



Urgent Action Office 3-1992 Yonge Street Toronto ON M4S 1Z7 Phone: (416) 363-9933 Fax: (416) 363-3103 urgentaction@amnesty.ca
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IRAN

PROTESTOR AT RISK OF IMMINENT EXECUTION

Mojahed (Abbas) Kourkouri is at grave risk of execution in relation to nationwide protests. In early April 2023, Iran's judiciary announced that a Revolutionary Court in Ahvaz had sentenced Mojahed to death for "enmity against God" (moharebeh), "corruption on earth" (efsad-e fel arz) and "armed rebellion against the state" (baghi). His grossly unfair sham trial was marred by torture-tainted "confessions" obtained while he was subjected to enforced disappearance.

Write to the Head of Judiciary urging the Iranian government to:

- Immediately quash the conviction and death sentence against Mojahed (Abbas) Kourkouri. If charged with a recognizable criminal offence, proceedings must meet international fair trial standards without recourse to the death penalty and exclude coerced "confessions".
- Grant him access to his family, independently chosen lawyer, and adequate medical care.
- Protect him from further torture and other ill-treatment and investigate torture allegations, bringing anyone found responsible to justice in fair trials.
- Ensure that Mojahed's sister, Negar Kourkouri, who was arbitrarily detained for campaigning on his behalf, must be released immediately.
- Grant independent observers access to capital trials connected to protests and immediately establish an official moratorium on executions with a view of abolishing 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

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

According to information received by Amnesty International, Mojahed Kourkouri was not at the protests taking place in Izeh on November 16, 2022. Relatives of Kian PIRFALAK, the nine-year-old child fatally shot by security officials that day, have also repeatedly stated publicly that Mojahed Kourkouri was not involved in the killing of their loved-one; and have repeatedly and publicly attributed responsibility to Iran's security forces.

Amnesty International previously documented how plainclothes security officials fatally shot Kian PIRFALAK with live ammunition during protests in Izeh, Khuzestan province, on November 16, 2022. Security forces fired toward the car in which Kian PIRFALAK was travelling with his family. During Kian PIRFALAK's funeral service on November 18, 2022, his mother, Mahmonir (Zeinab) MOLAIE RAD, publicly described the details of the fatal incident and said: "Hear it from me about how the shooting happened so they [the authorities] can't say it was by 'terrorists', because they are lying."

Mahmonir Molaierad described that they were on their way to their house in Izeh when they reached an intersection where large numbers of riot police and plainclothes officials were stationed. She said an official ordered them to stop and turn around after they passed the security forces. Kian Pirfalak's father, who was driving, heeded the order, but suddenly several plainclothes officials opened fire at the car.

As a result, Kian Pirfalak sustained fatal gunshot wounds and his father was severely injured. Mahmonir Molaierad said that amid the shootings, she opened the front passenger's car door, loudly alerted the officials that her children were in the car and asked them to stop. Three of the plainclothes officials responsible for the shootings then walked to the family, removed Kian Pirfalak's wounded body from the car and took him into a nearby building. Mahmonir Molaierad said, "I don't know why [the officials shot at us] ...They bombarded the car with bullets...I told the kids to hide under the seats. My younger child hid under the car's dashboard, but Kian was chubby and didn't go under the seat."

The death of Kian Pirfalak sparked an outpouring of rage and solidarity both in Iran and globally, particularly after a video went viral that showed him opening a school presentation with the words "in name of a God of Rainbow" and then testing a boat made up of ice cream sticks.

The same evening Kian Pirfalak was fatally shot, state officials including Valiollah Hayati, the Deputy Governor of Khuzestan Province for Law Enforcement and Security Affairs, claimed that "terrorist agents" were responsible for the incident. After Mojajed Kourkouri was named in Iranian state media as having been arrested in relation to Kian Pirfalak's killing in late December 2022, the family of Kian Pirfalak publicly denied his involvement.

Amnesty International has documented a pattern of the Iranian authorities systematically covering-up and concealing their crimes and denying responsibility for the unlawful killings of children perpetrated by its security forces. They instead propagated narratives claiming that children were killed by "terrorists" or "rioters" or that their deaths were not connected to protests, but rather a result of suicides or accidents.

According to Amnesty International's investigations, on November 16, 2022, in addition to Kian Pirfalak, security forces also fatally shot and killed with live ammunition at least three other children: Sepehr Maghsoudi and Artin Rahmani in Izeh, and Danial Pabandi in Saqqez, Kurdistan province.

In late April 2023, Mojahed Kourkouri's independently chosen lawyer learned that he was being held in Sheiban prison in Ahvaz, Khuzestan province, and was permitted to very briefly visit him. According to information received by Amnesty International, Mojahed Kourkouri has not been permitted family visits since his arrest.

Since late April 2023, the Iranian authorities have embarked on an alarming execution spree of scores of people, intensifying their use the death penalty as a tool of repression in an attempt to instill fear into the population and crush ongoing acts of resistance against the authorities and establishment. To date, Iranian authorities have arbitrarily executed seven people in relation to the popular uprising, including five individuals in 2023.