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First UA: 53/23 Index: MDE 13/6829/2023 Iran of May 25, 2023

## **IRAN**

### **YOUTH JAILED AT 17 TO BE EXECUTED IN LESS THAN 72 HOURS**

Hossein Shahbazi, 22, is at risk of imminent execution in relation to a crime that took place when he was just 17 years old. His trial was grossly unfair, and his torture-tainted “confessions” were used to convict him.

Iranian authorities have scheduled his execution for Sunday 28 May, in violation of the absolute prohibition on the use of the death penalty against people who were children at the time of the offence for which they have been convicted.

#### **Write to the Head of judiciary urging him to:**

- Immediately halt the scheduled execution of Hossein Shahbazi, quash both his conviction and death sentence, and grant him a fair retrial in full compliance with international law and the principles of juvenile justice, excluding coerced “confessions”, and without resorting to the death penalty.
- Protect him from further torture and other ill-treatment and investigate his torture allegations, bringing anyone found responsible to justice in fair trials without resort to the death penalty.
- Immediately establish an official moratorium on all executions and completely abolish the use of the death penalty against persons who were under the age of 18 at the time of the crime, in line with Iran’s obligations under international law, pending full abolition of the death penalty.

#### **Write to:**

Head of judiciary, Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei  
c/o Embassy of Iran to the European Union,  
Avenue Franklin Roosevelt No. 15, 1050 Bruxelles,  
Belgium

Salutation: Dear Mr Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei,

*You could also reach Iran’s Supreme Leader on Twitter using the handle @khamenei\_ir*

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

After Hossein Shahbazi was arrested and detained for 11 days by the Agahi in Shiraz, he was transferred to a child detention facility but still denied access to his family for several days, after which his mother was allowed to visit him. According to sources with knowledge of his case, during this visit, he had bruises on his face and appeared to have lost weight. He is currently imprisoned in Adelabad prison in Shiraz.

Iran’s criminal justice system facilitates the violation of the right to life, perpetuates a cycle of violence and seeks to place the responsibility for state-sanctioned killings of human beings on those who have lost their next of kin to murder. Under Iran’s laws, qesas (retribution-in-kind) is a system of equivalent

retaliation which involves subjecting those convicted of murder to the same fate as that suffered by the victim of murder - that is death. The law grants this power to the family of the murder victim who may demand and carry out the killing of the defendant or grant pardon in exchange for “blood money” (diyah).

In death penalty cases involving persons convicted of crimes taking place when they were children and based on qesas, including the case of Hossein Shahbazi, the Iranian authorities frequently mislead the public and the international community by claiming that the final decision on carrying out or halting the execution is out of their hands and that all they can do is to mediate and encourage the family of the victim to grant pardon in exchange for “blood money” (diyah).

Amnesty International emphasizes that these claims are dishonest and reflect a fundamental lack of respect for children’s rights by the Iranian authorities. Iranian courts sentence individuals to death for crimes that took place when they were children, in flagrant violation of international law, and Iranian courts subsequently reject repeated requests to commute these death sentences.

The absolute prohibition on the use of the death penalty against persons who were under the age of 18 at the time of the crime for which they have been convicted is provided in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, both of which Iran has ratified. It is also recognized as a peremptory norm of customary international law, which means it is accepted and recognized by the international community of states as a norm which is binding on all states and from which no derogation is permitted.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases without exception, regardless of the nature or the circumstances of the crime; guilt, innocence or other characteristics of the individual; or the method used by the state to carry out the execution.