Art. 91.

76 Iran Human Rights, *Annual Report on the Death Penalty in Iran – 2013*, (forthcoming), 18.

77 Iran Penal Code (2013), Art. 88.

78 Advisory opinion, Legal Office of the Judiciary, May 31, 2014, <http://edarehoquqy.ir/Default.aspx?tabid=4988&articleType=ArticleView&articleId=87698>

EXECUTION OF JUVENILE OFFENDERS IN 2014

According to reports, IHR has confirmed that at least 14 juvenile offenders have been executed in 2014 in Iran- the highest reported number since 1990.⁷⁹

Two of the juvenile executions in 2014 were announced by the media inside Iran. The other 12 juvenile executions were confirmed by at least two different unofficial sources, including human rights groups, witnesses or the family of the juvenile. Two of the juveniles executed in 2014 were reportedly convicted of drug trafficking,⁸⁰ while the others were convicted of murder and sentenced to “qisas” (retribution in kind).

- **Mehras Rezaei: executed by his grandfather**

Bloghnews⁸¹ reported that Mehras Rezaei was convicted of murdering his cousin when he was 17 year old.⁸² He was hanged in Jouybaran on 25 February 2014 and the execution was conducted by his grandfather according to this report.

- **Hassan Gholami: committed a murder at the age of 14**

Hassan Gholami was the other juvenile offender whose execution was announced by the media inside Iran. According to Fedaq news, Hassan was convicted of a murder when he was 14 years old. He was executed seven years later at the age of 21 in the prison of Shiraz. His family was not informed about the execution.⁸³

- **Ebrahim Hajati:
committed a murder at the age of 16⁸⁴**

Ebrahim Hajati was hanged in the Vakilabad prison of Mashhad on Sunday April 20. Ebrahim was convicted of murdering Abdollah (19) under a fight in a village outside Mashhad four years ago. At that time Ebrahim was 16 year old. He was sentenced to qisas (qesas; retribution in kind). Ebrahim's family was informed only half a day before the execution. His execution was not announced by the official Iranian media. (Picture Courtesy of Imam Ali Facebook page)



- **Jannat Mir, 15-year-old Afghan boy hanged for drug-related offences**

Jannat Mir, a 15-year-old Afghan boy, was executed for drug-related offences in April 2014. He reportedly had no access to a lawyer or consular services, raising concerns about whether fair trial standards were observed in his case and those of five other Afghans executed along with him for similar offences.⁸⁵ The executions were carried out in the prison of Isfahan in Central Iran. Jannat Mir's case was mentioned by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and in the report of the UN Secretary-General, where his age was given as 17 years old at the time of execution. However, according to Jannat Mir's family, he was 13 years old when he left Afghanistan to Iran, where he was executed two years later.

79 Amnesty International, Executions of Juveniles Since 1990, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/death-penalty/executions-of-child-offenders-since-1990>.

80 <http://iranhr.net/2014/05/afghan-juvenile-executed-in-iran-for-drug-related-charges/>

81 Local news website Bloghnews, 26 February 2014: Grandfather executed his own grandson. <http://www.bloghnews.com/vdcftmdm.w6decagiiw.html>

82 <http://iranhr.net/2014/03/execution-of-a-minor-offender-in-iran/>

83 <http://fedagh.ir/archives/7560>

84 More details on Facebook page of “Imam Ali Society”

85 <http://www.ohchr.org/FR/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=14780&LangID=F>



The Dari section of Radio Liberty (Radio Azadi)⁸⁶, reported that a 15- year-old Afghan boy identified as Jannat Mir was among the six Afghan citizens who were executed in the Dastgerd prison of Isfahan in April. According to this report, Jannat Mir and the five others executed in Isfahan were all convicted of drug-related charges. In an interview with Radio Azadi, Jannat Mir's brother, Nazok Mir, said that "Jannat Mir was a 9th grade school boy who left Afghanistan to go to Iran two years ago. He was arrested by the Iranian authorities and sentenced to death for drug-trafficking. He didn't have access to a lawyer and the Iranian authorities didn't allow the family to take the body back to Afghanistan, so they had to bury Jannat Mir in Isfahan." Jannat Mir's execution is one of the rare cases of juvenile executions for drug-related charges.

- **Juvenile offender executed together with his mother convicted of drug-related charges**

Osman Dehmardeh was according to the "Human Rights and Democracy Activists in Iran" executed together with her mother on August 9, 2014 in the prison of Zahedan. Osman was 17 at the time of his arrest. Both mother and the son had been sentenced to death for drug-related charges.

The complete list of the reported juvenile executions in 2014 in Iran is shown in Table 1 on page 33.

UPR RECOMMENDATIONS ON JUVENILE EXECUTIONS

Majority of the 39 recommendations given on the death penalty in Iran involved the death penalty to juvenile offenders. **A complete list of the recommendations is available on page 31.**

86 <http://da.azadiradio.org/content/transcript/25373245.html>

WOMEN

According to reports gathered by IHR, at least 26 women were executed in 2014 in Iran. 9 of the executions were reported by official sources. However, since more than 50% of those executed are only identified by their initials or not identified at all, there is a possibility that the number of women executed is higher than reported here.

SOME FACTS ABOUT THE WOMEN EXECUTED IN 2014

- Of 26 total executions, only 9 were announced by the authorities
- 18 were executed for drug-related charges but only 3 were announced by the authorities
- 8 were convicted of murder and sentenced to qisas but only 6 were announced by the authorities
- Two of the women were Pakistani citizens according to unofficial reports

• Farzaneh Moradi: Married at 15⁸⁷

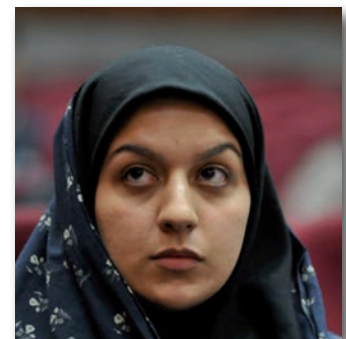


Farzaneh Moradi was convicted of murdering her husband six years ago. Initially, she confessed to the murder but later said that it was another man, identified as Saeed, who had committed the murder. However, the court didn't accept her new statement and sentenced her to death (qisas, retribution in kind). Farzaneh was married to her husband Ahmad at the age of 15, and became a mother when she was only 16. According to several reports, Farzaneh was not happy with her marriage. According to her, the man who had committed the murder had promised Farzaneh that they would live together and told her if she accepted the responsibility for the murder then she would

not be executed because she is a mother. Farzaneh was hanged in the prison of Isfahan on March 4, 2014. Her last wish was to see her daughter, whom she had not seen since her arrest six years ago. But her wish was not fulfilled. Farzaneh's lawyer, Abdolsamad Khoramshahi, told the Iranian media that he had not been informed about Farzaneh's execution. This is a violation of Iranian law.⁸⁸

• Reyhaneh Jabbari: Stubbed a man in self-defence⁸⁹

Despite massive international campaigns and calls, the 26-year-old, Reyhaneh Jabbari, was hanged on October 25, 2014. She was arrested in 2007 for the murder of Morteza Abdolali Sarbandi, a former employee of Iran's Ministry of Intelligence. Following her arrest, Reyhaneh Jabbari was held in solitary confinement for two months in Tehran's Evin Prison, where she did not have access to a lawyer or her family. Reyhaneh confessed to the murder immediately after



87 <http://iranhr.net/2014/03/farzaneh-moradi-a-26-year-young-woman-was-hanged-this-morning/>

88 Farzaneh Moradi was executed, Iranian Students' News Agency (ISNA), 4. March 2014

89 <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/oct/25/iran-reyhaneh-jabbari-executes-appeals>

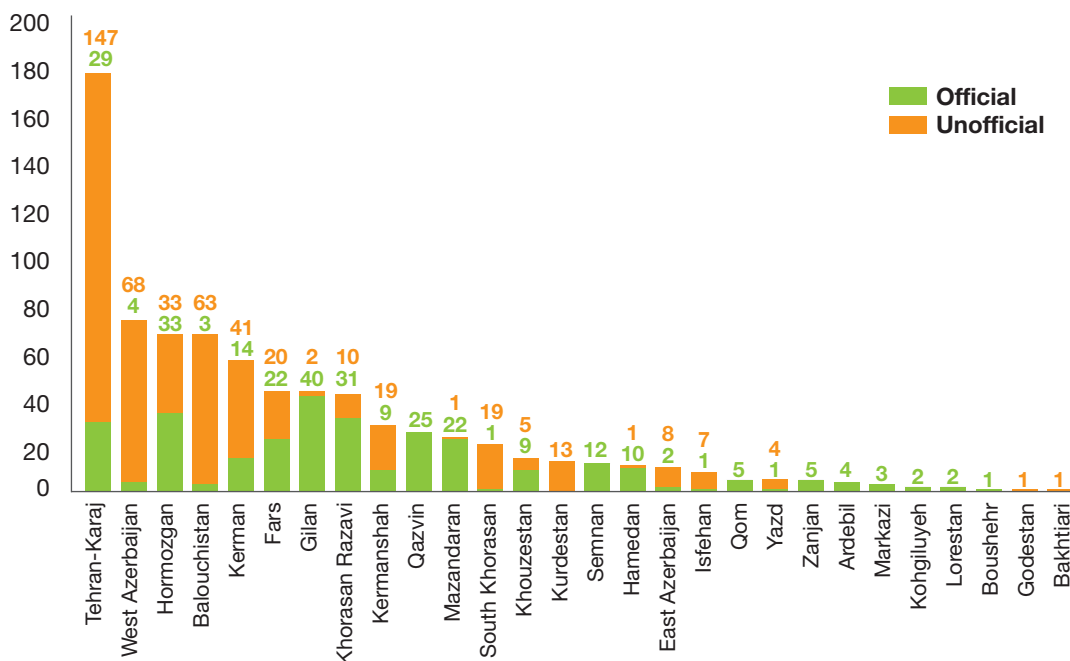
her arrest, even though she did not have a lawyer present at the time of her confession. She stated that the murder took place in self-defence. Reyhaneh Jabbari was sentenced to death under *qisas* (retribution in kind) by a criminal court in Tehran in 2009. The death sentence was upheld by the Supreme Court the same year. Reyhaneh's case has attracted much attention inside and outside Iran. Her scheduled execution was postponed twice on April 15 and September 29.

A list and details about the 29 women who were executed in 2014 are shown in Table 2, page 34.

SECRET AND UNANNOUNCED EXECUTIONS

As mentioned before only some of the executions are announced by the Iranian authorities. IHR has received reports on several hundred executions that have not been announced by the official Iranian sources. Some of these executions have been carried out secretly, without the family or the lawyer being informed, and some have simply not been announced by the official media. Only unofficial reports with sufficient amount of information have been included in this report. The actual numbers are believed to be much higher. In 2014 IHR received reports of secret or unannounced executions from 18 different prisons across the country.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF EXECUTIONS IN 2014



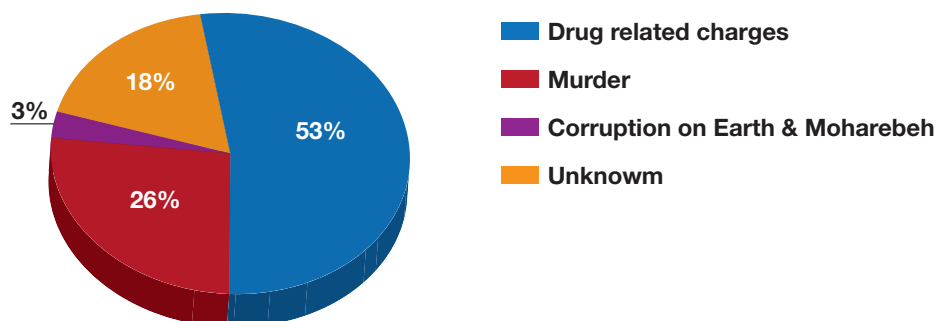
The diagram above shows the geographical distribution of the official (green) and unofficial (yellow) executions. The prisons in Tehran/Karaj area, Urmia (West Azerbaijan), Baluchistan, Kerman and Bandar Abbas (Hormozgan) were the prisons with the highest number of secret or unannounced executions. While in the prisons of Tehran/Karaj area there are prisoners from all parts of Iran, the prisoners in the Urmia and Baluchistan prisons belong mainly to the Kurdish, Azeri (Turks) and Baluchi ethnic groups.

Gilan was the province with the highest number of officially announced executions in 2014.

SOME FACTS ABOUT THE SECRET OR UNANNOUNCED EXECUTIONS IN 2014

- At least 462 (61%) executions were not announced by the official Iranian sources
- Charges for 18% of the unofficial executions were unknown
- Executions of women and foreign citizens (mainly Afghans) were mainly not announced
- Most of the juvenile executions were not announced

CHARGES OF UNOFFICIAL EXECUTIONS



The chart above shows that drug-related charges count for the majority of the secret or unannounced executions in 2014. Most of these prisoners were executed in the prisons of Urmia, Zahedan (Baluchistan), Kerman, Hormozgan, and Ghezelhesar (one of the Tehran/ Karaj prisons). Most of the executions for murder charges were carried out in the Rajaishahr prison of Karaj.

SECRET OR UNANNOUNCED EXECUTIONS IN KERMAN⁹⁰

According to reports by IHR's sources tens of prisoners have been executed during the last months of 2014 in the prison of Kerman. IHR has included 33 of the executions in the present report. The prisoners have often been executed in groups of 6-8 at a time, according to these sources. Except for one prisoners who was charged with murder, all the other prisoners had been sentenced to death for drug-related charges. No executions in the prison of Kerman has been reported by the official Iranian sources in this period. The executions have continued in 2015.⁹¹ At the present moment it is unknown when the weekly executions have started. Such executions have previously been reported in Vakilabad prison of Mashhad.⁹²



Grave stone of one of the prisoners executed on September 18, 2014, Bam Cemetery.

90 <http://iranhr.net/2014/12/secret-mass-executions-of-drug-convicts-in-kerman-prison-southeastern-iran/>

91 <http://iranhr.net/2015/01/correction-on-kerman-executions-8-people-executed-on-25-january/>

92 <http://iranhr.net/2013/02/mass-executions-vakilabad-minor-executed/>



ANNEX 1 :

UPR RECOMMENDATIONS TO IRAN ON THE DEATH PENALTY

1. Accede to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights aimed at the abolition of the death penalty (Benin) / Ratify the ICCPR-OP2 (Portugal);
2. Amend the Penal Code to exclude drug-trafficking related crimes from those punished by the death penalty (Spain);
3. Consider the cases of all prisoners condemned to death with a view to commuting their sentences and respect their right to challenge the legality of the detention before a tribunal in compliance with international law (Switzerland);
4. Revise the Islamic Penal Code to ensure consistency with its international obligations, including article 6 of the ICCPR, so that the death penalty is reserved for most serious crimes, never imposed for crimes committed by persons below eighteen years of age, and never imposed arbitrarily (Canada);
5. Abolish the death penalty (Luxembourg);
6. Consider abolishing the death penalty and ratifying the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court at its earliest convenience (Cyprus);
7. Amend all laws and practices to ensure that no person under the age of 18 at the time of the crime can be sentenced to death (Belgium);
8. Establish a formal moratorium on the death penalty, and in particular cease all planned execution of juvenile offenders and prohibit the imposition of the death penalty for crimes committed by minors (Australia);
9. Immediately declare an official moratorium on executions, particularly for minors at the time of the crime (Belgium);
10. Abolish the death penalty at least for juvenile perpetrators (Czech Republic);
11. Put a complete moratorium on the use of the death penalty and, short of such a decision, prohibit the death penalty for juvenile offenders and abandon the practice of public executions (Hungary);
12. Outlaw the death penalty for persons convicted of crimes committed before the age of 18, without exception, and implement a moratorium on all executions (Iceland);
13. Establish a moratorium on executions with a view to abolishing the death penalty, and guarantee that no individual under the age of 18 at the time of their alleged crime is sentenced to death, in line with its obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Ireland);
14. Ban executions of juvenile offenders, while at the same time providing for alternative punishments in line with the new Iranian Penal Code (Italy);
15. Establish a moratorium on the use of the death penalty with a view to its abolition and commute all death sentences for persons under the age of 18 (Lithuania);
16. As a first step, end the executions of minors, in accordance with the commitment made by Iran under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as well as the Convention on the Rights to the Child (Luxembourg);
17. Take immediate measures to abolish the death penalty for crimes committed by persons when they were under the age of 18, and place a moratorium on public executions (Norway);

ANNEX 1 (CONTINUED) :

UPR RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE DEATH PENALTY

18. Abolish the death penalty for those under 18 (Paraguay);
19. Prohibit the application of the death penalty to minors at the time of the offense (Spain);
20. Issue an immediate moratorium on the use of death penalty for juveniles and for crimes that do not meet the most serious crimes standards under international law (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);
21. Urgently establish a moratorium on the use of death penalty (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia);
22. Take all the necessary measures to establish a moratorium on the death penalty as a first step towards its total abolition (Uruguay);
23. Consider establishing a formal moratorium on executions of persons condemned to death and examine the possibility of abolishing the death penalty (Argentina);
24. Establish an official moratorium on executions, in particular executions of juvenile offenders who were under the age of 18 at the time of the alleged crime, with a view to reviewing all cases of juvenile prisoners on death row (Austria);
25. Pronounce a moratorium on the use of the death penalty with a view to its prompt abolition (Costa Rica);
26. Extend a moratorium on the death penalty and abolish the death penalty; and ratify the Second Optional Protocol to ICCPR (Estonia);
27. Cease executions and establish a moratorium with a view to abolishing the death penalty (France);
28. Announce a moratorium on the death penalty with a view to its eventual abolition. Pending this, take urgent steps to reduce its application, in line with international minimum standards (Germany);
29. Consider introducing a moratorium on the death penalty, with a view to its abolition, in particular for drug related offences and other crimes that cannot be labelled as “most serious” ones according to international standards (Italy);
30. Consider a moratorium on the death penalty with a view to abolishing it (Latvia);
31. Establish an immediate moratorium on the use of the death penalty with a view to abolishing it (Montenegro);
32. Introduce a moratorium on the death penalty with a view to abolishing it (Poland);
33. Commute the sentences of persons sentenced to death and establish a moratorium on executions as a first step towards abolition of the death penalty (Portugal);
34. Immediately end all public executions (Germany);
35. Eliminate stoning as a form of punishment (Paraguay);
36. Abolish stoning as a form of capital punishment and consider abolishing “apostasy” as a capital offence (Slovakia);
37. Abolish the continued use of death penalty, stoning and retribution for murder (Slovenia);
38. Stop all executions (Israel);
39. Increase the legal measures aimed at guaranteeing due process and the impartiality in the administration of justice, including the independence of judges and the Bar Association, paying special attention to the recommendations concerning the death penalty formulated by the Human Rights Committee, especially in relation to juvenile offenders (Chile).



ANNEX 2: LIST OF THE REPORTED JUVENILE EXECUTIONS

Nr.	Name	Date of execution d/m/y	Place of execution (prison)	Age at the time of execution	Age at the time of committing the offence	Source	Confirmation status and Charge
1	Meysam Chanbari	2/19/2014	Rajaishahr prison	26	minor	HRDAI ¹	Not Confirmed-Murder
2	Shahriar Mozaffari	2/19/2014	Rajaishahr prison	-	Conflicting reports	HRDAI	Not Confirmed-Murder
3	Reza Ganjlou	2/26/2014	Rajaishahr prison	20	16	HRDAI	Not Confirmed-Murder
4	Mehras Rezayi	2/26/2014	Mazandaran-Joybar	21	17	Official-Bloghnews	Murder
5	Hasan Zolfaqari	3/02/2014	Baluchistan-Zahedan	23	17	HRDAI	Murder
6	Hasan Gholami	3/12/2014	Fars- Shiraz	21	14	Official-Fedaqnews	Murder
7	Ahmad Rahimi	4/16/2014	Bandar Abbas	21	17	HRO-Kurd ²	Murder
8	Ali Fouladi	4/16/2014	Bandar Abbas	22	16	HRO-Kurd	Murder
9	Ali Sharifi	4/16/2014	Bandar abbas	29	14	HRO-Kurd	Not Confirmed-Murder
10	Jannat Mir	4/17/2014	Isfahan	15		IHR ³	Drug Trafficking
11	Ebrahim Hajati	4/20/2014	Mashhad	20	16	Imam Ali group	Murder
12	Amir Sarhayi	6/10/2014	Tabriz	24	17	Iran Global	Murder
13	Osman Dahmarde	8/9/2014	Zahedan	19	17	HRDAI	Drug Trafficking
14	Mohsen Sarani	8/13/2014	Birjand	22	18	HRANA ⁴	Murder
15	Hadi Veisi (Palani)	8/25/2014	Kermanshah	20	17	Kurdpa	Murder
16	Fardin Jafarian	10/18/2014	Tabriz	18	14.5	HRANA	Murder
17	Rahim Noorollahzade	11/25/2014	Tabriz	Minor	14	CDCPP ⁵	Murder

1 Human Rights and Democracy Activists in Iran
2 Human Rights Organization of Kurdistan, hro-kurd.net
3 Iran Human Rights
4 Human Rights Activists News Agency
5 Campaign in Defence of Civil and Political Prisoners

ANNEX 3: LIST OF WOMEN EXECUTED IN 2014

Nr.	Name	Date of execution d/m/y	Place of execution	Charge	Source	Comments
1	M. Sh.	1/26/2014	Lorestan-Delfan	Drug Trafficking	Arsh News	Official
2	Farzaneh Moradi/ Raziye M.	03/04/2014	Isfahan	Murder	Asre Iran	Official
3	Behjat. ?	05/10/2014	Alborz-Karaj	Murder	HRANA ¹	
4	Amene Tousan	5/22/2014	West Azerbaijan-Urmia	Drug trafficking	Kurdpa	
5	Golchin Nouri	5/22/2014	West Azerbaijan-Urmia	Drug trafficking	Kurdpa	Murder
6	S. T.	5/28/2014	Mazandaran-Amol	Murder	Fars News	Official
7	Unknown	7/20/2014	Khorasan S-Birjand	Drug trafficking	HRANA	
8	Unknown	7/20/2014	Khorasan S-Birjand	Drug trafficking		Murder
9	Unknown	7/20/2014	Khorasan S-Birjand	Drug trafficking		Murder
10	Unknown	7/20/2014	Khorasan S-Birjand	Drug trafficking		Murder
11	Unknown	08/09/2014	Baluchestan-Zahedan	Drug trafficking	HRDAI ²	
12	R. K.	8/14/2014	Mazandaran- Qaemshahr	Murder	Tabari News	
13	Unknown	8/23/2014	Baluchestan-Zahedan	Drug trafficking		
14	Unknown	8/26/2014	Kerman	Drug trafficking		
15	Unknown	09/10/2014	Alborz-Karaj- Rajai shahr	Murder	Javan online	Official
16	H. S.	09/11/2014	Gilan- Rasht	Drug Trafficking	IRIB ³	Official
17	Unknown	9/20/2014	Baluchistan-Zahedan	Drug trafficking	HRANA	
18	Unknown	9/20/2014	Baluchistan- Zahedan	Drug trafficking	HRANA	
19	Reyhane Jabari	10/25/2014	Alborz-Karaj- Rajai shahr	Murder	ISNA-Jam news	Official
20	Marziye Ostovari	12/01/2014	West Azerbaijan-Urmia	Drug trafficking		
21	Akram Hosseini	12/02/2014	Alborz-Karaj- Qezelhesar	Drug trafficking	HRANA	
22	F. Gh.	12/10/2014	Qazvin	Drug Trafficking	Bartarin ha	Official
23	Nahid Ghiasvand	12/16/2014	West Azerbaijan-Urmia	Drug Trafficking	Kurdpa ⁴	
24	Unknown	12/17/2014	Alborz-Karaj- Rajai shahr	Murder	IHR ⁵	
25	Nahid	12/25/2014	Alborz-Karaj	Murder	Javan Online	
26	Unknown	12/27/2014	Sistan and Baluchestan-Zahedan	Drug trafficking	HRDAI	Executed together with her son Osman Dehmardeh

- 1 Human Rights Activists News Agency
2 Human Rights and Democracy Activists in Iran
3 Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting
4 Kurdistan Press Agency
5 Iran Human Rights

IRAN HUMAN RIGHTS

IRAN HUMAN RIGHTS

Iran Human Rights (IHR) is a non-profit, politically independent organization with members and supporters inside and outside Iran. The organization started its work in 2005 and is since 2009 registered as an international non-governmental organization based in Oslo, Norway. Promotion of abolition of the death penalty in Iran has been the core of IHR's activities. Monitoring, reporting, advocacy and empowerment are IHR's main instruments in the struggle against human rights violations in general and death penalty in particular. IHR has a broad network inside Iran and its reports on the death penalty are points of reference in international documents.

IHR has been a member of the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty (WCADP) since 2009, and an elected member of this coalition since 2011.

Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam is the co-founder and international spokesperson of IHR.

ENSEMBLE CONTRE LA PEINE DE MORT

Ensemble contre la peine de mort

Since 2000, Together against the Death Penalty (Ensemble contre la peine de mort - ECPM) acts to fight against the death penalty around the world. The association promotes the universal abolition through the creation and dissemination of publications and teaching tools, as part of public campaigns and it lobbies governments at both national and international levels.

ECPM has definitely cemented its credibility as a unifying international abolitionist force: the 4th World Congress against the Death Penalty in Geneva in 2010 (after Strasbourg 2001, Montreal 2004, Paris 2007, Madrid 2013) organized by ECPM, was exceptional in terms of State representation, participation of retentionist countries and involvement of the public and the media.



*Ensemble
contre
la peine
de mort*

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