

# URGENT ACTION

## FOUR KURDISH MEN AT GRAVE RISK OF EXECUTION

**Anwar Khezri, Farhad Salimi, Kamran Sheikheh and Khosrow Basharat, all from Iran's Kurdish Sunni minority, are at grave risk of execution in Ghezel Hesar prison, Alborz province, amid an ongoing spike in executions across the country and following the arbitrary executions of three other Iranian Kurdish men between November 2023 and January 2024, who were tried in the same case. The seven men were convicted of "corruption on earth" (efsad-e fel-arz) and sentenced to death in a grossly unfair trial marred by allegations of torture and other ill-treatment.**

### TAKE ACTION:

- Write a letter in your own words or using the sample below as a guide to one or both government officials listed. You can also email, fax, call or Tweet them.
- [Click here](#) to let us know the actions you took on **Second Urgent Action 19.22**. It's important to report because we share the total number with the officials we are trying to persuade and the people we are trying to help.

### Head of judiciary, Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei

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

### Supreme Leader 'Ali Khamenei

c/o Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to  
the United Nations  
622 3rd Ave, 34th floor  
New York, NY 10017  
Email: iranunny@mfa.gov.ir

Dear Mr. Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei,

I am deeply concerned that Iranian Sunni Kurdish men **Anwar Khezri, Farhad Salimi, Kamran Sheikheh and Khosrow Basharat** are at grave risk of execution in Ghezel Hesar prison, Karaj, Alborz province, following the arbitrary executions of **Ghasem Abesteh** on November 5, 2023, **Ayoub Karimi** on November 29, 2023, and **Davoud Abdollahi** on January 2, 2024, who were sentenced to death in the same case. Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran convicted **Anwar Khezri, Ayoub Karimi, Davoud Abdollahi, Farhad Salimi, Ghasem Abesteh, Kamran Sheikheh and Khosrow Basharat** of "corruption on earth" (efsad-e fel-arz) and national security offenses and sentenced them to death following a grossly unfair trial around June 2018, during which the presiding judge barred their lawyer from speaking. Despite serious fair trial violations, on February 3, 2020, Branch 41 of the Supreme Court upheld their convictions and death sentences, and, in early September 2020, Branch 38 of the Supreme Court rejected their request for retrial.

I urge you to immediately halt any plans to execute Anwar Khezri, Farhad Salimi, Kamran Sheikheh, and Khosrow Basharat, quash their convictions and death sentences, and grant them fair retrials in proceedings in line with international fair trial standards without recourse to the death penalty and excluding coerced "confessions". I also urge you to ensure that they are protected from further torture and other ill-treatment and their torture allegations investigated.

Yours sincerely,

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

In his open letter written in February 2020 to the then Head of the Judiciary, Ebrahim Raisi, Anwar Khezri outlined the multiple serious human rights violations to which he was subjected by Ministry of Intelligence agents, judges, and prison authorities. He wrote that he had attempted suicide after being subjected to 56 days of torture following his arrest, including repeated beatings to his chest, head, and soles of his feet in a Ministry of Intelligence detention facility – to which he referred as a “torture chamber”. After receiving blood transfusions in hospital for blood loss related to his suicide attempt, agents returned him to prison the next day against medical advice. He said he was then forced to sign “confessions” after his torture resumed. He described being taken out of his cell while blindfolded and handcuffed and subjected to a mock execution in August 2017. According to an informed source, following arrest, Khosrow Basharat was repeatedly beaten with electric cables while tied to a bed, suspended by his cuffed hands from the ceiling for prolonged periods, and forced to listen to the screams of what sounded like others being tortured at night, which led to sleep deprivation and severe distress. After three weeks of such torture, he was forced to sign a pre-written “confession”. In an open letter from February 2020, Farhad Salimi wrote that around this time he was repeatedly put under pressure to make forced “confessions” to incriminate himself and to dismiss the lawyer of his own choosing. No investigations are known to have been conducted into the men’s claims of torture.

After spending over six years in pre-trial detention, the seven men were first sentenced to death in late May 2016 for “corruption on earth”. The Court also convicted them of national security offences for their alleged “membership in Salafist groups”, which Ministry of Intelligence agents alleged included al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and Kurdish opposition groups. The trial was grossly unfair and consisted of one hearing in mid-March 2016 that lasted just five minutes. On appeal to Branch 41 of the Supreme Court, their sentences and convictions were overturned around March 2017 and the Court remanded their cases to Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran for re-trial. In mid-2018, all seven men were convicted of “corruption on earth” and sentenced them to death. In early July 2018, a criminal court convicted Kamran Sheikheh of murder in a separate case and sentenced him to death as well as to 10 years’ imprisonment, while Anwar Khezri and Khosrow Basharat were convicted of complicity to murder and sentenced to 10 years’ imprisonment.

Ethnic minorities in Iran, including Kurds, Ahwazi Arabs, Azerbaijani Turks, Baluchis, and Turkmen face discrimination which curtails their access to education, employment, and political office. Ethnic minorities, including Kurds, are disproportionately affected by death sentences imposed for vague charges such as “corruption on earth”. Additionally, religious minorities, including Sunni Muslims, Baha’is, Christians, Gonabadi Dervishes, Jews, and Yaresan suffer discrimination in law and practice.

**PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET:** Persian, English, or your own language.

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL:** March 8, 2024

**NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN:** Anwar Khezri, Farhad Salimi, Kamran Sheikheh, and Khosrow Basharat (all are he/him)