

URGENT ACTION

YOUTH ARRESTED AT 17 AT RISK OF IMMINENT EXECUTION

Mohammad Reza Azizi, 21, is at risk of imminent execution in relation to a crime that took place when he was just 17 years old, in violation of international law prohibiting the use of the death penalty against children. His trial was grossly unfair; the court relied on his “confessions” obtained during interrogations without a lawyer present to convict him. Iranian authorities have previously scheduled his execution at least twice, including on October 21, 2024. While his execution was halted following public outcries, he remains under sentence of death and at risk of execution.

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 **Urgent Action 93.24**. 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

CC: 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,

Mohammad Reza Azizi, aged 21, is at risk of imminent execution in Adel Abad prison in Shiraz, Fars province, following his conviction related to a crime that took place when he was just 17 years old. His execution was scheduled on two previous occasions including on October 21, 2024. Most recently, his execution was halted following public outcries, but he remains at risk of execution.

Mohammad Reza Azizi was arrested in September 2020 and interrogated without a lawyer present. The court relied on his “confessions” made during interrogations to issue its verdict, according to legal documents reviewed by Amnesty International. The court also disregarded key evidence, including witness testimony from the defense.

Iran continues to sentence to death and execute people who were under the age of 18 at the time of the crime for which they were convicted, in violation of their obligations under international law.

I urge you to immediately halt the scheduled execution of Mohammad Reza Azizi, quash both his conviction and death sentence, and grant him a fair retrial in full compliance with international law and the principles of juvenile justice, excluding “confessions” and without resorting to the death penalty.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Iranian authorities arrested **Mohammad Reza Azizi** on September 18, 2020, and denied him access to a lawyer during interrogations. According to legal documents, he “confessed” to acting in self-defense during an altercation where he sustained injuries, and another individual died. Medical documents reviewed by Amnesty International show that Mohammad Reza Azizi required hospital care on the date after the incident. According to legal documents reviewed by Amnesty International, the Legal Medicine Organization of Iran (LMOI) concluded that Mohammad Reza Azizi had attained “mental growth and maturity” at the time of the crime without providing an explanation of how it reached this conclusion beyond noting he was able to provide his first and last name.

Amnesty International has [repeatedly](#) urged the Iranian authorities, including judges and doctors from the Legal Medicine Organization of Iran, to halt “maturity assessment” processes that inherently violate children’s human rights and risk subjecting them to the death penalty, and instead adopt a position that treats all individuals under 18 as less mature and culpable than adults, in accordance with international juvenile justice principles.

Iran’s criminal justice system also facilitates the violation of the right to life, by perpetuating a cycle which places the responsibility for state-sanctioned killings of human beings on those who have lost their next of kin to murder. Under Iran’s laws, qesas (retribution-in-kind) is a system of equivalent retaliation which involves subjecting those convicted of murder to the same fate as that suffered by the victim of murder. The law grants this power to the family of the murder victim who may demand and carry out the killing of the defendant or grant pardon in exchange for “blood money” (diyah). In death penalty cases involving persons convicted of crimes taking place when they were children and based on qesas, the Iranian authorities frequently make misleading claims that the final decision on carrying out or halting the execution is out of their hands.

In the aftermath of the “Woman Life Freedom” of September to December 2022 uprising, Iranian authorities have intensified their use of the death penalty to instill fear among the population and tighten their grip on power. In 2023, authorities carried out at least 853 executions. Amnesty International recorded the executions of five individuals in 2023 who were children at the time of the crime: Adel Damani, Ali Najafi, Abdolsamad Shahuzehi, Hamidreza Azari, and Mahmoud Rigi. In 2024, Amnesty International has recorded the execution of at least one individual who was a child at the time of the alleged crime - Mehdi Jahanpour - in September 2024.

The absolute prohibition on the use of the death penalty against persons who were under the age of 18 at the time of the crime for which they have been convicted is provided in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, both of which Iran has ratified.

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

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: December 31, 2024

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Mohammad Reza Azizi (he/him).