

URGENT ACTION

IRANIAN KURD FACING IMMINENT EXECUTION

Ramin Hossein Panahi, from Iran's Kurdish minority, was moved to Raja'i Shahr prison in Karaj, Alborz Province, on 13 August in preparation for his execution. He started a hunger strike on 26 August, after which he was immediately removed from the prison's general ward. He has not been heard from since. He is at imminent risk of execution.

On 13 August, Iranian Kurd **Ramin Hossein Panahi** was transferred from Sanandaj Central Prison, Kurdistan Province, to Raja'i Shahr prison in Karaj, Alborz Province, without any prior notice being given to him, his family, or lawyers. The Office for the Implementation of Sentences in Sanandaj prison has told his lawyers that he was taken to Raja'i Shahr prison in preparation for his execution. For the first week following his transfer, he was allowed contact with his family but has since been barred from any contact with them. He has been denied all contact with his lawyers. On 26 August, he sewed his lips together and started a hunger strike in protest at his death sentence and ill-treatment in prison, including the denial of specialized medical care for both his kidney problems and the injuries he sustained from being shot at the time of his arrest. Immediately after the start of his hunger strike, the prison authorities removed him from the prison's general ward and he has not been heard from since.

Ramin Hossein Panahi was arrested on 23 June 2017 and forcibly disappeared for four months. He has said that, during this time, Ministry of Intelligence and Revolutionary Guards officials tortured him, including through beating him with cables, kicking and punching him in the stomach and hitting his head against a wall. He was sentenced to death after an unfair trial on 16 January 2018 that lasted less than an hour. His family told Amnesty International that he appeared before the Revolutionary Court in Sanandaj with torture marks on his body, but that the court failed to order an investigation into his claims that he had been forced to make a "confession" under torture. The court convicted and sentenced him to death for "taking up arms against the state" (*baqi*) merely based on his membership of the banned Kurdish opposition group Komala. Between his arrest and trial, he was allowed only one brief meeting with one of his lawyers, which took place in the presence of intelligence officials. The Supreme Court upheld the conviction and death sentence in March 2018. His lawyers have made a second application for a judicial review of his case after their first request was rejected.

Please write immediately in English, Persian, or your own language calling on the Iranian authorities to:

- Immediately halt plans to execute Ramin Hossein Panahi, quash his conviction and death sentence, and ensure he is released unless there is sufficient evidence not obtained through torture or other ill-treatment to charge him with an internationally recognizable criminal offence and grant him a fair trial, without recourse to the death penalty;
- Immediately reveal his fate and whereabouts and allow him regular access to his family and lawyers;
- Ensure that he has access to adequate specialized medical care and to a qualified health professional who can provide health care in compliance with medical ethics;
- Ensure Ramin Hossein Panahi is protected from torture and other ill-treatment, and order a prompt, independent, effective, and impartial investigation into his allegations of torture and other ill-treatment, bringing to justice anyone found responsible in fair trials and without recourse to the death penalty;
- Establish an official moratorium on executions with a view to abolishing the death penalty.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 10 SEPTEMBER 2018 TO:

Head of the Judiciary
Ayatollah Sadeghi Larijani
c/o Public Relations Office
Number 4, Dead end of 1 Azizi
Above Pasteur Intersection
Vali Asr Street, Tehran, Iran
Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of Raja'i Shahr prison
Gholamreza Ziyaei
Raja'i Shahr prison
Moazzen Boulevard
Karaj, Alborz province, Iran
Salutation: Dear Sir

And copies to:
High Council for Human Rights
Mohammad Javad Larijani
Esfandiar Boulevard, Niayesh
Intersection, Vali Asr Avenue
Tehran, Iran

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. H.E. Hamid Baeidinejad, Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 16 Princes Gate London SW7 1PT, Tel: 02072254208 or 02072254209 Email: iranconsulate.lon@mfa.gov.ir **Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.** This is the fourth update of UA 171/17. Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/8457/2018/en/

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Article 287 of the Islamic Penal Code states: “Any group that takes up arms against the foundations of the Islamic Republic of Iran is considered *bagi* and in the event of resorting to the use of arms, its members shall be sentenced to death.” However, Article 288 notes that, if members of the group are arrested before using arms, they shall be sentenced to imprisonment. The circumstances around Ramin Hossein Panahi’s arrest are unclear to Amnesty International. Komala initially issued a statement noting that he and three other Komala members had engaged in an armed clash with the Revolutionary Guards in the neighbourhood of Shalman in Sanandaj. Komala is an armed Kurdish opposition group which has been engaged in armed activities against the Islamic Republic of Iran since the 1980s. During the incident, Ramin Hossein Panahi was severely injured and the other three men were shot dead. However, Ramin Hossein Panahi and his lawyer have since claimed that shots were only fired by the Revolutionary Guards. This claim is supported by a report published on 17 July 2017 by Akam News, a media outlet affiliated with the Ministry of Intelligence, which stated that the Revolutionary Guards ambushed the men and opened fire on them, and that the men were not able to fire any shots back. In an official statement issued on 23 June 2017, the Revolutionary Guards said that they had not suffered any casualties in the incident. During Ramin Hossein Panahi’s trial, no evidence was provided linking him to activities involving intentional killing, which is the required threshold defining the “most serious crimes” to which the use of the death penalty must be restricted under international law.

Ramin Hossein Panahi was held in solitary confinement in detention centres run by the Revolutionary Guards and Ministry of Intelligence from his arrest on 23 June 2017 until 9 January 2018, when he was transferred to Sanandaj Central Prison. During the months in which he was forcibly disappeared, his elderly parents reported making strenuous efforts to locate him by visiting various government offices in the cities of Sanandaj and Qorveh, and the village of Dehgolan, all in Kurdistan Province, but said that officials refused to disclose his fate or whereabouts. Instead, officials threatened and insulted them, describing their son as a “terrorist”. On 31 October 2017, the Ministry of Intelligence in Sanandaj contacted Ramin Hossein Panahi’s mother and instructed her to go to the Sanandaj bus terminal. From there, Ministry of Intelligence officials took her to an undisclosed location to meet with her son. His mother said that the intelligence officials initially wanted to take photos and videos of the family visit but removed the cameras after Ramin Hossein Panahi objected. His family has also reported that, on several occasions, Ministry of Intelligence officials visited him in prison and said that his death sentence would be commuted to imprisonment if he agreed to make televised “confessions” denouncing Kurdish opposition groups as “terrorists”.

Hours after Ramin Hossein Panahi’s arrest on 23 June 2017, the Revolutionary Guards stormed his parents’ house and arrested his brother, Afshin Hossein Panahi. They raided the house again on 24 June 2017 and arrested three other members of his family: Ahmad Hossein Panahi (his brother-in-law); Zobeyr Hossein Panahi (a distant relative); and Anvar Hossein Panahi (a cousin). Information received by Amnesty International suggests that none of these men had any involvement with the armed clashes and were instead arrested as a form of retribution. In October 2017, Afshin Hossein Panahi was sentenced to eight and a half years in prison, which he is currently serving in Sanandaj Central Prison. Ahmad Hossein Panahi and Zobeyr Hossein Panahi were sentenced to five and six years in prison respectively. They were all convicted of national security offences connected to their involvement with Komala. On 1 May 2018, Ahmad Hossein Panahi was arrested to begin serving his sentence. Zobeyr Hossein Panahi has not yet been summoned to begin serving his sentence.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases without exception, regardless of the nature of the crime, the characteristics of the offender, or the method used by the state to kill the prisoner. The death penalty is a violation of the right to life and the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment.

Name: Ramin Hossein Panahi
Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 171/17 Index: MDE 13/9004/2018 Issue Date: 29 August 2018