

# ANNUAL REPORT ON THE DEATH PENALTY IN IRAN 2013



Photo by: Amir Pourmand

*Ensemble  
contre  
la peine  
de mort*

Iran Human Rights

## INTRODUCTION

The sixth annual report of Iran Human Rights (IHR) on the death penalty gives an assessment of how the death penalty was implemented in 2013 in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Other than providing the number of executions that were conducted, the report also looks at the trends compared to previous years. More importantly, it looks at the execution trends in the months prior to the presidential elections in June 2013 compared to the second half of the year (the months after the presidential elections). It provides information about who was executed – based on gender, age and ethnicity – where and how they were executed and what the charges were against them.

This report is the result of the hard work of human rights defenders who have been taking part in the reporting, documenting, collecting, analysing and writing of its content. Due to the lack of transparency and the obvious risks and limitations human rights defenders face in the Islamic Republic of Iran, it does not give, by any means, a complete picture of the use of the death penalty in this country. However, we believe that this report gives the most complete and realistic figures possible under the present circumstances.

With 687 executions identified by IHR, the number of executions in 2013 is the highest reported in more than 15 years.

---

### ANNUAL 2013 REPORT AT A GLANCE

- At least 687 people were executed in 2013 in Iran, a 16% increase compared to 2012;
- 388 cases (56%) were reported by the official Iranian sources, a 26% increase from 2012;
- 458 executions (68%) were carried out in the months after the election of Mr. Rouhani;
- 59 executions were performed in public;
- 331 people were executed for drug-related charges, 25% lower than in 2012;
- 148 people who were executed were charged with murder (qisas), 8 times higher than in 2012;
- Charges in 114 cases were unknown;
- At least 30 women were executed in 2013;
- At least 3 juvenile offenders were among those executed in 2013;
- At least 299 executions in 21 different prisons were either not officially announced or were carried out secretly.

---

Due to lack of details, more than an additional 130 reported executions have not been included in this report.

In 2013, the number of executions in the ethnic regions of Iran increased. The high number of executions in Baluchestan (southeast Iran), and executions of several Kurdish and Arab political and civil activists have led to outrage among the human rights defenders.<sup>1 2 3</sup> Ethnic groups are also over-represented with regards to secret or unannounced executions. Prisons

1 Iran: Indiscriminate executions continue

2 <http://iranhr.net/2013/12/iran-human-rights-condemns-execution-of-four-ahwazi-political-prisoners-3/>,

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

in Urmia (capital of West Azerbaijan province) and Zahedan (capital of Baluchistan province) had among the highest numbers of secret or unannounced executions.

In violation of their international obligations, the Iranian authorities executed at least 3 juvenile offenders in 2013. Many more juveniles remain on death row in Iran.

Possession and trafficking of narcotic drugs remain the charges the most commonly used against those executed in Iran in 2013. However, there was a relative decrease in the number of executions for drug-related charges compared to the previous three years. This decrease might be due to the increasing international attention on the use of the death penalty for drug-related charges in Iran. In the past 2 years, IHR and ECPM, together with several human rights groups, have urged the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to halt its cooperation with the Iranian authorities and condition it on a death penalty moratorium for drug-related charges.<sup>4</sup> In recent years, several European countries have decided to cease their funding for the fight against drug trafficking in Iran because of Iran's use of death penalty.<sup>5 6</sup> Whether the relative decrease in the number of drug-related executions will continue remains to be seen. The relative decrease in the number of drug-related executions is compensated by the dramatic increase in the number of executions for murder (qisas; law of retribution). The number of implemented cases of qisas (execution for murder) in 2013 is indeed eight times higher than the number in 2012.

In 2013, the number of public executions remained high. In some qisas cases, a family member of the victim conducted the public execution<sup>7</sup>.

On the other hand, the Iranian civil movement against the death penalty made significant progress at the end of 2013. There have been some civil protests against the death penalty. On November 5th, residents of the Kurdish city of Mariwan staged a demonstration against the recent executions of the political prisoners in Iranian Kurdistan, and on November 26th, families of the death row prisoners gathered outside the Iranian Parliament, Majles, in a peaceful protest against the death penalty.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, a campaign against the death penalty called Legam (step-by-step abolition of the death penalty) started in November.

The elections of Mr. Hassan Rouhani as President of the Islamic Republic of Iran on June 14, 2013 led some human rights defenders and the international community to feel optimistic. However, more than 8 months after the presidential elections and 7 months after Mr. Hassan Rouhani took office, the situation deteriorated in regards to the use of death penalty. This report shows that the number of executions in the six months after his election is twice as high as the number in the corresponding period before the election.

Unfortunately, the trend continues in 2014. In the first two months of the new year, IHR registered 142 executions, 73 of which were announced by the official Iranian sources.

The Annual Report of the Death Penalty in Iran – 2013, is being published at a time when the international community is improving its relations with the Iranian authorities. After the election of Mr. Hassan Rouhani, and the following provisional agreement about Iran's nuclear program, several high-ranking political delegates from several EU countries expressed their optimism or visited Iran. IHR and ECPM urge the international community to put the death penalty on the top of the agenda during their new dialogue with the Iranian authorities.

Commenting on the report, Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam, the spokesperson for IHR said: "It is a paradox that the relations between Iran and the international community are improving while the number of the executions in Iran increases. The election of Mr. Rouhani has not

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

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

6 <http://iranhr.net/2013/04/denmark-stops-aid-to-irans-fight-against-drug-trafficking/>

7 <http://iranhr.net/2013/10/two-prisoners-executed-publicly-in-northern-iran/>

8 <http://www.ghanoononline.ir/News/Item/101035/26/101035.html>

improved the situation. Despite the optimistic atmosphere created after the presidential elections, the human rights situation has in fact deteriorated in regards to the use of death penalty. Demanding a halt on the executions and due process of law must be on the top of the agenda in the dialogue between the international community and Iran. Improvement of diplomatic relations should be conditioned into concrete steps from the Iranian authorities to comply with the international obligations regarding the use of the death penalty.”

Raphael Chenuil-Hazan, Executive Manager of ECPM states that “the information collected by IHR shows once again that the Islamic Republic of Iran uses the death penalty profusely. In regard to the new diplomatic efforts, we urge the Iranian government to increase its cooperation with the UN bodies for human rights, and to especially allow the Special Rapporteur to visit Iran in order to assess the situation of the death penalty. We urge the international community to be cautious in their dialogue with Iran and to obtain concrete counterparties from the Iranian authorities to diminish the use of the death penalty.”

## SOURCES

Due to lack of transparency in the Iranian judicial system, only some of the executions are announced by official sources. In this report, we distinguish between the official and unofficial executions. Official executions are those announced by official websites of the Iranian Judiciary or by the Iranian Police, the National Iranian Broadcasting Network, official or state-run news agencies and national or local newspapers (see the glossary at the end of the report).

More than 56% of execution cases included in this report are regarded as official and are based on information announced by the sources mentioned above.

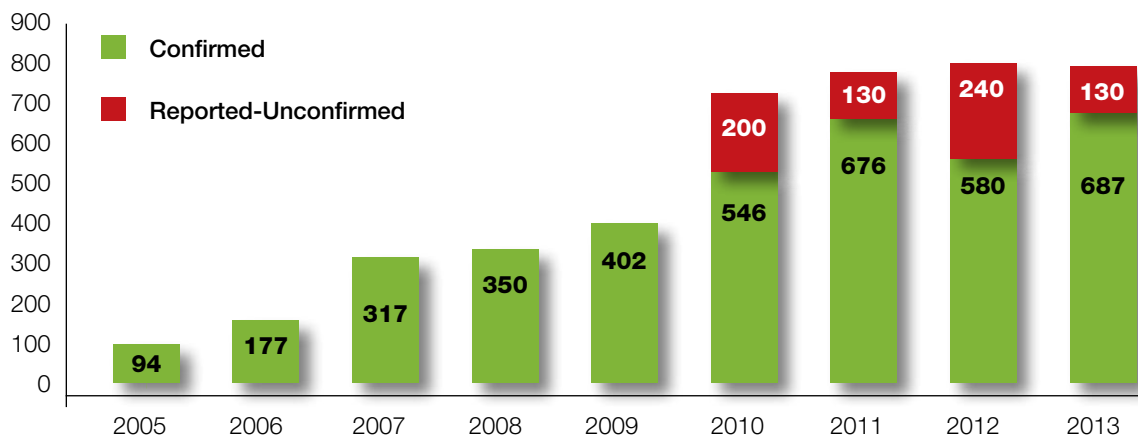
44% of execution cases in this report are based on verified information released by unofficial sources. These sources include other human rights NGOs or IHR’s sources within Iran. The sources of unofficial reports are often eyewitnesses, family members, lawyers, sources within the prisons and the Iranian Judiciary. IHR has only included unofficial reports that have been confirmed by two independent sources.

This report does not include extra-judicial killings of the people who work as porters (Kolbaran) and ‘Kasebkaran’ in the border area, who are shot dead by Iranian authorities’ security forces near the Western or Eastern borders of Iran. Several hundred porters have been killed by the Iranian authorities in the past few years.<sup>9</sup>

9 <http://www.roozonline.com/persian/news/newsitem/archive/2013/september/09/article/-7b440c58d7.html>

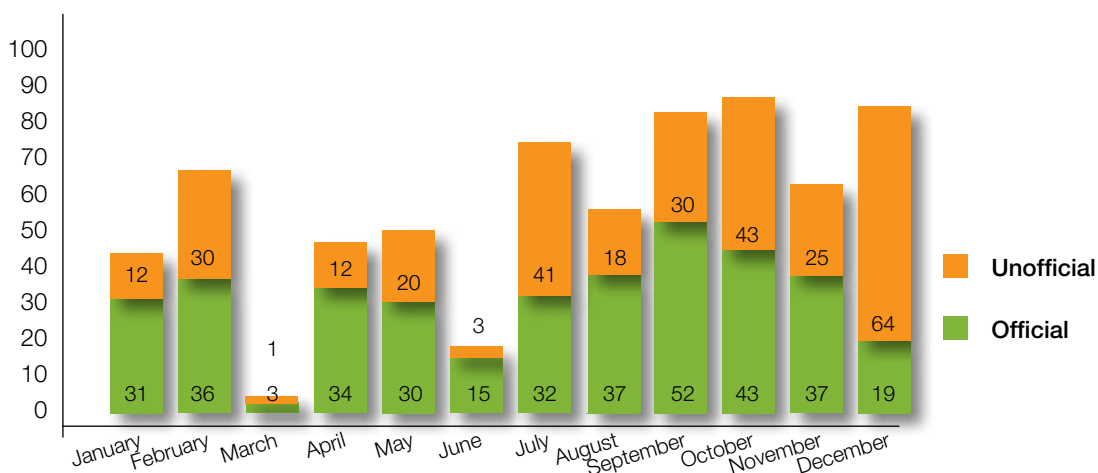
# ANNUAL REPORT 2013: FACTS AND FIGURES

## ANNUAL EXECUTIONS IN THE LAST 9 YEARS



The diagram above shows the number of annual executions based on the reports published by Amnesty International (AI) and IHR since 2005. The numbers in the green columns show confirmed executions (both official and unofficial). The red columns indicate the number of reported cases that have not been confirmed due to lack of details and are therefore not included in the annual report. The number of executions in 2013 is higher than in previous years and is probably among the highest since the early 1990's.

## MONTHLY OVERVIEW OF EXECUTIONS IN 2013



The diagram above shows the monthly variations in the number of executions in 2013. The number of both official (green) and unofficial (yellow) executions is significantly higher in the second half of the year. The execution numbers are particularly low in March (the Iranian New Year) and June (presidential elections; see below).

## EXECUTION TRENDS BEFORE AND AFTER THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

In the beginning of 2013, human rights groups feared an increase in the number of executions in the months prior to the presidential elections. Keeping the protests after the 2009 elections in mind, it was feared that the authorities would increase its use of the death penalty as an instrument to spread fear and prevent protests.



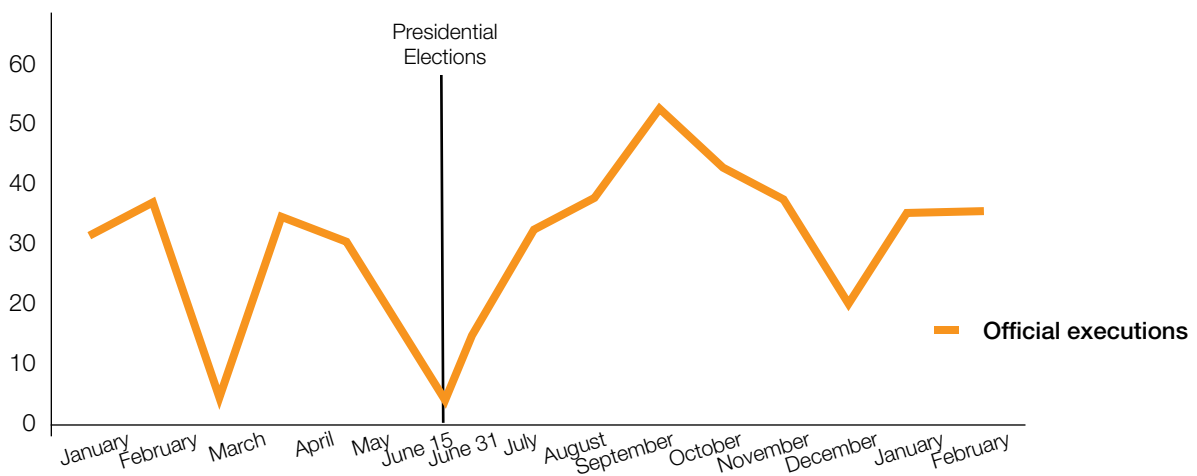
The number of executions, especially public executions, was indeed high the first two months of the year. About 20 public executions were conducted in January and February. These cases include a Taliban-style public hanging of a young man in a football stadium in Sabzevar (see picture), and the public execution of two young men convicted of mugging charges in Tehran.<sup>10</sup> The authorities also conducted a public amputation of a man's right hand fingers in front of hundreds of spectators in Shiraz and widely broadcasted the pictures in the state-run media.<sup>11</sup>

On January 16, 2013 at 7 A.M. a 23-year-old prisoner identified as Elyas was hanged in public in a Mazhari stadium in Sabzevar on charges of rape. There was no age limit for those who wanted to enter the stadium and watch the execution.

Following this execution, the international governing body of football, FIFA, sent a letter to the head of the Iranian Football Federation and warned them for using football fields for public executions.<sup>12</sup>

### EXECUTION TRENDS IN 2013 IN RELATION TO THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

The election of Mr. Hassan Rouhani as President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and especially his promises to improve the human rights situation during his campaign, led to some optimism regarding the use of the death penalty. However, the number of executions did not in fact decrease after the elections, but increased. According to this report, the number of executions in the six months after the presidential elections is more than twice as high as the corresponding period before the elections.



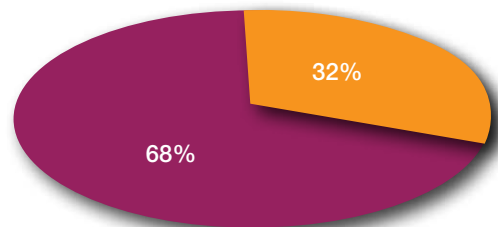
10 <http://www.mehrnews.com/detail/News/1795149>

11 <http://www.dadfars.ir/Default.aspx?tabid=2507&articleType=ArticleView&articleId=44710>

12 [http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/iran/2013/04/130421\\_157\\_iran\\_fifa\\_execution.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/iran/2013/04/130421_157_iran_fifa_execution.shtml)

The previous diagram shows the “execution trends” in 2013. This diagram is based only on the official execution cases. The numbers are generally high, except around the Iranian New Year (March) and the two weeks prior to the presidential elections. IHR has previously published a report showing a correlation between the use of the death penalty and political events in the past five years in Iran<sup>13</sup> (see Annex 1). The report shows a sharp rise in the number of executions when the authorities feared protests, or right after a protest. However, the numbers fell in the two weeks before the elections when the international community was focusing on Iran.

This chart shows the number of executions in the six months before and after the elections. 68% of all executions in 2013 were carried out after the election of Mr. Hassan Rouhani. The ratio is also similar (60:40) if only the official numbers are taken into account.



■ Before the election ■ After the election

## PUBLIC EXECUTIONS

In 2013, IHR recorded 59 public execution cases. One of these executions was interrupted and the prisoner survived. He was sentenced to death for murdering a security officer and was pardoned by the victim’s family a few seconds after the start of the execution (see picture).<sup>14</sup> His name is not among those executed in 2013 but is registered in this report.

Of the 59 public executions, Vahid’s execution was the only case that ended well. 58 other public executions were carried out in front of horrified people. Furthermore, pictures of children watching the executions was not an uncommon scene this year. Public executions and their influence on children have been debated for some time in the Iranian civil society. This issue has received more attention in the past few months following three incidents where children died playing the “execution game.”<sup>15</sup> An 8 year-old boy, Mehran Yousefi, died in September 2013 while playing with other children trying to stage an execution scene that they had witnessed.<sup>16</sup>



Photos by: Nima Nejafzadeh, Fars News Agency

A prisoner identified as Vahid Zare was sentenced to death (qisas) for murdering a security officer on December 7, 2012 and was publicly hanged in Mashhad (Northeast Iran) on May 18, 2013. A few seconds after he was hanged, the family of the security officer pardoned him and the execution was stopped. Vahid Zare survived the execution. Upper Left: Vahid Zare a few moments after being hanged. Upper Right: an executioner trying to stop the execution. Bottom: Happy spectators applauding Vahid’s pardon and his survival.

13 <http://iranhr.net/2013/07/relationship-between-political-events-and-the-death-penalty-trends-in-iran/>  
 14 <http://farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=13920218000073>  
 15 <http://www.rferl.org/content/iran-hanging-rights-un/25131488.html>  
 16 <http://www.roozonline.com/persian/news/newsitem/archive/2013/september/04/article/-de12bcf75b.html>

In connection with the launch of the 2012 annual report, IHR and ECPM called upon the Iranian authorities to immediately halt all public executions.<sup>17</sup> IHR has previously urged the United Nations to ban public executions.<sup>18</sup>



Photo by: Reza Zirakpour, Fars News Agency

Children watching a public execution in Shahr-e-Kord in June 2013.

Family members of two young men at the scene of the execution. “Alireza Mafiha” and “Mohammad Ali Sarvari,” were convicted of moharebeh for mugging a man for 25 dollars in Tehran.



Photo by: Ebrahim Noroozi, Fars News Agency

17 <http://iranhr.net/2013/04/annual-report-on-the-death-penalty-in-iran-2012/>

18 <http://iranhr.net/2011/10/children-watching-public-executions-in-ahr-urge-un-ban/>



## METHODS USED FOR PUBLIC EXECUTIONS



Photo by: Reza Zirakpour Noroozi, Fars News Agency

In most cases, public executions are carried out using cranes. The prisoners are either pulled up or the object they are standing on is removed from underneath them. In this case, the prisoners die of suffocation and strangulation and it often takes several minutes until death occurs. In the case of qisas (retribution for murder), a member of the victim's family is encouraged to carry out the public execution.

Examples of execution by crane. It often takes several minutes until the prisoner dies. This method is called "slow strangulation" and regarded as torture.

## MONTHLY DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLIC EXECUTIONS IN 2013

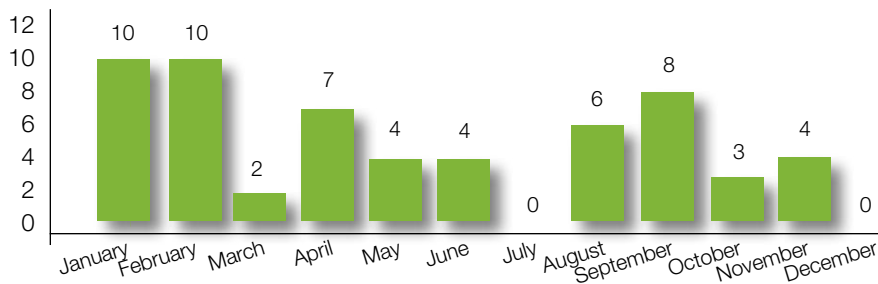


Diagram showing monthly distribution of public executions in Iran. Most of the executions were conducted in the first half of the year.

## GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLIC EXECUTIONS IN 2013

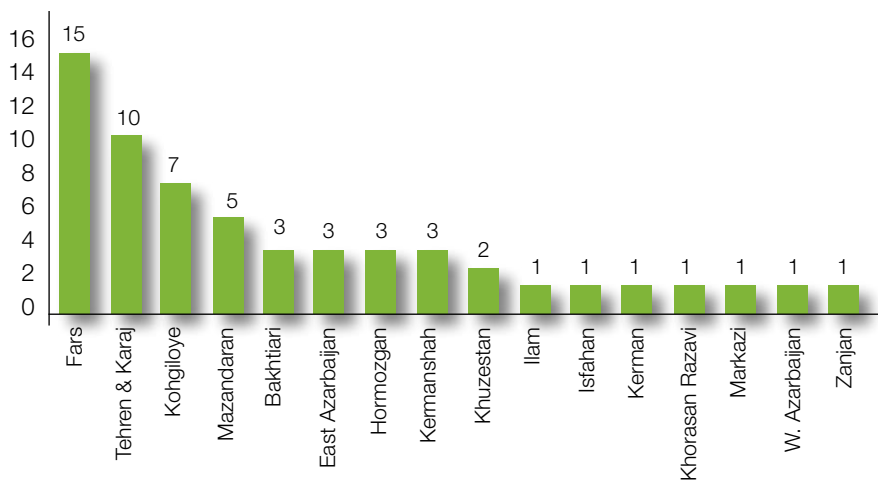


Diagram showing geographical distribution of public executions. As of last year, Fars (southern Iran) is the province with the highest number of public executions, followed by Tehran/Karaj and Kougiloye (south-west region).

## CHARGES

### CHARGES PUNISHABLE BY DEATH IN IRANIAN LAW

Several offences are punishable by death in Iranian law. Drug possession and trafficking, murder, rape/sexual assault and moharebeh were the most common charges used against those executed in 2013.

It is important to emphasize that lack of due process of law, unfair trials, forced confessions, the use of torture and the political nature of the Iranian judicial system are all major problems that must be kept in mind when analysing the use of the death penalty in Iran. These issues will be addressed in detail in future reports.

#### THE ISLAMIC PENAL CODE

Most of the charges punishable by death are described in the Islamic Penal Code (IPC). However, some charges such as drug-related offences are described in other legislations.

In April 2013, the Iranian Parliament finally passed the new Islamic Penal Code (IPC). On May 1, 2013 the IPC was ratified by the Guardian Council - and was communicated to the government for enforcement on May 29, 2013. It will be in force for a trial period of five years.

The new IPC has retained the death penalty in almost all the instances that were already punishable by death under the previous IPC. Moreover, it appears that its scope has been expanded in some cases. As in the previous draft of the IPC, the new version explicitly states (Article 220) that Article 167 of the Constitution can be invoked by the judge to pronounce hudud punishments that the law has not addressed: "the judge is bound to try each case on the basis of the codified law. In case of the absence of any such law, he has to deliver his judgment on the basis of authoritative Islamic sources and authentic fatwa. He, on the pretext of the silence of or deficiency of law in the matter, or its brevity or contradictory nature, cannot refrain from admitting and examining cases and delivering his judgment."

#### 1. NEW ISLAMIC PENAL CODE & OFFENCES PUNISHABLE BY DEATH

##### a) Sexual Offences

###### Incest and fornication

A death sentence shall be imposed on the male party in cases of incest, fornication with stepmother, fornication of a non-Muslim man with a Muslim woman and fornication by force or reluctance. The punishment for the female party shall be decided by other provisions concerning fornication (Article 224).

###### Adultery

Adultery between married parties is punishable by stoning (see below for more details).

###### Same-sex relations

Sodomy: A death sentence shall be imposed on the "active party" only if he is married or has forced the sexual act, but the "passive party" shall receive the death penalty regardless of marital status. A non-Muslim "active party" in a sexual act with a Muslim party shall also receive the death sentence (Article 234). The non-Muslim "active party" in same-sex relations not involving penetration shall also be sentenced to death.

Lesbianism shall be punished on the fourth occasion if “offenders” are sentenced and receive the lashing punishment on the first three occasions. This has not been specifically stated in the law, but can be inferred from the provisions of Article 136 on Repeat Offenders.

#### **b) Moharebeh**

Article 279 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 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.”

#### **c) “Corruption on Earth” & 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, against 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 centres or assists in establishing them.”

Article 286 does not offer concrete definitions for the term “crime” and the scope of “extensive;” therefore, this gives the judges more power to interpret the law at their own will.

Article 287 defines “rebels” as the members of any group that stage armed uprisings against the Islamic Republic of Iran, and stipulates that they shall be sentenced to death.

#### **d) Murder and Qisas**

Qisas refers to retribution in kind. The qisas death sentence has been retained for murder in the new IPC. Like the previous IPC, it exempts the following situations/people from qisas:

- Father and paternal grandfathers of the victim (Article 301);
- Killing of a person who has committed a ‘hodud’ offence punishable by death (Article 302);
- Killing a rapist (Article 302);
- A man who kills his wife and her lover in the act of adultery (Article 302);
- Muslims, followers of recognised religions, and “protected persons” who kill followers of unrecognised religions or “non-protected persons” (Article 310).

The law indirectly encourages arbitrary killings by private individuals. Experts believe, for instance, that Article 301 and 302 might be contributing to the increased number of honor killings in Iran. The law also discriminates against followers of “unrecognised” religions. Article 301 says: “qisas shall be established...if the victim is sane and has the same religion as the culprit. Note: If the victim is Muslim, the non-Muslim status of the culprit shall not prevent qisas.” This concerns, in particular, members of the Bahai faith, which is not recognised as a religion, according to Iranian law. If a Bahai follower is murdered, the family does not receive blood money (Diyeh), and the offender is exempted from qisas.<sup>19</sup> In 2013, there were two reported Baha’is murder cases. On April 23rd, Saeedollah Aqdasi was murdered in his house in Miandoab (Northwestern Iran)<sup>20</sup> and Ataollah Rezvani was shot in Bandar Abbas (Southern Iran) on August 24th;<sup>21</sup> none of these cases have been properly investigated.<sup>22</sup>

19 <http://cshr.org.uk/human-rights-portal/1823>

20 HRANA: Lack of investigation in murder case of a Bahai citizen

21 [http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/iran/2013/08/130819\\_u04\\_bahai\\_rezvani\\_killing.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/iran/2013/08/130819_u04_bahai_rezvani_killing.shtml)

22 <http://www.radiozamaneh.com/125291>

**e) Other Religious “Offences”**

Article 262 stipulates the death sentence for cursing the Prophet of Islam, any of the other grand prophets or for accusing the infallible imams and the Prophet Mohammad’s daughter, Fatima Zahra, of sodomy or fornication. Recently, the Iranian Supreme Court upheld the death sentence of Ruhollah Tavana for insulting the Prophet.<sup>23</sup>

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 can impose by invoking Article 167 of the Constitution.

**f) Repeat Offenders**

Article 136 stipulates that repeat offenders who commit an offence punishable by hudud, and who are punished for each offence, shall be sentenced to death on the fourth occasion. This Article has failed to specify the hudud offences and has only mentioned the death sentence for fourth-occasion theft in Article 278. Nevertheless, Articles 220-288 have defined the hudud offences as follows: fornication and adultery, sodomy, lesbianism, pimping, cursing the prophets, theft, drinking alcohol, qadf (false accusation of sodomy or fornication), moharebeh, corruption on earth and rebellion.

**g) Stoning**

The IPC has retained the punishment of stoning for those charged with adultery while married (Article 225). Furthermore, the courts have been provided with an alternative to impose the death sentence upon the approval from the Chief Justice “if it is not possible to perform stoning.”

**h) Juveniles & the Death Penalty**

The new IPC retains death sentence for juveniles. Although Articles 89-95 suggest corrective measures and alternative punishments for children and juveniles, Article 91 is very clear that the offences punishable by hudud or qisas are exceptions to this rule. It is important to note that almost all juvenile offenders executed in the past 7 years were sentenced to death based on qisas and hudud clauses.

Article 91: For offences punishable by hudud or qisas, mature persons younger than 18 shall be sentenced to the punishments stipulated in this chapter (Articles 89-95) if they do not understand the nature of the offence committed or its prohibition or if there are doubts about their maturity or development of their reasoning.

The Article leaves it to the discretion of the judge to decide if a juvenile offender understood the nature of the offence and was mature at the time of committing the offence and thus can impose the death sentence on them. The Note to Article 91 authorises, but does not require, the court to seek the opinion of the Forensic Medical Department or to use any other means to reach a verdict.

Moreover, while Article 146 provides that immature persons do not have criminal responsibility, Article 147 repeats the provisions of the previous law and the Civil Code regarding maturity and the age of criminal responsibility. Girls are mature at the age of 9 lunar years and boys at the age of 15 lunar years. Therefore, a girl older than 8.7 years and a boy older than 14.6 years can be sentenced to death.

Former MP and deputy chairperson of the Laws Review Committee of Parliament, Mussa Qorbani, who was involved in drafting and editing the new IPC, confirmed that children and juveniles will continue to be sentenced to death under the new IPC: “This law is based on the implementation of the qisas and hudud except in cases where a juvenile does not know about

23 [http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/iran/2014/02/140220\\_u07\\_rohollah\\_tavana\\_human\\_rights\\_campaign.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/iran/2014/02/140220_u07_rohollah_tavana_human_rights_campaign.shtml)

the criminal nature of the action. On the other hand, if a juvenile knowingly commits murder, he/she shall remain in the correctional facility if he/she is younger than 18 and shall receive the qisas after reaching the legal age, as has been the procedure before.”<sup>24</sup>

The juvenile offenders executed in 2013 stayed in prison or correctional facilities until they reached the age of 18 and were then executed (see the “Juvenile Offenders” part of report).

## 2. OTHER LEGISLATION: DEATH SENTENCE FOR DRUG-RELATED CHARGES

Besides the IPC, a number of other laws also provide for the death penalty. These include the “Audiovisual Offences Law” and the “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 kilos 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.

### **Denial of the right to appeal**

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. Only the Attorney General or the head of the Supreme Court can appeal the death sentence for such convictions. In practice, the head of the Supreme Court does not get involved and the prosecutor is certainly far from impartial as he is the party who demands the imposition of the death sentence on defendants.

## EXECUTIONS IN 2013 BASED ON CHARGES

Lack of transparency, due process of law, unfair trials, forced confessions, the use of torture and the political nature of the Iranian judicial system are all major problems that must be kept in mind when analysing the charges used against those sentenced to death in Iran. The charges used in our analysis are the charges given to the prisoners by the Iranian judicial system and have therefore not been confirmed by independent sources. A recent article published in the Iranian newspapers about a man who was proved innocent 48 hours before his execution is yet another document revealing the widespread use of torture under interrogation and forced confessions, which are used as a basis for delivering death sentences in Iran (see below).<sup>25</sup> These issues will be addressed in detail in future reports.

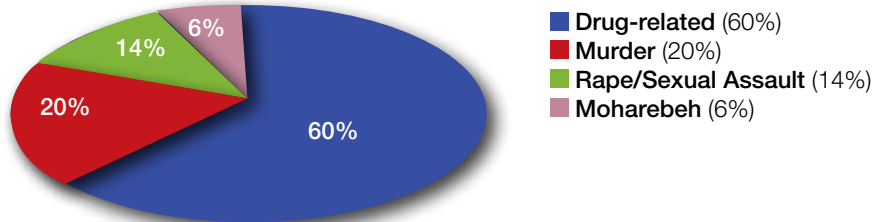
A death row prisoner who confessed to a murder was proved innocent 48 hours before his scheduled execution, according to the Iranian daily “Jam-e-Jam” on December 22, 2013. The man who was not identified by name, had been sentenced to death for the murder of one of his employees six years ago. The report stated that 48 hours before the scheduled execution, another person was arrested and confessed to the same murder. According to the report, the man who was proved innocent said, “Six years ago when I was charged for the murder, I was beaten so much that I thought, if I don’t confess, I will die as a result of the beating.” The man continued: “During these six years, my wife divorced me, my son became a drug addict and my father sold all he had to pay for my lawyer.”

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.maavanews.ir/Default.aspx?tabid=4355&articleType=ArticleView&articleId=70835>

<sup>25</sup> <http://iranhr.net/2013/12/proved-innocent-48-hours-before-execution-had-been-tortured-to-confess/>

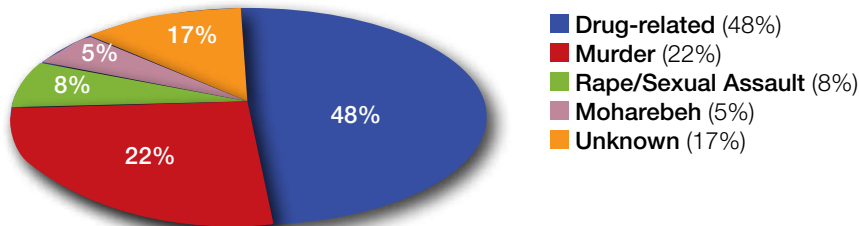
The charts below show the charges used against those who were executed in 2013 in Iran. The upper chart is based on the execution reports announced by the authorities where all the “alleged” charges are known. The lower chart is based on the total number of executions, including secret or unannounced executions. This latter group includes a larger number of cases where the exact charges are not confirmed.

**CHARGES FOR THE OFFICIAL EXECUTIONS**



Drug-related charges accounted for the majority of the officially announced executions, followed by murder (qisas), rape or sexual assault and moharebeh. In this chart, moharebeh also includes those charged with “corruption on earth.”

**CHARGES OF TOTAL EXECUTIONS**



Charges for about 17% of the total executions are unknown. The proportion of the charges in this chart differ from those in the official executions chart.

**DRUG-RELATED CHARGES**

As in the past five years, drug-related charges accounted for the highest number of executions compared to other charges. At least 328 people who were executed were convicted of drug-related charges. All drug convicts are tried by the Revolutionary Courts behind closed doors and the identities of most of them are not reported by the official media. IHR has also received reports this year on unfair trials and torture in drug-related charges. Iranian authorities claim that the executions are meant to fight the international drug trafficking. The Iranian Chief Justice, Mohammad Javad Larijani, recently stated that most of those executed for drug-related charges were on their way to Europe and the USA.<sup>26</sup> In fact, many of these people were arrested inside Iran and not in the border areas, with alleged charges of possession or trafficking of narcotic drugs. The majority of drug-related executions were also conducted in the central provinces (see diagram).

26 <http://www.khabaronline.ir/detail/288914/society/judiciary>

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF DRUG-RELATED EXECUTIONS IN 2013

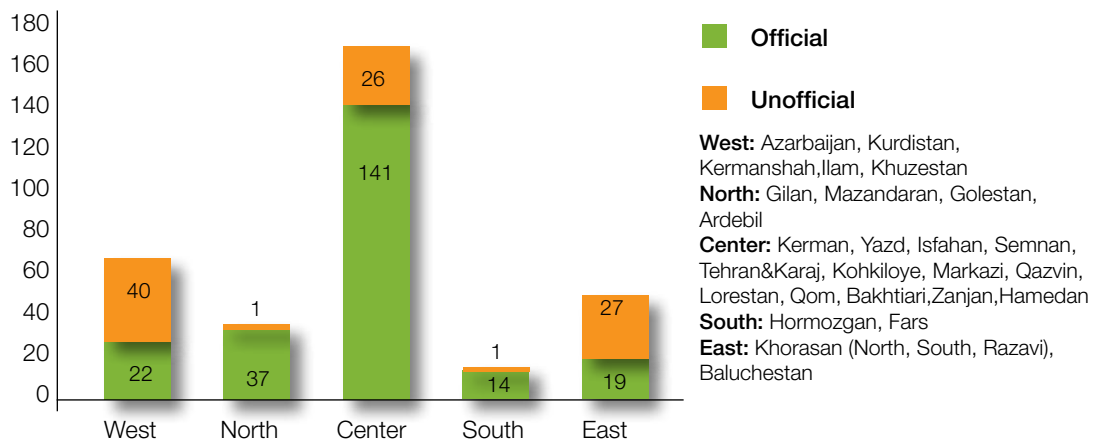
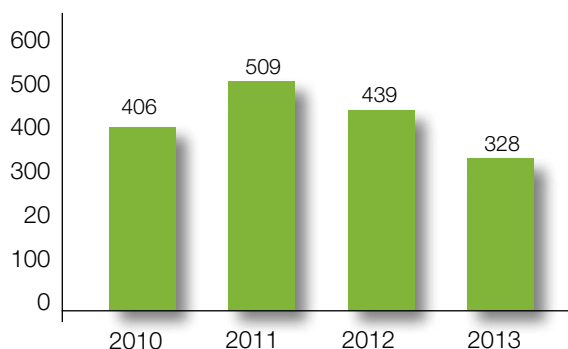


Chart above shows geographical distribution of the drug-related executions in 2013. Most of the executions take place in the central regions of Iran and not in the provinces with borders to the neighboring countries

DRUG-RELATED EXECUTIONS 2010-2013

Drug-related executions in the last 4 years:



The chart above shows drug-related executions according to the IHR annual reports from 2010-2013. The numbers are 25% lower in 2013 compared to 2012.

The relative fall in the number of drug-related executions in 2013 may be related to the increased attention these executions have received in the past two years, and particularly UNODC's cooperation with Iran on fighting drug trafficking. In the past couple of years IHR, ECPM and several human rights groups have called on UNODC to halt its cooperation with Iran and condition it on a moratorium on the death penalty for drug-related charges.<sup>27 28</sup> In 2013, the Danish government decided to stop its funding to the UNODC drug fighting program in Iran, in order to stop contributing to the execution of several hundred people every year. Several other countries such as Ireland and Norway have done the same.<sup>29</sup> It remains to be seen whether the fall in execution numbers will continue. However, it is important to emphasize that drug-related charges still account for several hundred executions every year in Iran, and that drug-related charges are not among the most serious crimes and the executions are in breach of international law. IHR and ECPM continue their call for an international campaign for a moratorium on drug-related charges.

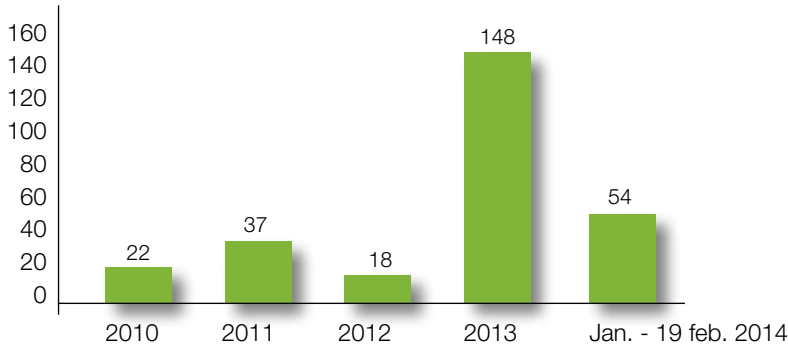
27 <http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/08/21/iran-donors-should-reassess-anti-drug-funding>

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

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

QISAS

Murder is punishable by death by qisas, or retribution. In 2013, at least 148 of the people who were executed were convicted of murder. This is an eightfold increase compared to 2012 and represents a strong increase compared to the last 4 years (see the diagram below). This trend continues in 2014: by February 28th, at least 62 people who were executed in Iran were convicted of murder. This is more than three times higher than the total amount of executions for murder in 2012.



This diagram shows qisas executions since 2010. In 2013, there was a dramatic increase in the number of qisas executions. The trend continues in 2014.

It is unclear whether the increase in the number of qisas cases is a coordinated compensation for the relative decrease in the number of executions for drug-related charges. However, reports from IHR's sources inside Iran indicate that authorities are focusing their attention on "solving" the qisas issue, which has been supported by recent statements made by the justice officials in the media. After a recent visit from the Chief of the Iranian Judiciary Sadegh Larijani, the head of branch 107 of public courts in Gorgan (northern Iran), Hojatoleslam Koulaei stated that 90 cases regarding prisoners sentenced to death by qisas have been sent to the Judiciary and is awaiting the Chief of Justice's order to carry out the executions.<sup>30</sup> Gorgan is the capital of the Golestan province, which has a population of about 250,000 people and is regarded as a small to medium-sized city in Iran.

According to Iranian law and practice in case of murder, it is the "right" of the victim's family to claim retribution. In many cases, the authorities even encourage the victim's family members to conduct the execution. IHR (and ECPM) condemn this practice as a form of punishment, which, according to international law, is the responsibility of the state to carry out.



On October 5, 2013, two men identified as "M. S." (37) and "A. T." (33) were hanged in public in the "Shahar Niai" Boulevard of Babol. They were convicted of murdering a man and his wife along with their two children. The execution was carried out by a family member of the victims (see picture). IHR strongly condemned the executions and Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam, the spokesperson for IHR stated: "We also condemn the Iranian authorities for allowing the victims' family, who have already suffered the loss of their loved ones, to conduct the executions. This is nothing other than promoting a culture of murder and brutality in society."<sup>31</sup>

30 <http://ebrat.ir/?part=news&inc=news&id=52725>

31 <http://iranhr.net/2013/10/two-prisoners-executed-publicly-in-northern-iran/>



## MOHAREBEH AND CORRUPTION ON EARTH

In 2013, 29 people who were executed were convicted of moharebeh and corruption on earth. This includes people who are charged with armed robbery, affiliation with political opposition groups and those charged with "terrorism." An over-representation of prisoners from ethnic groups such as Baluchis, Kurds and Arabs are included in this group.

### Conviction of Moharebeh for mugging charges:



Two young men were publicly hanged in Tehran in the early morning of January 20, 2013. The young men were identified as "Alireza Mafiha" 23 years old and "Mohammad Ali Sarvari," 20 years old (see picture). They were arrested after mugging a man on a Tehran street on December 1, 2012. A video of the episode, captured by a surveillance camera, was posted on YouTube. It showed four young men mugging a man and one of them was holding a knife. The young men were arrested two weeks later, charged by a Tehran court with moharebeh (waging war

against God) and "corruption on earth," and were sentenced to death. The death sentences were publicly carried out five weeks after their arrest. One of the young men was quoted saying, "I know what I did was wrong, but I didn't think the punishment would be death." Mehr, a state-run news agency, reported that the dead bodies were left hanging from the crane for "17 minutes."

Others who were executed with charges of "moharebeh" and "corruption on earth" include several convictions of armed robbery, two prisoners were convicted of espionage (executed on May 19th, in Tehran's Evin prison), and several prisoners in the ethnic regions of Iran. An overview of some of those executed in the ethnic regions of Iran is given under the section "Ethnic minorities."

## ETHNIC MINORITIES

Charges such as moharebeh and corruption on earth have traditionally been used against armed opposition groups and people with connections to these groups. Furthermore, using such charges against political and civil rights activists is not rare in Iran. Members of different ethnic minorities such as Arabs, Baluchis and Kurds are overrepresented in this group. There have been many reports on torture, forced confessions and unfair trials in such cases.

### Execution of four Ahwazi Arab activists:



Four Ahwazi Arab activists were secretly executed and news of their executions was published by human rights groups and numerous media outside Iran.<sup>32</sup> **Ghazi Abbasi, Abdul-Reza Amir-Khanafereh, Abdul-Amir Mojaddami and Jasim Moghaddam Panah** (see picture) were sentenced to death by Branch 1 of the Ahwaz Revolution court on August 15, 2012. They were convicted of “moharebeh” and “corruption on earth” (ifsad fil-arz). The death sentences were upheld by the Supreme Court in February, although it is believed

that the lawyer representing Abdul-Reza Amir-Khanafereh was still in the process of appealing the conviction before the executions. The charges were in relation to a series of shootings that allegedly led to the deaths of a police officer and a soldier. On February 13, 2013, Branch 32 of the Supreme Court upheld the four death sentences. All four men have denied any involvement in the shootings, stating that their “confessions” were obtained under torture, among other ill-treatment, which they reportedly recanted in court. However, their claims of torture have not been investigated by either the Revolutionary Court of Ahwaz or by the Supreme Court.<sup>33</sup> The Iranian authorities took the four Ahwazi prisoners from the Karoun prison on November 3rd where they were being detained and held incommunicado by the Ministry of Intelligence without access to lawyers or family members. The executions are believed to have occurred some time between November 3rd and the beginning of December. Neither the family or lawyers were informed prior to the executions and the authorities have not yet given the bodies back to the families for burial and no mourning services were allowed.

### Arab activists in danger of execution:

Two Ahwazi Arab activists with similar charges were executed in January 2014. Hadi Rashidian and Hashem Sha'bani were teachers and members of the Al-hiwar (dialogue) group involved in cultural and civil rights activities. Three other members of Al-hiwar, **Mohammad-Ali Amouri and brothers Seyed Mokhtar Alboshokeh and Seyed Jaber Alboshokeh**, are still on death row and are in danger of being executed.<sup>34</sup>

### Execution of Baluchi prisoners:

Baluchi prisoners make up the biggest group among those executed who are charged with moharebeh and corruption on earth.

16 prisoners were hanged on October 26th in a Zahedan prison (capital of the Sistan-Baluchistan province, southeast Iran). Mohammad Marzieh, the public and revolutionary prosecutor of Zahedan, announced that the 16 individuals were executed that morning in “retaliation” of a border attack a day earlier.<sup>35</sup> The armed Sunni group, Jaish-ul-Adl (Army of

32 <http://iranhr.net/2013/12/iran-human-rights-condemns-execution-of-four-ahwazi-political-prisoners-3/>

33 Amnesty International: Ahwazi Arab men at risk of imminent execution- 4 October 2013

34 <http://iranhr.net/2013/08/danger-of-execution-for-ahwazi-arab-activists/>

35 <http://www.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=13920804000374>



Justice), had allegedly killed 14 border guards in the city of Saravan of the same province, near the Pakistan border.

The retaliative execution of the Baluchi prisoners led to widespread condemnation by the international community.<sup>36</sup>

Authorities announced later that eight of those executed had been convicted of “enmity against God” (moharebeh) and “corruption on earth” (ifsad fil-arz) for their alleged membership in an armed militant group in the Sistan-Baluchestan Province. The other eight individuals were convicted of drugs offences.<sup>37</sup>

The day after the executions in Zahedan, another Baluchi prisoner was hanged in a Khoramabad prison (western Iran) for moharebeh and for being a member of the Abdolmalek Rigi (Jondollah) group.<sup>38</sup>

### Execution of Kurdish prisoners:

Three Kurdish political prisoners charged with moharebeh and corruption on earth were hanged in October and November 2013. Neither the lawyers or families in any of the three cases were informed prior to the execution.

Among those executed was Habibollah Golparipour. On the morning of October 25th, he was transferred from solitary confinement in a Urmia Prison, West Azerbaijan Province, northwest of Iran, to an unknown location and executed that same evening. His family was not notified beforehand. After his execution, the Iranian authorities reportedly refused to hand over his body to his family, adding to their distress.

Bultannews, a website associated with the Iranian Intelligence Ministry, confirmed the execution the following day and published a photoshopped picture (right) of Shirko Moarefi carrying weapons.<sup>39</sup> The original picture is on the left.



36 <http://iranhr.net/2014/01/un-rights-experts-urge-the-iranian-authorities-to-stop-the-executions/>

37 <http://www.farsnews.com/printable.php?nn=13920808000141>

38 <http://iranhr.net/2013/10/two-more-executions-in-iran/>

39 Bultannews-5 November 2013



Habibollah Golparipour was sentenced to death in a five-minute trial in March 2010. He was arrested in September of the previous year in northwestern Iran and convicted of moharebeh and corruption on earth because of his alleged cooperation with a banned armed group, the Party For Free Life of Kurdistan (PJAK). According to court documents, he denied any armed activity and subsequently wrote a letter to Iran's Supreme Leader, alleging that he was tortured during interrogation – but these allegations were never investigated. The court documents also state that he was arrested carrying books and documents belonging to PJAK, with no mention of any weapons.

**Reza Esmaili** (34 years old), a Kurdish political prisoner, was hanged in the Salmas prison (West Azerbaijan) on October 27th. Like Golparipour, Esmaili was also convicted of moharebeh and being a member of the PJAK (see above).

**Shirkoo Moarefi** (34 years old), a Kurdish political prisoner from Baneh, was hanged in the Saghez prison (Iranian Kurdistan) on November 4th. He was arrested on the Iran-Iraq border while he was attempting to return to Iran from Iraqi Kurdistan in 2008. He was sentenced to death on the charge of moharebeh, “being a member of the Komalah Party,” and “acting against national security.”

**Hiva Tab**, Hamid Khoshnavaz, Kamal Hashemi, Moslem Rashidi and Hiva (known as Chaleh) were executed on October 10th in a Sanandaj prison (Iranian Kurdistan).<sup>40</sup> The executions were not announced by the authorities. They were all former members of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) and were convicted of terrorist acts and murdering Sunni clerics in Kurdistan.

#### **Kurdish Prisoners in Danger of Execution:**

At least 12 Kurdish prisoners may be in imminent danger of execution. 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. 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 Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran, convicted of moharebeh (enmity against God) and “acts against the nation's security.”<sup>41</sup>

Human rights groups have also warned of the danger of the execution of two Kurdish political prisoners, Zanyar and Loghman Moradi, 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.<sup>42</sup>

#### **Executions in West Azerbaijan Province:**

The prison in the the Iranian West Azerbaijan capital, Urmia (Oroumieh), is one of the prisons with the highest numbers of secret executions. Many Azer and Kurdish prisoners are among those executed in the Urmia prison (see under Unofficial Executions).

40 <https://hra-news.org/fa/execution/1-15368>

41 <http://iranhr.net/2013/10/four-kurdish-sunni-prisoners-of-conscience-in-imminent-danger-of-execution/>

42 [amnesty.org/en/news/iran-lives-two-kurdish-death-row-inmates-risk-amid-surge-executions-2013-10-28](http://amnesty.org/en/news/iran-lives-two-kurdish-death-row-inmates-risk-amid-surge-executions-2013-10-28)

## JUVENILE OFFENDERS

In 2013, IHR received reports of at least 9 executions where the prisoner was a juvenile (under 18 years old) at the time of committing the alleged offence. In all the 9 cases, the prisoner was charged with murder and sentenced to death (qisas). Except for one of the executions where a local newspaper had explicitly mentioned the age of the prisoner at the time of committing the alleged crime,<sup>43</sup> all other reports are from unofficial sources. Confirming such reports is difficult and is often extremely risky. All the reported cases are shown in Table 1, Annex II.

Other than published reports, IHR has presently had direct access to the sources for three of the cases, who include:

**1.** An 18-year-old boy identified as “Morteza” was executed in Kazeroun (Fars Province) in September. According to a local newspaper, and IHR’s sources, the boy was 14-years-old at the time of committing the alleged murder.

**2.** An unidentified boy, who had just turned 18, was hanged on February 13th in Vakilabad Prison in Mashhad. He was convicted of a murder he committed when he was a juvenile. According to sources, he was under a narcotic-induced psychosis at the time of committing the offence. The story was published by IHR.<sup>44</sup>

**3.** Iraj Nasiri was hanged in a Urmia prison (West Azerbaijan) on December 18, 2013. He was convicted of a murder that he allegedly committed before turning 15.<sup>45</sup> He was in an Urmia prison for more than six years before he was executed. The news of the execution was originally published by a Mukrian news agency, but IHR confirmed the news independently.

## WOMEN

At least 30 women were executed in 2013 in Iran. 10 of the executions were reported by official sources. However, it is important to emphasize the fact that for about 70% of all executions, either the prisoners are only identified by their initials or not identified at all. Therefore, confirming the gender based on the name of those executed is not possible. Details concerning the 30 women who were executed in 2013 are shown in the Annex II (at the end of the document). According to the human rights group, Human Rights and Democracy Activists in Iran (HRDAI), one woman, identified as Giti Marami (34 years old), was flogged 100 times before her execution. She was executed on May 22nd in a Gharchak prison in Varamin (near Tehran). No information regarding her charges is available.<sup>46</sup>

### Some facts about the women executed in 2013:

- 30 total executions, only 9 were announced by authorities;
- 21 of those executed were convicted of drug-related charges;
- 5 women were convicted of murder and sentenced to qisas.

43 <http://iranhr.net/2013/09/execution-of-juveniles-in-iran-prisoner-executed-for-murder-committed-at-age-14/>

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

45 <http://www.radiozamaneh.com/114747>

46 HRDAI: Woman executed after being flogged 100 times

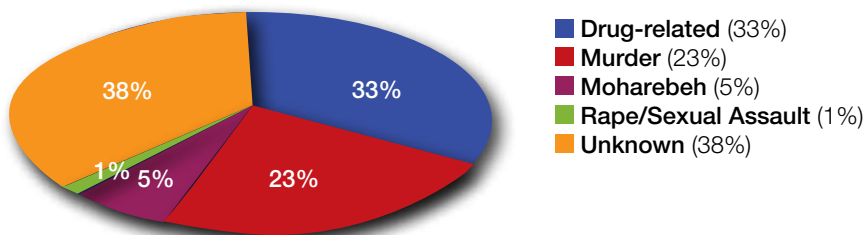
## SECRET AND UNANNOUNCED EXECUTIONS

As in the previous years, IHR has received several hundred reports on executions that Iranian authorities have not announced. Some of these executions have been carried out secretly (without informing the family or the lawyer before the execution, as the Iranian law requires), and some have just simply not been officially announced. Only the unofficial cases where there has been a sufficient amount of information, or where IHR has managed to independently confirm the executions, have been included in this report. IHR has received reports regarding more than 130 executions which, due to insufficient details, have not been included in this report. Besides the Rajaishahr and Ghezelhesar prisons in the Tehran/Karaj area, where prisoners from all over the country are being held, the highest number of secret or unannounced executions were confirmed in the Zahedan (Baluchistan Province; mainly Baluchi prisoners) and Urmia prisons (West Azerbaijan, mainly Kurdish and Azeri prisoners). This indicates that the death row prisoners belonging to ethnic groups like Baluchis, Kurds and Azeris are overrepresented in secret and unannounced executions.

### Some facts about the secret or unannounced executions:

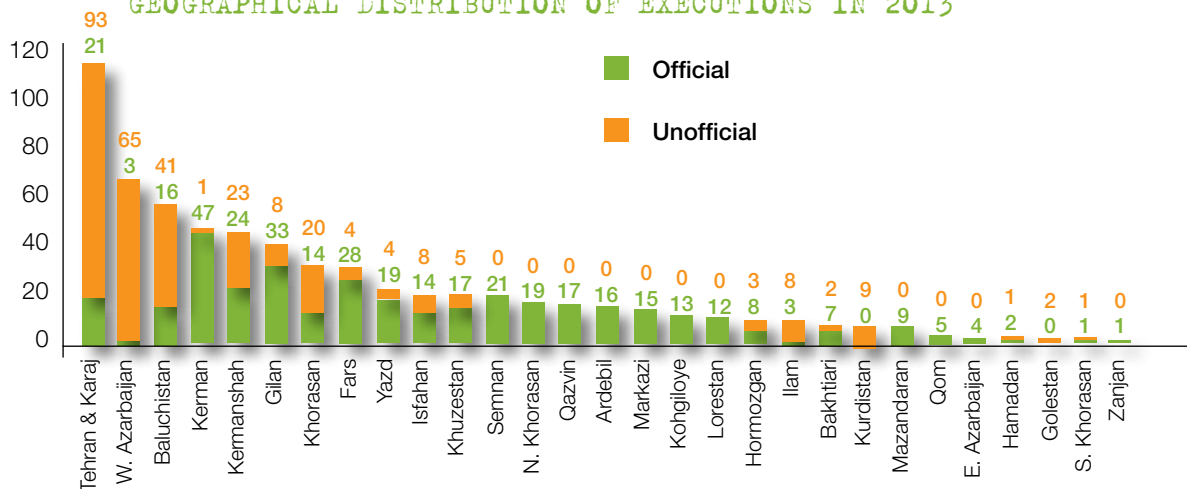
- At least 299 secret or unannounced executions were carried out in 2013 in Iran;
- Charges for 114 executions (38%) could not be confirmed with certainty;
- The main charges known were drug-related (33%) and murder (23%);
- 70% of the executions took place in the second half of the year (after the presidential elections);
- Prisoners belonging to different ethnic minority groups are overrepresented among the unofficial executions;
- 130 additional reported executions are not included in the 2013 figures.

### CHARGES FOR THE UNOFFICIAL EXECUTIONS



The main charges used in unofficial executions are drug-related and murder. 38% of secret or unannounced executions are unknown.

### GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF EXECUTIONS IN 2013



This diagram shows the geographical distribution of all the executions, including both official (green) and unofficial (yellow) executions. Prisons in Tehran/Karaj (Rajaishahr, Ghezelhesar and Evin); West Azerbaijan (Urmia) and Baluchistan (Zahedan) were the prisons with the

highest number of secret or unannounced executions. While the prisons in Tehran/Karaj house prisoners from all over the country, the prisoners in Urmia and Zahedan provinces are mainly from ethnic regions such as Kurdistan, Azerbaijan and Baluchistan. Baluchi and Kurdish prisoners are occasionally executed in other prisons as well. Kerman is the province with the highest number of official executions.

## SECRET EXECUTIONS IN VAKILABAD

In February 2013, Iran Human Rights (IHR) reported that secret executions in the Vakilabad prison had resumed after a halt that lasted several months due to international reactions. According to this report, executions began in October 2012 and have been taking place every Wednesday and Sunday of each week. On a few occasions there have been three weekly executions and at least ten prisoners are hanged at each execution. In November, approximately thirty-five prisoners were executed and about fifty were executed in December. The executions took place in complete secrecy, and the prison phone lines were cut off several hours before the executions. Neither the prisoners nor their families or lawyers (if they had any) were informed about the executions in advance. This information is based on reliable sources from the Vakilabad prison.

Due to insufficient details, only a minimum number of executions that occurred on February 10th and February 13th (10 executions on each occasion) are included in the annual report.

According to these reports, at least ten prisoners were executed on February 10th, while the number of prisoners executed on Wednesday, February 13th was much higher. Most of those executed were convicted of drug-related charges. However, a possible juvenile offender, a young boy who had just turned 18 and convicted of murder, was among those executed on February 13th. According to our sources, the boy was allegedly a minor and under a narcotic-induced psychosis when he committed the offence.

IHR has also received reports about a significant number of Afghan prisoners who were 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 in a section of the Mashhad Cemetery (Behesht-e-Reza) along with the bodies of the other prisoners secretly executed 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 the executions of Afghans in Vakilabad. On February 23rd, BBC Persian reported that the bodies of five Afghan prisoners, who were executed in Iran, were buried in the Kalafgan district of the Takhar Province in Afghanistan.<sup>47</sup> Quoting the families of those executed, the report claims that about 80 people from this district have been executed in the last six months in Iran. The report stated that 50 bodies were transferred to Afghanistan while the remaining bodies were being stored in cold rooms in Iran.

## UNCONFIRMED SECRET EXECUTIONS NOT INCLUDED IN THIS REPORT

The following execution reports are not included in the 2013 figures because of insufficient details:

- About 110 reported executions in the Vakilabad prison between January 2nd and February 6th;
- 11 executions for drug-related charges in the Ghezelhesar prison in Karaj (February 19th);
- 9 executions in the Tabriz prison: 3 for drug-related charges and 9 for murder (November 21st).

47 [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)

## EXECUTION OF AFGHAN CITIZENS IN IRAN

The execution of Afghan citizens continued in 2013 in Iran. Although the official Iranian sources reported less than 10 executions of Afghans, there is strong evidence suggesting a much higher number of Afghans being executed in Iran. However, due to the reactions by Afghan civil society and to the political sensitivity that this issue carries, execution of Afghan citizens are often unannounced or kept secret by the authorities. Many of the Afghan prisoners on death row are kept in Mashhad's Vakilabad prison or in other prisons in the three Khorasan provinces. Reports from Afghanistan show that the number of executed Afghan citizens in Iran is relatively high. A report published by "Al Jazeera" in June 2013 has shed some light on this issue:<sup>48</sup>

"The grieving mother of 21-year-old Kamal Uddin weeps in the doorway as village elders recite verses from the Quran on the second floor of the family's mud-brick home in northern Afghanistan.

Kamal left four years ago to find work in Iran, just like many other ethnic Tajiks from the impoverished village of Zir-e Shakh in Takhar province's Kalafgan district, 260 kilometres north of the capital Kabul.

Imprisoned on drug charges in Iran's notorious Vakilabad prison in the city of Mashhad, Kamal was hanged late last year - about the same time Iranian authorities are accused of resuming mass executions of prisoners - many for minor crimes such as drug possession.

Kamal's father, Mullah Mohammad Youssef, received word of his son's death through friends. Youssef says the last time he spoke to his son was a year ago.

"He convinced me that he would be released soon. He said to me, 'Dear father, don't worry about me.'"

Youssef tried several times to get his son's body back, but the Iranian government refused to hand it over, he says.

"No one can bring back corpses from Vakilabad prison," Youssef told Al Jazeera. "Other prisons give the body back. Only Vakilabad's rules are different. I have no idea why."

Human rights groups estimate more than 4,000 Afghans are currently on death row in Iran, most for drug-related offences. Village elders here say they have compiled a list of more than 100 names of those executed in the past six months, 80 of those bodies have been returned.

The majority of Afghans are locked up in Mashhad's Vakilabad prison. Others are incarcerated at the Ghezel Hesar prison in Karaj, west of the Iranian capital Tehran, and the Kerman and Zahedan's central prisons also hold a large number of Afghans, says Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam, Iran Human Rights (IHR) spokesman in Norway.

Schoolteacher Qari Mohammad Amin told Al Jazeera he recently travelled to Iran to gather his brother Habibullah's body, after he too was executed on drug charges. Amin's wife said the body was badly bruised from beatings.

"Of course the dead bodies from Iran are increasing," said local villager Shamsurham, 32, who gave only one name. "But most of the bodies are buried in Iran. Poor families can't afford to bring the bodies back."

48 <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/06/201366102037670360.html>



## RECOMMENDATIONS TO:

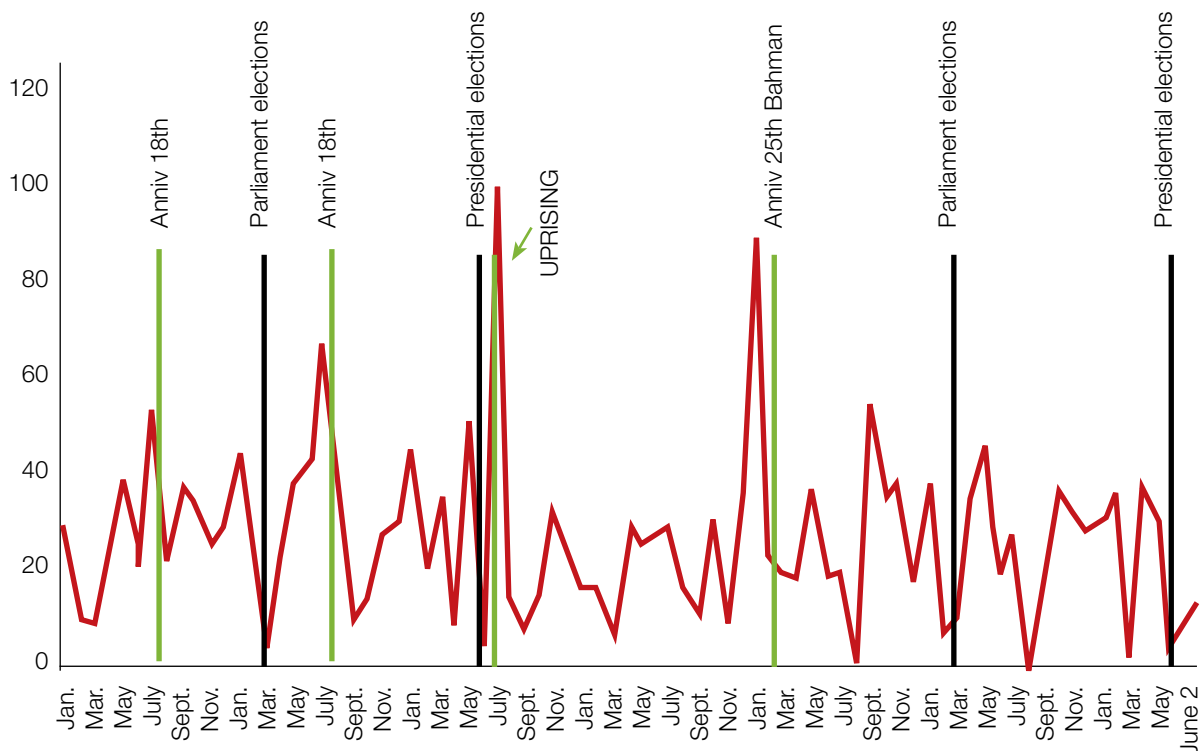
### THE UNITED NATIONS

- Renew the mandate of the Special Rapporteur in Iran.
- Appoint a fact-finding mission to investigate the reports of secret executions, especially the executions of Ahwazi Arab prisoners.
- Ban public executions.

### THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

- Put the death penalty on top of the agenda in all exchanges with the Iranian authorities.
- Require procedural transparency from Iranian authorities and guarantee fair trials.
- Call on the Iranian authorities to implement a moratorium on executions and demand an immediate halt to public executions.
- Require compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by Iran in 1991, which prohibits the execution of juveniles in terms of their age when the offense was committed, and not their age when the execution will take place.
- Request an immediate halt to discriminatory practices against ethnic and religious minorities.
- Demand from the countries funding the UNODC international programs that fight against international drug trafficking to impose the creation of a Criminal Justice Commission in Iran as a condition of their donation, in order to guarantee the transparency of procedures and a moratorium on death sentences for those convicted of drug trafficking.

# ANNEX I RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLITICAL EVENTS AND THE DEATH PENALTY TRENDS IN IRAN



Iran Human Rights, July 11th: After a short break leading up to the June 14th presidential election, a new wave of executions began on June 20th in Iran. According to official media sources, 38 people were executed in the last three weeks. Additionally, at least 44 executions were reported by human rights groups during the same period; however, these executions were not announced by Iranian authorities or by the media. According to the official and unofficial reports, at least 82 prisoners were executed in different Iranian cities during the three weeks that followed the June 14th election.

The Annual Death Penalty Report published by Iran Human Rights for 2012 shows that between 70 and 80% of those executed in Iran were convicted of drug-related charges. Iranian authorities have repeatedly claimed that the high number of executions in Iran is due to Iran's struggle against international drug trafficking, since Iran is on the transit line between Afghanistan and Europe.

Iran Human Rights (IHR) and other human rights groups have previously claimed that Iranian authorities use the death penalty as an instrument to spread fear throughout society in order to prevent protests and to remain in power.

Following is IHR's analysis of the relationship between the number of executions and political events in Iran from 2007 to 2013. Only the executions that were reported by authorities are included in this analysis. The analysis summary is shown in the diagram above.

The analysis shows that:

- The number of executions in Iran dropped significantly in the weeks leading up to the presidential or parliamentary elections (black vertical lines).
- The months before and after the elections executions reached a peak.
- The highest number of monthly executions took place in July 2009, the month when the post-election protests started.
- A peak in executions is noticeable prior to when protests are expected, such as on the anniversary of the student uprising in 1999 (July 9th, 18th of Tir) and the anniversary of February 14, 2009 (25 Bahman).
- The green vertical lines in the diagram indicate periods when the authorities fear uprisings.
- The number of announced executions is low during the Persian New Year (Norooz, March) and the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. However, numbers are generally high around Christmas and in January.
- IHR is currently conducting a more detailed analysis of the execution trends in the last decade in Iran. The results will be presented in the near future.

Commenting on the present analysis Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam, the international spokesperson for IHR states: “The present analysis indicates that there is a significant correlation between execution trends and political events in Iran. It seems that Iranian authorities occasionally choose the timing of executions in a coordinated and non-arbitrary manner. In general, execution numbers are high when authorities fear protests and the numbers are low when the world’s focus is on Iran.”

Regarding the low number of executions during the elections, Amiry-Moghaddam declares that “one possibility [for the decrease in executions] might be because during elections, the authorities have to allow more space to the public in order to encourage people’s participation in the elections. Furthermore, during the elections, international journalists visit Iran one week before and after the elections. However, in the weeks prior to and after the elections, the number of executions peak.”

## ANNEX II LIST OF REPORTED JUVENILE EXECUTIONS IN 2013

Name	Date of execution	Place of Execution	Age at Execution	Age at the time of committing the offence	Source	Confirmation status
Not Known	13.02.2013	Vakilabad Mashhad	18	?	IHR	
Saeed Afshar	03.07.2013	Rajaishahr Karaj	25	15	HRDAI	
Arman Mohammadi	20.08.2013	Kermanshah	18	12	Judiciary- Age by KURDPA	
Morteza	23.09.2013	Kazeroun	18	14	Kazeroun- Nema IHR	YES (Name by Iranhr sources)
Ahmad Seifpanahi	05.11.2013	Sanandaj	24?	16	KURDPA	
Ahmad Jankjoo	07.11.2013	Hormozgan- Bandar Abbas	?	?	Judiciary- Age by unofficial source	
Abdolaziz Raessi	16.12.2013	Zahedan	24	17	HRDAI	
Iraj Nasiri	18.12.2013	Urmia	?	Less than 15	Mukrian	YES

## ANNEX III LIST OF WOMEN EXECUTED IN 2013

Nr.	Name	Date of Execution	Place of Execution	Charge	Source
1	Unknown	27.01.2013	Isfahan	Drug trafficking	HRANA
2	Unknown	27.01.2013	Isfahan	Drug trafficking	HRANA
3	Parinaz, M.	19.02.2013	Fars-Shiraz	Drug trafficking	Judiciary
4	Unknown	22.04.2013	Kermanshah	Drug trafficking	iribnews
5	Unknown	22.04.2013	Kermanshah	Drug trafficking	iribnews
6	Giti Marami	22.05.2013	Tehran- Varamin	Unknown	HRDAI
7	Golafrooz Fayooj	20.06.2013	Shahr- e-Kord	Drug trafficking	Judiciary-Newspaper Kayhan
8	Unknown	06.07.2013	Zahedan	Drug trafficking	HRANA
9	Unknown	06.07.2013	Zahedan	Drug trafficking	HRANA
10	Unknown	06.07.2013	Zahedan	Drug trafficking	HRANA
11	Unknown	06.07.2013	Zahedan	Drug trafficking	HRANA
12	Unknown	06.07.2013	Zahedan	Drug trafficking	HRANA
13	Mehrnaz Gholmakani	07.07.2013	Shiraz	Murder	IHR - Communication with the lawyer - Hossein Raeesi
14	Masoumeh Abdollahazar	10.09.2013	Urmia	Drug trafficking	HRANA
15	N.S.	19.09.2013	Yazd	Drug trafficking	Iranian Judiciary in Yazd
16	S.H.	19.09.2013	Yazd	Drug trafficking	Iranian Judiciary in Yazd
17	Z.S.	19.09.2013	Yazd	Drug trafficking	Iranian Judiciary in Yazd
18	Unknown	23.09.2013	Mashhad	Murder	Khorasan News
19	Unknown	25.09.2013	Urmia	Drug trafficking	HRANA
20	Unknown	25.09.2013	Urmia	Drug trafficking	HRANA
21	Unknown	25.09.2013	Urmia	Drug trafficking	HRANA
22	Unknown	25.09.2013	Karaj	Murder	HRANA
23	Nasrin Safari	21.10.2013	Kermanshah	Murder	HRANA
24	Jazi Darvishzadeh	26.10.2013	Urmia	Drug trafficking	Kurdpa
25	Mitra Shahnnavazi	30.10.2013	Karaj	Murder	HRANA
26	Unknown	30.10.2013	Urmia	Unknown	Mukrian News Agency
27	Unknown	30.10.2013	Urmia	Unknown	Mukrian News Agency
28	A.A.	21.11.2013	Yazd	Drug trafficking	Iranian Judiciary in Yazd
29	R.A.	21.11.2013	Yazd	Drug trafficking	Iranian Judiciary in Yazd
30	Unknown	26.11.2013	Karaj	Drug trafficking	HRANA

## ANNEX IV GLOSSARY

**Official execution:** an execution announced by official websites of the Iranian Judiciary or Iranian Police, the national Iranian Broadcasting Network, official or state-run news agencies and national or local newspapers.

**Public execution:** an execution that is carried out in a public space.

**Unannounced execution:** an execution that the authorities do not publicly announce but is confirmed by two independent sources.

**Secret execution:** an execution that the authorities do not publicly announce and keep secret from the families/lawyers before it happens (the Iranian law stipulates that the lawyer has to be informed 48 hours prior to the execution).

**Unofficial execution:** secret or unannounced execution.

**Confirmed execution:** either official or unofficial execution confirmed by Iran Human Rights (IHR).

**Unconfirmed execution:** execution reported to IHR, but unconfirmed by two independent sources.

**Hudud:** the punishment which type, amount and quality is prescribed by Shari'a (divine punishment); this includes theft, robbery, illicit sexual relations, alcohol consumption and apostasy.

**Qisas:** the punishment to which the criminal shall be sentenced and is equal to his/her crime (law of retaliation/retribution).

**Moharebeh:** waging war against God; enmity against God.

**Corruption on Earth:** crimes against the State, Islam.

## 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 based 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).

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 is now a growing number of human rights defenders, groups, and even political organizations who are focusing on the death penalty.

In 2009, IHR became a member of the World Coalition against the 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 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.





Just before a noose is put on his neck, Alireza Mafiha, 23, lays his head on an executioner's shoulder. Together with Mohammad Ali Sarvari, 20, he was convicted of Moharebeh (waging war against God) for threatening a man with a big knife and stealing the equivalent of \$ 25. The pair were hanged publicly in Tehran on January 21, 2013, seven weeks after they were arrested.

Iran Human Rights

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

Tel: +47 91742177  
Email: mail@iranhr.net

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

*Ensemble  
contre  
la peine  
de mort*

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

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

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

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>2</b>	<b>Introduction</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Sources</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Annual Report 2013: Facts and Figures</b>
5	Annual executions in the past 9 years
6	Execution trends before and after presidential election
7	Public executions
<b>10</b>	<b>Charges</b>
10	Charges punishable by death in Iranian law
13	Executions in 2013 based on charges
14	Drug-related charges
16	Qisas
17	Moharebeh and Corruption on Earth
<b>18</b>	<b>Ethnic Minorities</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>Juvenile Offenders</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>Women</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>Secret and Unannounced Executions</b>
23	Secret Executions in Vakilabad
23	Unconfirmed Secret Executions Not Included in Report
<b>24</b>	<b>Execution of Afghan Citizens in Iran</b>
<b>25</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<b>26</b>	<b>Annexes</b>
26	Relationship between political events and the death penalty trends in Iran
28	List of Reported Juvenile Executions in 2013
29	List of Women Executed in 2013
30	Glossary
31	Iran Human Rights
31	Ensemble contre la peine de mort

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 report on the death penalty in Iran.

IHR and ECPM see the death penalty as a benchmark for the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran.