



22.1.2014 / Geneva – At least 40 persons have been reportedly hanged in Iran during the first two weeks of January, of which at least 33 executions were carried out in the past week alone. 625 executions, including at least 28 women and a number of political prisoners were reported to have been carried out in 2013.

The United Nations Special Rapporteurs on the situation of human rights in Iran, Ahmed Shaheed, and on summary executions, Christof Heyns, today called on the Government of Iran to urgently halt the abrupt surge in hangings in the country since the start of 2014.

“We are dismayed at the continued application of the death penalty with alarming frequency by the authorities, despite repeated calls for Iran to establish a moratorium on executions,” the independent experts said, stressing “the inherently cruel, inhuman and degrading nature of the death penalty.”

The majority of those executions were for drug-related offences, but a number of individuals were also executed for the crimes of Moharabeh (‘enmity against God’), or acting against national security.

“It is deeply concerning that the Government proceeds with executions for crimes that do not

meet the threshold of the ‘most serious crimes’ as required by international law, and when serious concerns remain about due process rights,” the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions said.

The Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran also raised alarm at the recent pace of executions of political activists and individuals from ethnic minority groups, and urged the Government to stop the execution and to revisit the cases of people at risk of execution.

“The persistent execution of individuals for exercising their rights to freedom of assembly, association, and affiliation to minority groups contravenes universally accepted [human rights](#) principles and norms,” Mr. Shaheed said.

The independent human rights expert noted that the Government had hanged 16 members of the Baloch community on 26 October 2013, in reprisal to the killings of 14 border guards the day before.

“Execution of individuals as a form of retaliation for another crime is an action unquestionably illegal under international human rights law,” the experts said. “The Government of Iran has legal and moral obligations to respect the right to life, which is the most fundamental of all human rights.”

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*Related links:*

UN Human Rights, country page - Iran: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/AsiaRegion/Pages/IRIndex.aspx>

More information on Ahmed Shaheed (the Maldives) is a Visiting Professor at the Human Rights Centre, Essex University, UK; <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/AsiaRegion/Pages/IRIndex.aspx>

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*More information on the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Christof Heyns (South Africa): <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Executions/Pages/SRExecutionsIndex.aspx>*

*International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CCPR.aspx>*

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