

# ANNUAL REPORT ON THE DEATH PENALTY IN IRAN 2012



*Ensemble  
contre  
la peine  
de mort*

Iran Human Rights

[www.abolition.fr](http://www.abolition.fr)

[www.iranhr.net](http://www.iranhr.net)

---

*The organizations Iran Human Rights (IHR) and Together against the death penalty (Ensemble contre la peine de mort - ECPM) collaborate since 2011 for the international release and dissemination of the annual report on the death penalty in Iran.*

---

## INTRODUCTION

The fifth annual report of Iran Human Rights (IHR) on the death penalty in Iran is an assessment of how the death penalty was used in 2012. Due to harsh crackdowns on civil society, non-existing freedom of press and lack of transparency of the Iranian judicial system, the present report by no means covers all death penalty cases in Iran. The report is the result of efforts by human rights defenders, members and affiliates of IHR in Iran who, on some occasions, took serious risks to help provide a more accurate picture of the death penalty than the official channels do.

The number of executions in 2012 in Iran is among the highest in more than 15 years. Besides the confirmed numbers, it is believed there is a large number of unannounced executions.

---

### ANNUAL 2012 REPORT AT A GLANCE

- At least **580** people were executed in 2012 in Iran.
- 294 cases (**51%**) were reported by official Iranian sources.
- 286 cases included in the annual numbers were reported by unofficial sources.
- Only **85** out of the estimated **325** secret executions carried out in Vakilabad Prison in 2012 are included in the present report.
- At least **76%** of executions included in this report were due to drug related charges.
- **60** executions were carried out in public in 2012. **46%** of all public executions were carried out in the province of Fars (southern Iran).
- **One third** (20) of those executed in public were convicted of drug-related charges.
- At least **27** Afghan citizens and one Pakistani citizen were executed in 2012.
- At least **9** women were executed in 2012.
- IHR has received reports of **secret** or '**un-announced**' executions in more than **15 different Iranian prisons**.

---

*The Annual Report on the Death Penalty in Iran – 2012* is being published at a time when Iranian society heads toward an uncertain future. Socio-economic conditions worsen each day, and in June 2013 another round of Presidential elections will commence in Iran. Keeping in mind the 2009 post-election protests in Iran and the Arab Spring in 2010 and 2011, Iranian authorities are well aware that the outcome of new protests in June 2013 may be even worse than the protests in 2009. They are therefore doing the maximum to prevent new protests. Spreading fear through society is the Iranian authorities' main oppressive strategy, and the death penalty is their most important instrument to do so.

Since the protests in 2009, the number of executions, particularly public executions, has risen dramatically. Public executions in 2012 were more than six times higher than numbers from 2009. The trend continues in 2013. Just in January and February 2013 alone, 20 people

were hanged in public. Other demonstrations of horror were carried out in 2013, including the Taliban-style public hanging of a young man in a football (soccer) stadium in Sabzevar<sup>1</sup>, the public executions of two young men, who were convicted of mugging charges<sup>2</sup>, and the public amputation of a man's fingers in Shiraz<sup>3</sup>.

Secret executions in Vakilabad Prison in Mashhad (northeastern Iran) have resumed. Since October 2012, IHR has received reports of weekly executions in Vakilabad Prison, where probably several hundred prisoners have been executed so far. IHR has included only a small portion of those executions in this report; only those that have been confirmed by at least two independent sources. IHR and ECPM characterize mass executions in Vakilabad Prison as a massacre and have urged the United Nations to send a fact-finding mission to Iran to investigate these executions<sup>4</sup>. There are also reports of unannounced executions in several other Iranian prisons, such as Rajai Shahr Prison in Karaj. Death row prisoners in this prison live under the constant fear of execution<sup>5</sup>.

Drug-related charges still account for the majority of executions in Iran, and most prisoners executed on drug-related charges are unidentified. These prisoners do not receive coverage from international media, campaigns do not exist to help save their lives, and their executions do not typically lead to international attention. However, in 2012, victims of the Iranian regime's 'war on drugs'-- which is supported by UNODC<sup>6</sup>--were finally given a face. Saeed Sedighi, a young man tortured to confess to drug trafficking, was sentenced to death after an unfair trial and executed in October 2012. His execution was postponed for one week due to an international campaign initiated by several human rights organizations<sup>7</sup> as IHR and ECPM, statements issued by UN Special Rapporteurs<sup>8</sup>, and reactions from the international community. Many death row prisoners in Iran are treated in a similar manner. They are subjected to torture, coerced confessions, unfair trials, and their cases do not receive appropriate attention.

IHR and ECPM along with other human rights groups have urged the UNODC to halt all fundings to Iran as long as prisoners, convicted of drug-related charges, are facing the death penalty. IHR and ECPM are also concerned about death row prisoners from ethnic regions in Iran, especially the Arab, Baluchi, and Kurdish prisoners who remain at imminent danger of execution. In 2012 four imprisoned Ahwazi Arab activists were executed and death sentences for five more (Mohammad Ali Amourinejad, Hashem Shabani, Hadi Rashedi, Mokhtar Alboshoka and Jaber Alboshoka) Ahwazi Arab activists, charged with "Moharebeh", were upheld by the Iranian Supreme Court. Six Salafist Kurdish prisoners were executed in December 2012 in Tehran and more are awaiting on death row. Zanyar and Loghman Moradi, two Kurdish death row prisoners continue to be at imminent danger of execution. Less information is available regarding Baluchi death row prisoners, but according to IHR reports, many Baluchi prisoners have been executed in other Iranian prisons outside Baluchistan.

As the June Presidential election nears, we fear an increase in the number of executions, particularly in the ethnic regions of Iran. Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam, the international spokesperson for IHR, says: "We urge the international community to pay more attention to Iran in the coming months as we expect an increase in the number of executions. There are also several prisoners of conscience who are at imminent danger of execution." He continues: "We urge the United Nations to impose a ban on public executions, which besides being a dehumanizing punishment, also brutalizes the general public; particularly children."

1 <http://iranhr.net/spip.php?article2680>

2 <http://iranhr.net/spip.php?article2686>

3 <http://iranhr.net/spip.php?article2695>

4 <http://iranhr.net/spip.php?article2707>

5 <http://iranhr.net/spip.php?article2709>

6 <http://www.ihra.net/contents/1215>

7 <http://justiceforiran.org/call-for-action/whereabouts/?lang=en>

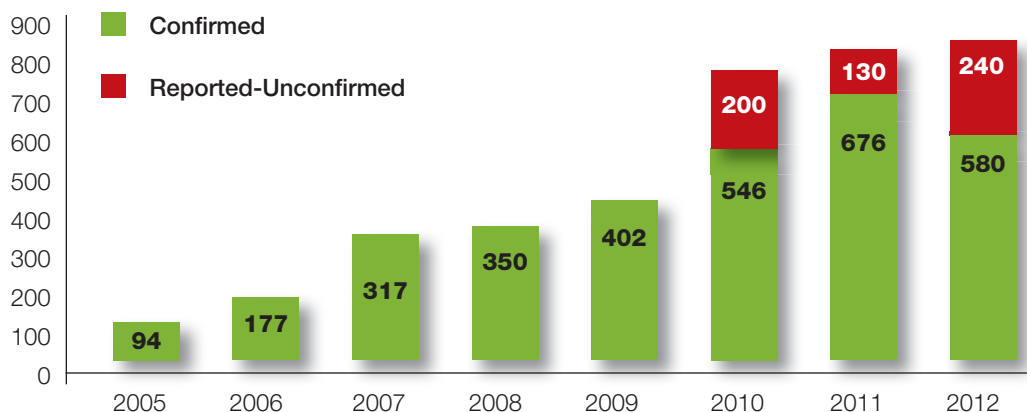
8 <http://www.shaheedoniran.org/english/english/dr-shaheeds-work/press-releases/3080-iran-un-special-rapporteurs-call-for-the-immediate-halt-of-executions-including-eleven-scheduled-for-tomorrow.html>

## SOURCES

More than 50% of execution cases included in this report are based on information released by official Iranian sources. These sources include official websites of the Iranian Judiciary, the national Iranian broadcasting network, and official or state-run news agencies and newspapers. 49% of execution cases in this report are based on information released by other human rights NGOs or IHR's sources inside Iran<sup>9</sup>. These sources include eye-witnesses, family members, lawyers, and sources within the prisons and the Iranian Judiciary. IHR has only included unofficial sources which were confirmed by two independent sources-- these cases are called 'unofficial' or 'unannounced' executions. This report does not include people killed in prisons as a result of maltreatment or torture, like the blogger Sattar Beheshti<sup>10</sup> Furthermore the report does not include people who work as porters (Kolbaran) and 'Kasebkaran', who are often killed by Iranian authorities' security forces near the Western or Eastern borders of Iran. According to reports, at least 98 porters (Kolbar) have been killed by Iranian security forces between March 2011 and June 2012<sup>11</sup> in the Iranian province of Kurdistan alone.

## ANNUAL EXECUTIONS IN THE LAST 8 YEARS

Sources: Amnesty International (2005-2007) and Iran Human Rights (2009-2012):



The diagram above shows the number of annual executions in Iran since 2005. The numbers are based on annual reports by Amnesty International (AI; 2005-2007) and Iran Human Rights (IHR; 2008-2012).

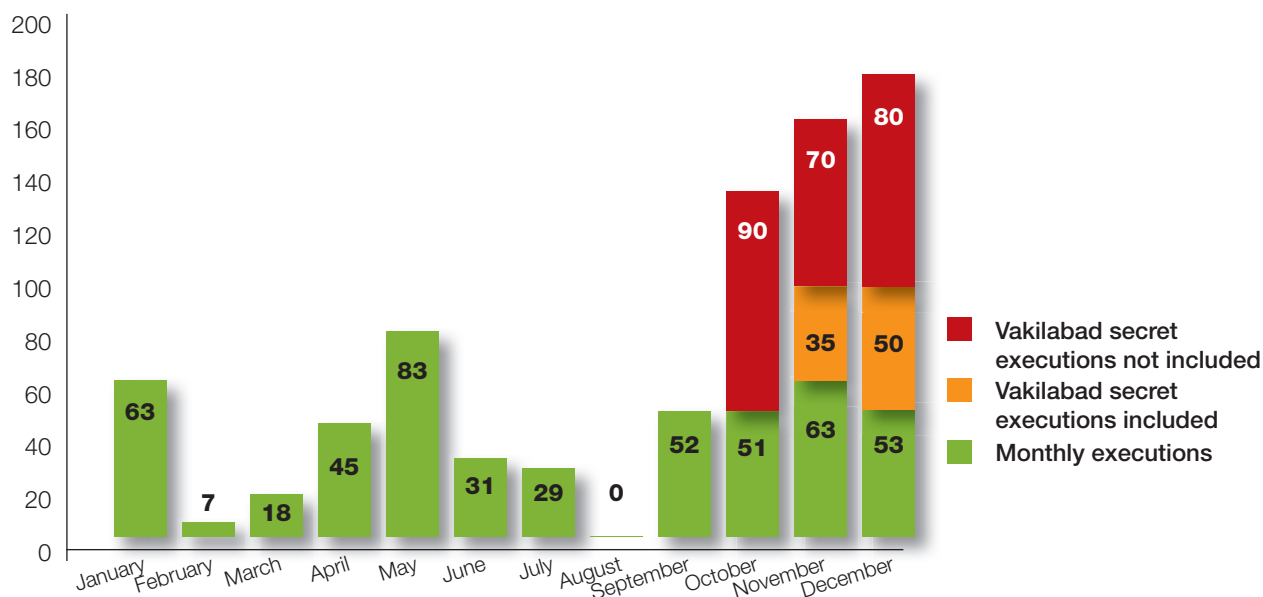
The numbers in the green columns represent executions announced by official Iranian media and un-announced executions confirmed by human rights organizations. The numbers in the red columns represent reported secret executions (mainly in Vakilabad Prison) that have not been included in annual reports due to a lack of detailed information. The actual number of executions in 2012 is higher than previous years and probably the highest since the early 1990's. There has been a dramatic increase in the number of annual executions in Iran after the post-election protests in 2009.

9 The primary sources for the other un-announced executions: Iran Human Rights (IHR), Human Rights and Democracy Activists in Iran (HRDAI), Human Rights Activists News Agency (HRANA), Mukrian news agency, Ahwaz news and Kurdpa.

10 <http://iranhr.net/spip.php?article2629>

11 <http://www.kurdpa.net/farsi/index.php?cat=idame&id=4876>

## MONTHLY OVERVIEW OF EXECUTIONS IN 2012



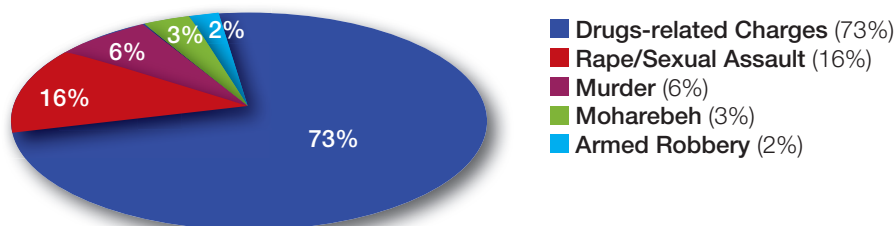
The diagram above shows monthly variations in the number of executions in 2012 in Iran. Secret executions in the Vakilabad Prison resumed in October 2012 and are still occurring. Only 85 out of the 325 estimated secret executions in Vakilabad were included in the 2012 report (yellow). 240 of the secret executions carried out in Vakilabad (red) have not been included in the present report (see section about 'secret executions').

February, March, and August are the months with the lowest number of executions. Low numbers in February and March are partly due to the Iranian New Year (21 March) and the Parliamentary elections that were held in March 2012. August 2012 coincided with the holy Muslim month of Ramadan and the conference of the Non-Aligned Movement summit in Tehran. These events may be the reasons for the lack of reported executions in August 2012.

## CHARGES

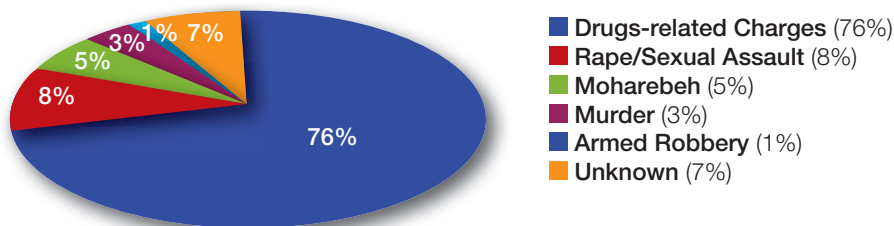
The charts below show the type of charges used by Iranian authorities for executions carried out in 2012. The upper chart shows the charges used for officially announced executions, while the lower chart shows the charges for both officially announced and unannounced executions confirmed by IHR. A comparison between the two charts indicates that the relatively higher number of drug-related and Moharebeh charges are among the executions not announced by Iranian authorities. Charges for 7% of executions included in the present report are unknown.

Charges of the officially announced executions





Charges for all executions (official and confirmed unofficial executions)



As in previous years, drug-related charges account for the majority of executions carried out in Iran in 2012. Other frequent charges are: rape and sexual assault, murder, Moharebeh (waging war against God) and armed robbery. People involved in armed robbery are normally charged with Moharebeh, however we used armed robbery as a separate charge in cases where the term, Moharebeh was not used in official media reports. Some individuals executed last year were convicted of several of the above-mentioned charges. For instance few individuals were convicted of both rape and murder, or rape and kidnapping. In the latter case we used “rape” as the main charge, as this is the charge most likely used to issue the death penalty sentence. In cases where individuals were convicted of both rape and murder IHR has included half of the cases in each respective category.

DRUG TRAFFICKING

According to IHR’s annual report, at least 438 prisoners were executed for drug-related charges in 2012 in Iran. Drug-related charges account for approximately 76% of all death penalty cases in Iran in 2012. This is a very cautious estimate since it does not cover more than 240 secret executions in the Vakilabad Prison from November to December 2012. According to preliminary reports, almost all those executed secretly in the Vakilabad Prison were convicted of drug-related charges.

Facts about the death penalty for drug offences in Iran:

- Drug-related charges account for approximately 70-80% of all death penalty cases in Iran.
- One third of all public executions in 2012 were due to drug-related charges.
- Iranian authorities blame the “war against drug trafficking” for the high execution numbers.
- A person charged with the possession of 30 grams of certain narcotic drugs may be sentenced to death.
- Drug convicts are denied the right to appeal their death sentence.
- There are numerous reports on torture, forced confessions, and unfair trials.
- Many of those sentenced to death for drug-related charges belong to the weakest socio-economic groups in Iranian society.

IHR has received numerous reports regarding the absence of due process, torture, and coerced confessions in drug-related cases. All prisoners charged with drug-related crimes are tried behind closed doors by revolutionary courts, and many of them have no access to a lawyer. Additionally, those convicted for drug related crimes are denied the right to appeal their death sentence.

In 2012, the Iranian authorities revealed the identities of only 23% of those executed for drug-related charges. The remaining 77% were either not identified at all (33%) or just identified by initials or first name. We cannot rule out the possibility that drug-related charges may be used as a cover-up against political opponents.

**Saeed Sedighi**, a Tehran-based shop-owner was executed along with nine others on drug-related charges. Thanks to the efforts of his family members, Saeed's case was brought to the attention of the international community. Saeed's younger brother, Majid-- who lived in Tehran-- was arrested for giving interviews to media outside Iran. He was later released on bail. According to reports from Iran, Saeed Sedighi was subjected to torture after his arrest. He met his lawyer in person 15 minutes before his trial, which lasted less than 30 minutes<sup>12</sup>.



In October 2012, human rights organizations launched a campaign to save Saeed Sedighi (see above) and nine others sentenced to death for drug-related charges. Three United Nations Special Rapporteurs called on Iran to halt the executions<sup>13</sup>. Due to the massive attention the cases received, the executions were postponed for one week. It was the first time the international community reacted to the scheduled execution of a prisoner convicted of drug trafficking.

The families of several other prisoners sentenced to death and executed for drug-related charges have shared their stories with IHR. Many of their stories are similar to Saeed Sedighi's.

## IRAN'S FIGHT AGAINST DRUGS AND INTERNATIONAL AID

The death penalty is one of the main tools used by Iranian authorities to allegedly fight increased drug trafficking throughout Iran. Iranian officials often use "War on drug-trafficking" as an excuse to justify the high number of death penalty cases in the country. Iran's fight against drug trafficking is partly funded through United Nations Office on Drug and Crimes (UNODC) and several European countries are contributors. Every year, thousands of people are arrested by the Iranian authorities for drug related charges and several hundreds of them are executed. Iranian authorities admitted on several occasions that most of those executed are people who turned to drug trafficking out of poverty and are involved in selling drugs on a smaller scale. According to Iranian criminal laws, possessing 30 grams of heroin, morphine, cocaine, LSD, methamphetamine, or similar drugs is punishable by death. In 2012 several NGOs; including IHR and ECPM, urged UNODC and contributing countries to freeze funding for drug enforcement programs to Iran<sup>14</sup> and immediately halt the provision of any monetary funds, services or other resources to the Iranian authorities for anti-drug trafficking purposes until such time the Iranian regime renounces its policy of executing individuals for drug-related offenses<sup>15</sup>.

12 <http://iranhr.net/spip.php?article2610>

13 <http://www.shaheedoniran.org/english/english/dr-shaheeds-work/press-releases/3080-iran-un-special-rapporteurs-call-for-the-immediate-halt-of-executions-including-eleven-scheduled-for-tomorrow.html>

14 <http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/08/21/iran-donors-should-reassess-anti-drug-funding>

15 <http://iranhr.net/spip.php?article2593>

## MOHAREBEH

Moharebeh means “Waging war against God” and is traditionally used for those who are involved in the armed struggle against the authorities. However, Iranian authorities have also used the Moharebeh charge against many of their political or ideological opponents. Most of those executed in 2012 for “Moharebeh” belonged to ethnic and religious minorities. The punishment for Moharebeh is death or amputation of the right hand and left foot, according to the Iranian penal code. Some of those executed who were convicted of Moharebeh are:

**Ahwazi Arabs:** On June 18, 2012 four Ahwazi Arab prisoners--**Taha Heidarian, Abdolrahman Heidarian, Abbas Heidarian, and Ali Sharifi**--were secretly executed by Iranian authorities<sup>16</sup>.



The prisoners- three of them brothers- were arrested following civil unrest and protests in Ahwaz in April 2011. According to reliable reports, the Heidarian brothers and Ali Sharifi were charged and convicted of Moharebeh after having confessed under torture. They were denied fair trials or any other legal proceedings. Their confessions were aired on Press TV, a state-controlled television network and their bodies were not returned to their families<sup>17</sup>. The executions were met by strong protests, and IHR and several other NGOs issued a joint statement condemning the executions<sup>18</sup>.

**Six Kurdish prisoners**, members of a Salafist (Sunni Muslim) group were secretly executed in Ghezel Hesar prison in Karaj (west of Teheran) on December 26, 2012. The prisoners were charged with Moharebeh. The group, Human Rights Activists News Agency (HRANA) identified the prisoners as **Bahram Ahmadi, Asghar Rahimi, Behnam Rahimi, Mohammad Zaher Bahmani, Keyvan Zand Karimi and Houshiar Mohammadi**. The prisoners allegedly belonged to a Salafist group. Their official charges were: “Membership in Salafist groups” and “Participation in terrorist acts, such as the assassination of a Friday prayer Imam in Sanandaj (Iranian Kurdistan) in 2009”. The Kurdish Salafist group did not claim responsibility for the assassination. Several other prisoners allegedly members of the same group are in danger of execution.

**Five Baluchi prisoners** convicted of Moharebeh were executed, according to official Iranian sources. Two prisoners, “**Mohammad Mohammad Hasani Lotak**” and “**Saedd Baluch Shahbakhsh**” were executed on June 6, 2012. They were convicted of Moharebeh through armed kidnappings, spreading fear among people, and possessing illegal arms and drugs”.

16 <http://www.amnesty.org.au/news/comments/29022/>

17 <http://www.ahwaziarabs.info/2013/02/iranian-regime-hiding-arab-bodies-in.html>

18 <http://iranhr.net/spip.php?article2549>



Three other Baluchi prisoners, “**Yahya Chari**”, “**Abdoljalil Kahrazehi**”, and “**Abdolbaset Rigi**” were hanged on October 21, 2012 in Zahedan Prison. They were convicted of Moharebeh through “membership in the Rigi group (Jondollah), participation in terrorist acts (i.e. bombing of a mosque in Zahedan)”.

**Majid Jamali Fashi** a 24-year-old kick-boxer accused of being an agent for the Israeli intelligence agency Mossad and killing one of its nuclear scientists Masoud Ali-Mohammadi in January 2010, was convicted of Moharebeh and executed in Evin Prison May 15, 2012. Both the Western diplomats and the Iranian Nuclear agency have said that Mr. Ali-Mohammadi did not have anything to do with Iran’s nuclear program<sup>19</sup>. Many sources state that Mr. Fashi was subjected to coerced confessions against himself. The Iranian TV broadcasted Mr. Fashi’s “confessions” saying he was paid by Mossad and had been to Israel for training purposes. They also showed an Israeli passport allegedly belonging to Mr. Fashi. The passport shown on the Iranian TV<sup>20</sup> was similar to the picture of an Israeli passport<sup>21</sup> found on the internet, both being issued in 17.11.2003 when Mr. Fashi was only 15 year old. However Mr. Fashi’s picture on the passport was not a standard picture and was taken during the last months of his life.

**There are currently several death row political prisoners who are convicted of Moharebeh and who are at imminent danger of execution:**

- Five Ahwazi activists: Mohammad Ali Amourinejad, Hashem Shabani, Hadi Rashedi, Mokhtar Alboshoka and Jaber Alboshoka<sup>22</sup>
- Gholamreza Khosravi and Abolreza Ghanbari<sup>23</sup>: convicted of Moharebeh for giving alleged support to the banned opposition group, “People’s Mujahedin Organization of Iran” (PMOI/MEK)
- Kurdish prisoners, Zanyar and Loghman Moradi: convicted of the assassination of the son of a Friday prayer Imam in Kurdistan. Zanyar and Loghman Moradi have repeatedly denied the charges<sup>24</sup>.
- Azarbaijani minority prisoner Yunes Aghayan<sup>25</sup>: member of Ahl-e-Hagh group
- Kurdish prisoners Habibollah Golparipour<sup>26</sup> and Habibollah Latifi

19 [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/05/15/majid-jamali-fashi-iran-hanged\\_n\\_1516867.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/05/15/majid-jamali-fashi-iran-hanged_n_1516867.html)

20 [http://fa.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D9%BE%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%86%D8%AF%D9%87:Fake\\_israeli\\_passport.jpg](http://fa.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D9%BE%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%86%D8%AF%D9%87:Fake_israeli_passport.jpg)

21 [http://fa.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D9%BE%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%86%D8%AF%D9%87:Israel\\_passport.jpg](http://fa.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D9%BE%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%86%D8%AF%D9%87:Israel_passport.jpg)

22 <http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/01/24/iran-stop-execution-ahwazi-arab-political-prisoners>

23 <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/058/2012/en>

24 <http://iranhr.net/spip.php?article2676> , <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE13/010/2012/en/ef544c1f-9aee-469e-8314-900a9e5623a4/mde130102012en.html>

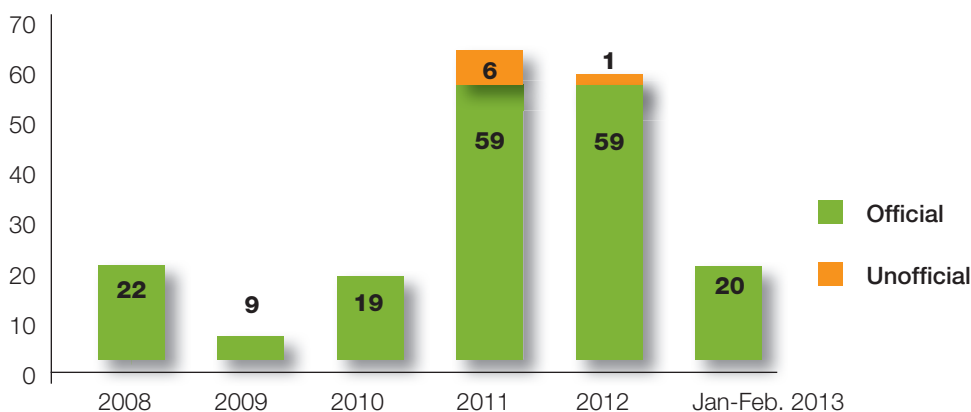
25 <http://iranhr.net/spip.php?article2533>

26 <http://www.iranhrdc.org/english/news/inside-iran/1000000093-kurdish-iranian-death-row-prisoner-habibollah-golparipour-transferred-to-semnan-prison-denied-visitation-from-his-family.html>

## PUBLIC EXECUTIONS

The official number of public executions in Iran in 2012 is 59, which is as high as in 2011 and at least among the highest since the 1990's. We included in the annual report one public execution that was not announced by Iranian authorities. The total number of public executions included in this report is 60. In 2011 IHR was able to document six cases of public executions not announced by official state-run media. It cannot be ruled out that the number of public executions in Iran is higher than reported.

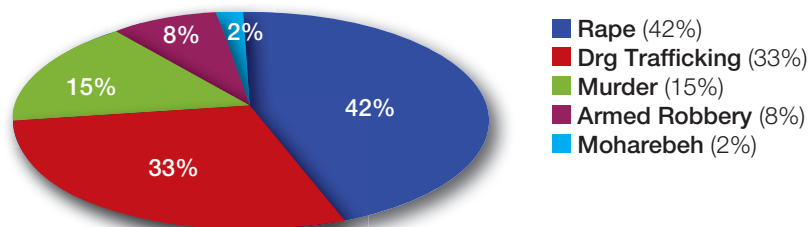
### PUBLIC EXECUTIONS IN THE LAST 5 YEARS IN IRAN



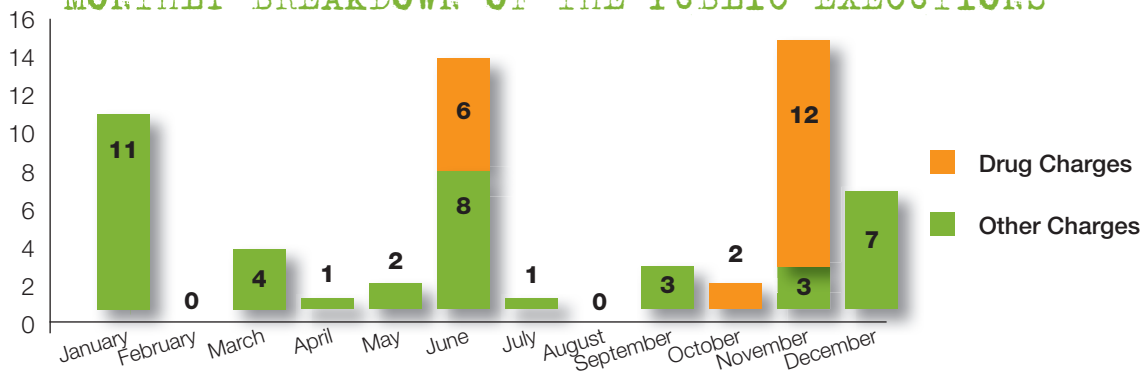
The number of public executions has increased dramatically since the 2009 post-election protests. The number of public executions in 2012 is six times higher than in 2009. The trend continues in 2013, as the number of public executions in the first two months of 2013 is higher than for the whole year 2010.

### CHARGES LEADING TO PUBLIC EXECUTIONS

The most striking difference between the public executions in 2012 and previous years is the large number of public executions resulting from drug related convictions. One third (20 of 60) of the prisoners hanged publicly in 2012 in Iran were convicted of drug related charges. In comparison only one of the 59 public executions announced by the official sources in 2011 were convicted of drug-related charges. Rape, Moharebeh, armed robbery and murder were the other charges used for public executions.

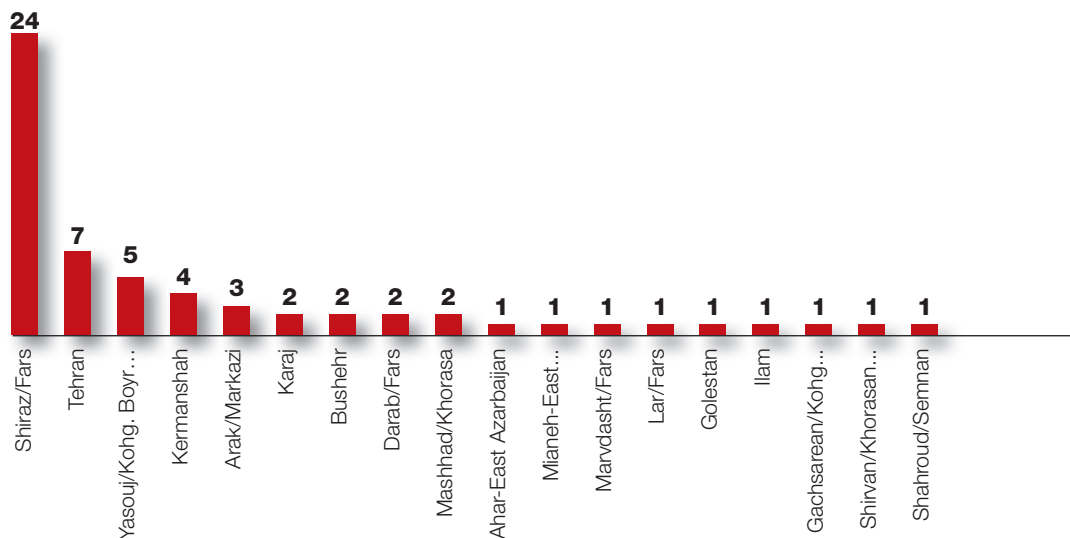


MONTHLY BREAKDOWN OF THE PUBLIC EXECUTIONS



January, June, November, and December 2012 were the months with the highest numbers of public executions. There were no public executions in February and August 2012, the months before the Parliamentary election (March 2) and the conference of the Non-Alligned Movement summit (last week of August) respectively.

GEOGRAPHICAL BREAKDOWN OF PUBLIC HANGINGS  
(BY THE LOCATION OF THE EXECUTION)



The below table shows the number of public executions by province

Province	Public hanging
Fars (South)	28
Teheran/Karaj (Capital)	9
Koh. Boyer-Ahmad.	6
Kermanshah (West)	4
Markazi- Arak (Center)	3
Bushehr (South)	2
Khorasan Razavi (North)	2
East Azarbajian (Northwest)	2
Ilam (West)	1
Golestan (North)	1
Semnan-Shahrud (Center)	1
Khorasan Shomali (Northeast)	1
<b>Total:</b>	<b>60</b>

Although public executions were carried out in all regions of Iran, like 2011, the province of Fars had the highest number of public executions and Teheran (the capital) had the second highest number. More than 40% of all public executions took place in Fars, and the majority of these executions were carried out in Shiraz (capital city of Fars). 19 of the 20 public executions for drug-related charges were carried out in Fars. One of the public executions in Fars was not announced by official sources and was documented by IHR's sources inside Iran.

## CHILDREN WATCHING PUBLIC EXECUTIONS



Iranian authorities actively invite the local population to watch public executions. In many of the locations, leaflets and posters were distributed to announce the scheduled execution. Also, following the execution, pictures of the hanged prisoners were aired or published via state-run news agencies and other media. Images of horrified children watching public executions were not an uncommon sight in 2012.

IHR has repeatedly urged the United Nations to impose a ban on public executions<sup>27</sup> and other medieval punishments, such as flogging and lashings.

“Public executions are not only inhumane and degrading for those executed but also for those watching, including children. We ask the UN to implement serious measures to halt this inhumane and brutalizing punishment,” said Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam in a statement on public executions.



Horrified citizens, among them children, watch public executions in Iran. The upper picture published by Mehr news agency shows a little girl watching a public execution on 28. June 2012 in Robat Karim, Teheran.

## METHODS USED FOR PUBLIC EXECUTIONS

Most public executions are carried out using cranes to hang the prisoner. In some cases the prisoner stands on an object, which is removed from under their feet—the prisoner then dies from cervical dislocation. In many of the cases a prisoner is lifted by the crane and dies from strangulation and suffocation. In the latter case, it takes several minutes until unconsciousness occurs.



**Left:** A man is being executed as the barrel he is standing on is kicked away by the executioner (Tehran, 28. June 2012).



**Right:** A man is standing on the ground with the noose around his neck, and was lifted by a crane a few moments later (Golestan, 31. December 2012).

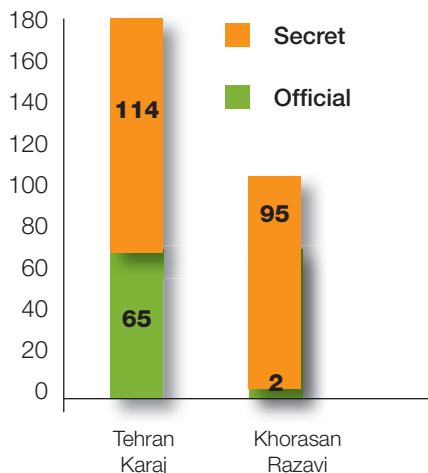
27 <http://iranhr.net/spip.php?article2319>





**Left and right:** Execution of three prisoners in Kermanshah. Prisoners stand on three public buses. The execution occurs when the buses drive off and the prisoners are hanged from the bridge (Kermanshah, 5. January 2012).

## GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL (SECRET) EXECUTIONS



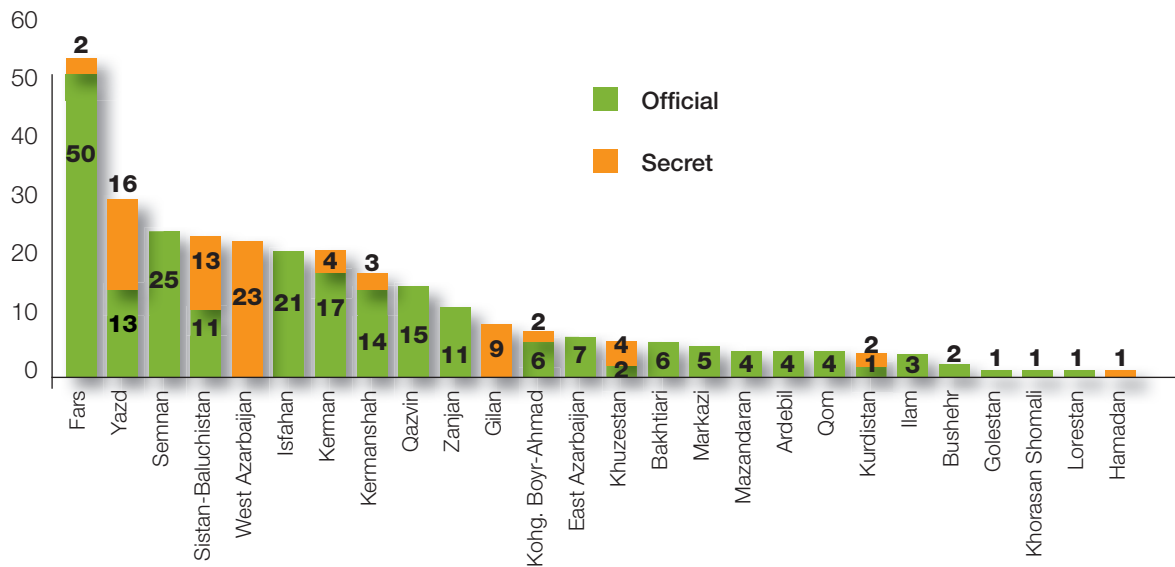
As for the last two years, IHR has received a large number of reports about executions not reported by the Iranian authorities. IHR has confirmed and included in this report secret and unannounced executions in 15 different Iranian prisons. The majority of the reports came from Ghezel Hesar, Rajai Shahr, and Evin prisons in Teheran and Karaj; and Vakilabad Prison in Mashhad. These numbers indicate that the actual number of executions in Iran is much higher than what is reported by the authorities or even human rights organizations. The numbers in the above chart only represent execution cases that IHR regards as confirmed.

The chart above shows all executions reported from the Tehran/Karaj and Khorasan Razavi provinces. Numbers in the green fields indicate officially announced executions, including public and prison executions. Prisons included in Tehran/Karaj area are: Evin, Ghezel Hesar and Rajai Shahr. Prisons in Khorasan Razavi are Vakilabad and Taybad. A summary of the above chart is presented as follows:

- Tehran/Karaj and Khorasan Razavi are the provinces with the highest total number of executions included in this report.
- The number of secret or unannounced executions in the Teheran/Karaj area (114) is about 175% larger than the number of officially announced (65) executions.
- Only two cases of executions (both public) in Khorasan Razavi were announced by Iranian authorities. However, IHR could confirm 95 cases of secret executions (See IHR's recent statement on the secret executions in Vakilabad at the end of this report).
- 85 of the 95 secret executions in Khorasan Razavi took place in the Vakilabad Prison of Mashhad while the remaining 10 took place in the Taybad Prison.
- IHR is in the process of investigating a report on an estimated 240 additional executions in the Vakilabad prison, which are not included here.



GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF OFFICIAL  
AND UNOFFICIAL/SECRET EXECUTIONS  
IN OTHER REGIONS OF IRAN



The chart above shows the geographical distribution of official (green) and unofficial or secret executions (yellow) in other regions of Iran than Tehran/Karaj and Khorasan Razavi. Note that in some provinces, like West Azarbaijan (capital city is Urmia), all of the executions were secret or unannounced.

A summary of the geographical breakdown of executions in other Iranian provinces is as follows:

- Fars has the highest number of official executions after Teheran/Karaj.
- Urmia Prison (located in West Azarbaijan) has the highest number of unofficial/secret executions after Tehran/Karaj and Vakilabad prisons.
- More than half of the executions in Yazd and Sistan-Baluchistan were secret or not announced through official channels.
- Many prisoners belonging to the Baluchi ethnic minority are executed in other Iranian prisons

IHR has received unconfirmed reports about additional secret weekly executions in the prisons of Kerman and Shiraz (Adelabad).

## WOMEN

The executions of only two of (at least) nine women executed in 2012 were reported by Iranian authorities. The other executions were reported through reliable, unofficial sources. This is a trend that may indicate that Iranian authorities do not announce executions of women prisoners to avoid international attention, since international opinion seems to be more receptive to the execution of women.

### LIST OF THE WOMEN EXECUTED<sup>28</sup>

Name	Date of execution	Place of execution	Charge	Source
Not identified	10.03.2012	Zahedan (Sistan-Baluchistan)	Drug trafficking	HRDAI (unofficial)
Not identified	10.03.2012	Zahedan prison (Sistan-Baluchistan)	Drug trafficking	HRDAI (unofficial)
Not identified	17.05.2012	Yazd Prison		HRDAI (unofficial)
Not identified	17.05.2012	Yazd Prison		HRDAI (unofficial)
Not identified	17.05.2012	Yazd Prison		HRDAI (unofficial)
Not identified	17.05.2012	Yazd Prison		HRDAI (unofficial)
Safieh Ghafouri <sup>1</sup>	12.07.2012	Shiraz Prison	Murder	IHR (unofficial)
A.A.	16.05.2012	Kermanshah	Drug trafficking	Fars
Not identified	03.12.2012	Kermanshah	Drug trafficking	Judiciary website

## JUVENILE OFFENDERS

IHR has not registered any executions of juvenile offenders in 2012. However, very little information was revealed by the Iranian authorities about those executed. Ages of about 10% of those executed was provided by the official Iranian sources. Based on the fact that death penalty for juvenile offenders remains in Iranian law, juveniles are still sentenced to death and their sentences are upheld by the Supreme court it is likely that there might be juveniles among the at least 580 people executed in 2012.

28 Safieh Ghafouri <http://iranhr.net/spip.php?article2551>

## EXECUTION OF AFGHAN CITIZENS IN IRAN



According to the official and unofficial reports there were at **least 27 Afghan** citizens among those executed in 2012 in different Iranian prisons. Nine of the executions were reported by official Iranian sources. One of those executed was identified as Akram Norouzaad and was convicted of rape. He was hanged publicly in Mashhad on March 13, 2012 (Picture on the left)<sup>29</sup>. The other Afghan prisoners were sentenced to death for drug-related charges.. IHR received reports about a **significant number of Afghan prisoners among those executed in the Vakilabad prison in the past few months**. The bodies of the executed Afghan prisoners, which were not transferred to Afghanistan, are buried at a section of the Mashhad Cemetery (Behesht-e-Reza) along with the bodies of other prisoners executed secretly in Vakilabad. This part of the cemetery is monitored by cameras and patrolled by the Iranian security forces. A recent report from BBC Persian supports IHR's reports on execution of Afghans in Vakilabad. On February 23, BBC Persian<sup>30</sup> reported that the bodies of five Afghan prisoners, who were executed in Iran, were buried in the Kalafgan district of Takhar Province in Afghanistan. Quoting the families of those executed, the report says that about 80 people from this district have been executed in the last six months in Iran. The report said that 50 bodies were transferred to Afghanistan while the remaining bodies are being kept in cold rooms in Iran.

In a statement published February 2013 IHR urged the Afghan government to **follow up on the situation of its imprisoned citizens in Iran more closely** IHR's Spokesperson Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam said: "Afghan citizens are among the weakest in the Iranian society. Many of those imprisoned do not have access to lawyers and their execution is a violation of international obligations. Unfortunately, the Afghan government doesn't seem to pay much attention to its imprisoned citizens in Iran."

## REPORT ON STONING

In November the website "Melli-Mazhabi" reported that four women were stoned to death in Iran. The charges in the case files include 'engaging in immoral (sexual) relationship(s)' and 'drug abuse'. **Security agents from the Iranian Judiciary reportedly transferred the bodies of the four women to the Teheran forensic medicine department**. Reliable sources in contact with the Melli-Mazhabi website said the women had additional wounds on their bodies other than the ones caused by stoning. The sources that IHR has been in contact with had

29 <http://iranhr.net/spip.php?article2445>

30 [http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/afghanistan/2013/02/130223\\_k05\\_afghan\\_prisoner\\_hanged\\_iran.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/afghanistan/2013/02/130223_k05_afghan_prisoner_hanged_iran.shtml)

no doubts that the women died as a result of stoning and that the Judiciary was involved”<sup>31</sup>. A few days later Tehran Forensic Medicine rejected the claims<sup>32</sup>.

Due to security issues it has not been possible to find out more details about these cases. Therefore these four individuals are not included in the annual report. However IHR is still investigating them.

In February 2013 the spokesman for the Iranian Parliament’s Justice Commission, Mohammad Ali Esfenani, told reporters that the punishment of stoning was removed from the Iranian penal code due to its negative international attention<sup>33</sup>. He said: “Some people in the international arena have a very biased view of stoning and used it against Iran. They meant that stoning is a violation of human rights”. He added: Stoning is only removed from the law but it still exists in Sharia and can not be removed from the Sharia”

## STATEMENT ON THE SECRET EXECUTIONS IN VAKILABAD<sup>34</sup>

On February 3 2013, Iran Human Rights (IHR) reported that secret executions in Vakilabad prison had resumed after a hiatus of several months due to international reactions. **The executions began in October 2012 and have been taking place on Wednesdays and Sundays every week.** On a few occasions there have been three weekly executions. Each time, at least ten prisoners were hanged; on two occasions in November and December, thirty-five and fifty prisoners were executed respectively. The executions take place in complete secrecy, and the phone lines of the prison are cut off several hours before the executions. - Neither the prisoners nor their families and lawyers (if they have one) are informed about the executions in advance.

### **Tens of prisoners, among them a possible juvenile, executed on February 10th and 13th**

Reliable reports from Vakilabad prison indicate that mass executions are still taking place. **IHR has now received more details about the mass executions which occurred on Sunday, February 10 and Wednesday, February 13.** According to these reports, at least ten prisoners were executed on February 10, while the number of prisoners executed on Wednesday February 13 was much higher. Most of those executed were convicted of drug related crimes. However, a possible juvenile offender was among those executed on February 13: a young boy who had just turned eighteen and was convicted of murder. According to our sources, the boy was allegedly a juvenile and under narcotic-induced psychosis when he committed the offence.

## THE UNITED NATIONS MUST INTERVENE

Based on new information about mass executions in Vakilabad, IHR sent an urgent appeal to the United Nations (UN) demanding a fact finding mission to Iran. **IHR spokesperson Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam said: “What is going on in Vakilabad is a massacre. These are arbitrary and unlawful mass executions that must be stopped[...] We urge the UN to send a fact finding commission to Iran immediately and we ask the international community to react. Hundreds or possibly thousands of prisoners could be executed in the coming months.”**

Are overcrowded prisons the motivation behind mass executions? According to unconfirmed reports, there could be as many as 3,000 death row prisoners in Vakilabad at danger of execution in the coming months. IHR believes that secret executions also take place in other Iranian prisons. In its annual report for 2011, IHR reported confirmed secret executions in

31 <http://iranhr.net/spip.php?article2624>

32 <http://www.lmo.ir/index.aspx?siteid=1&pageid=2316&newsview=12273>

33 <http://www.aftabnews.ir/vdcf0edyvw6dcja.igiw.html>

34 <http://iranhr.net/spip.php?article2729>



fifteen different Iranian prisons. One of the reasons for the secret mass executions in Vakilabad and other Iranian prisons is that prisons are overcrowded. According to official reports, there are 250,000 prisoners in the Iranian prisons and 43% of the prisoners are charged for drug crimes<sup>35</sup>. Number of the prisoners in the Vakilabad prison were about 13,000 in 2011, although the prison only has the capacity to house 3,000 prisoners<sup>36</sup>. IHR's sources estimate that there are 20,000 prisoners in Vakilabad. According to eyewitnesses, in some wards, prisoners have to sleep on the steps and in the corridors. The situation is similar in several other Iranian prisons, and it seems that mass execution of death row prisoners is one of the solutions Iranian authorities are using to resolve the overcrowding of prisons in Iran.

**Human rights groups published the first reports on secret executions in Vakilabad prison in 2010. According to the estimates, at least 500 prisoners were executed in 2010-2011. Names of more than 100 executed prisoners were published in 2011. The executions halted in 2011 due to international attention. However, the executions have resumed and according to IHR's conservative estimates that about 500 prisoners were executed in this prison between October 2012 and February 2013.**

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO

### THE UNITED NATIONS

- Renew the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Iran and appoint a fact-finding mission to establish the truth about secret executions

### THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

- Require from Iranian authorities procedural transparency and guarantee fair trials
- Call on the Iranian authorities to implement a moratorium on executions and demand an immediate halt to public executions designed to terrorize the population ahead of the upcoming presidential elections
- Require compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by Iran in 1991, which prohibits the execution of juveniles at the time of offense was committed, and not at the time of the execution of the sentence
- Request an immediate halt to discriminatory practices against the ethnic and religious minorities
- Demand from countries contributing to the international programs from the UNODC fighting against international drug trafficking to impose, as a condition to their contribution, the establishment of a justice commission in Iran to guarantee the transparency of procedures and a moratorium on death sentences for those convicted of drug trafficking

35 [aftabnews.ir/vdcccxoqs02bqm08.ala2.html](http://aftabnews.ir/vdcccxoqs02bqm08.ala2.html)

36 <http://www.mashreghnews.ir/fa/news/77825>



## IRAN HUMAN RIGHTS



Iran Human Rights (IHR) is a non-profit, human rights organization with members inside and outside Iran. IHR is a non-partisan and politically independent organization with its base in Oslo, Norway. IHR has active and supporting members in Iran, USA, Canada, Japan and several European countries. The organization started in 2005 as a network of Iranian and non-Iranian human rights defenders. Its official news web site (iranhr.net) was initiated in 2007.

IHR-International is the main body of the organization while there are two regional sections in Norway (iranhr.no) and Italy (iranhr.it).

Persian2English is the web campaign branch of Iran Human Rights (IHR) with its base in Canada.

Reporting on the death penalty in Iran has been the main focus of iranhr.net. IHR's aim has been to create an abolitionist movement in Iran by increasing awareness about the death penalty.

In recent years the number of executions in Iran has been rising and there are now a growing number of human rights defenders, groups, and even political organizations giving attention to the death penalty.

In 2009, IHR became a member of the World Coalition against Death Penalty (WCADP) and is one of the twenty elected members of its steering committee.

Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam is the co-founder and international spokesperson of Iran Human Rights. You may contact IHR regarding questions about the report or other related news via email (mail@iranhr.net) or phone (+47 91742177).

## 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 lobbies governments at both national and international levels.

ECPM has definitely cemented his credibility as a unifying international abolitionist forces: 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 by the level of States representation, the participation of retentionist countries, the involvement of the public and the media.





*Ensemble  
contre  
la peine  
de mort*

Iran Human Rights

Raphaël Chenuil-Hazan  
General Manager  
Email : [rchenuil@abolition.fr](mailto:rchenuil@abolition.fr)  
69, rue Michelet  
93100 Montreuil  
France

Tel. : +33 1 57 63 03 57  
Fax : +33 1 57 63 89 25

Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam  
Founder and Spokesperson  
Iran Human Rights  
P.O.Box 2691 Solli  
0204 Oslo  
Norway

Tel: +47 91742177  
Email: [mail@iranhr.net](mailto:mail@iranhr.net)

[www.abolition.fr](http://www.abolition.fr)

[www.iranhr.net](http://www.iranhr.net)