

# ANNUAL REPORT ON THE DEATH PENALTY IN IRAN 2015



*Ensemble  
contre  
la peine  
de mort*





This report has been prepared by Iran Human Rights (IHR).

The organizations Iran Human Rights (IHR)<sup>1</sup> and Ensemble contre la peine de mort-Together Against the Death Penalty (ECPM)<sup>2</sup> have been collaborating since 2011 for the international release and dissemination of the annual reports on the death penalty in Iran.

We thank Elizabeth Zitrin (President of the World Coalition Against the Death penalty), Daniel Dolan (Reprieve) and Advocates for Human Rights for their contributions.

Cover picture: A public execution in Shiraz (Fars province, southern Iran), January 17, 2015. Hundreds of people, including children were present at the execution scene. . Photo by M. Reza Dehdari, Mehr News Agency<sup>3</sup>

Graphic Designer: Olivier Dechaud (ECPM)

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1 <http://iranhr.net/en/>

2 <http://www.abolition.fr/>

3 Shargh online, January 17, 2015: Rapists hanged in public

## PREFACE

The 8th annual report of Iran Human Rights (IHR) on the death penalty gives an assessment and analysis of the death penalty trends in 2015 in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The report provides the number of executions in 2015, the trend compared to previous years, methods of execution, charges, geographic distribution and monthly breakdown of the executions. The report provides a special focus on drug-related executions, including the ongoing debate on changing the legislation in Iran, and where Hassan Rouhani's government and other centres of power stand in this debate. Finally we will look at the cooperation between the United Nations' Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and Iran against drug trafficking, which was renewed in December 2015. Lists of the women and juvenile offenders executed in 2015 are also included in tables at the end of the report.

The report looks also into the abolitionist movement inside Iran. For the first time the report includes trends and numbers of "forgiveness" cases, where the family of murder victims chose forgiveness instead of retribution, and compare them to the trends for death sentences in murder cases.

As are our previous reports, the 2015 report is the result of hard work from IHR members and supporters who took part in the reporting, documenting, collecting, analyzing and writing of its content. Due to the lack of transparency and the obvious risks and limitations that human rights defenders face in the Islamic Republic of Iran, the present report does not give, by any means, a complete picture of the use of the death penalty in Iran. We have for instance, not included all the executions reported to us due to lack of sufficient details or inability to confirm the cases through two different sources. However, we believe that this report gives the most complete and realistic figures possible under the present circumstances.

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## ANNUAL 2015 REPORT AT A GLANCE

- 969 people were executed in 2015 (29% increase compared to 2014)
  - 373 cases (39%) were announced by official sources
  - 95% of executions in ethnic regions were not announced by official sources
  - 638 (66%) were executed for drug-related charges
  - 57 executions were conducted in public spaces
  - At least 3 juvenile offenders were among those executed
  - At least 19 women were executed
  - 207 were executed for murder
  - 262 were forgiven by the families of the murder victims
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## INTRODUCTION

The 8th annual report on the death penalty in Iran shows that the Islamic Republic of Iran had one of the darkest years of its history with reference to the number of executions. On average between two and three people were hanged every single day in 2015. This stands in contrast to the fact that 2015 also was the year when the Islamic Republic of Iran emerged out of several years of isolation. Following the nuclear agreement between Iran and the Group of 5+1, sanctions were lifted. The diplomatic climate has probably never been better between the Islamic Republic and the West. At the time of publishing this report hundreds of European companies are preparing to resume business in Iran. It seems that Iran's horrifying death penalty record of 2015 has not had an impact on relations with the West.

In the year when the UN put emphasis on human rights in the international fight against drug trafficking, Iran executed more than 638 people for drug offences. This is despite the fact that several top Iranian officials admitted that drug problems -including trafficking- have not decreased despite the high number of executions. Nevertheless, the United Nations' Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has renewed its cooperation with Iran in the fight against drug trafficking.

In violation of its international obligations, Iran continued the execution of juvenile offenders in 2015, and public executions went on at a similar rate as before. Iranian authorities also implemented other barbaric punishments such as amputations, sometimes in public, and gouging out of eyes. In March 2015, at the same time as the negotiations between the Iranian Foreign minister and Foreign ministers of the USA and European countries were taking place, Iranian media reported for the first time about the punishment of blinding for a man in the Rajai Shahr prison of Karaj.

In 2015 several people were executed for membership or cooperation with banned political or militant groups. All belonged to ethnic minorities.

Although the reaction of the international community to the wave of executions was not adequate, there were some encouraging signs inside Iran. The movement against the death penalty kept growing. In particular, the forgiveness movement, where families of murder victims were encouraged to choose forgiveness instead of the death penalty (retribution) made significant progress. In 2015, the number of the families of murder victims who chose forgiveness was higher than the number of those who asked for a retribution death sentence for the murder convict.

On the occasion of launching this annual report, Iran Human Rights (IHR) and Ensemble contre la peine de mort (ECPM) call on Iran's European partners to make more effort to reduce the death penalty in Iran. Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam, the Director of IHR said "Europe and European companies cannot be silent witnesses to Iran's horrendous death penalty record. Upgrading business relationship with the Iranian authorities must be conditioned on restriction of the use of the death penalty. The growing abolitionist civil society inside Iran, and Iran's need for foreign investments provide a rare opportunity for Europe to contribute to limiting the use of the death penalty and improving human rights in Iran". Raphaël Chenuil-Hazan, the Executive Director of ECPM said "We call on Iran to impose a moratorium on the death penalty for drug related offences, while it is considering a new legislation of the Anti-drug law. We also ask the Iranian authorities to give special consideration to the most vulnerable groups in the Iranian society, including Afghan citizens".

IHR and ECPM also call on the UNODC to cease its law enforcement cooperation against drug trafficking and to condition future support on a moratorium on the death penalty for drug related offences.

## SOURCES

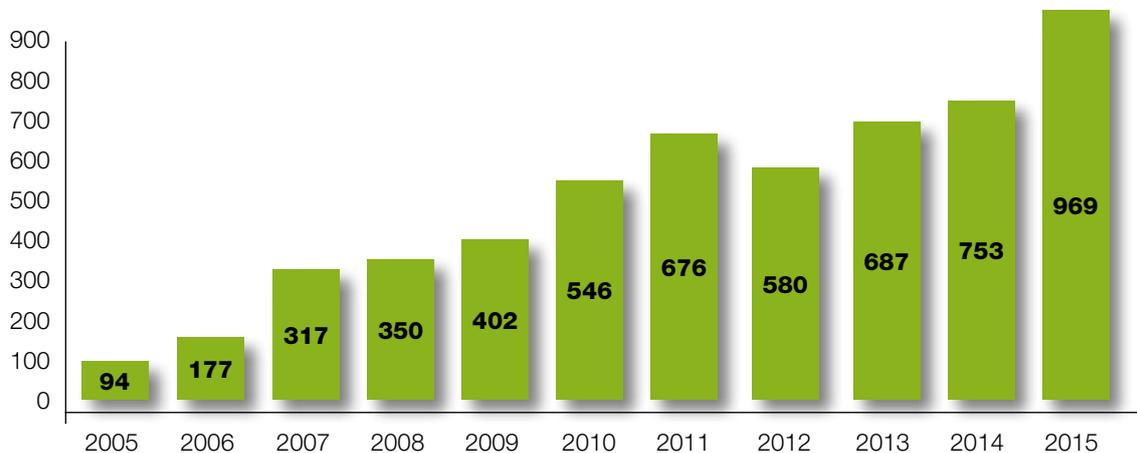
Many executions that have been carried out have not been announced by official Iranian media. Therefore, we distinguish between the “official” and “unofficial” or “unannounced” executions. Official executions are those announced by official websites of the Iranian judiciary, Iranian police, the National Iranian Broadcasting Network, official or state-run news agencies and national or local newspapers. Unofficial or unannounced executions include the cases that have not been announced by official sources, but have been confirmed by IHR through unofficial channels and communications. These 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 were confirmed by two independent sources.

Due to the lack of transparency in the Iranian judicial system and the pressure put on the families, many execution reports received by IHR could not be verified. Therefore, these cases are not included in the present report.



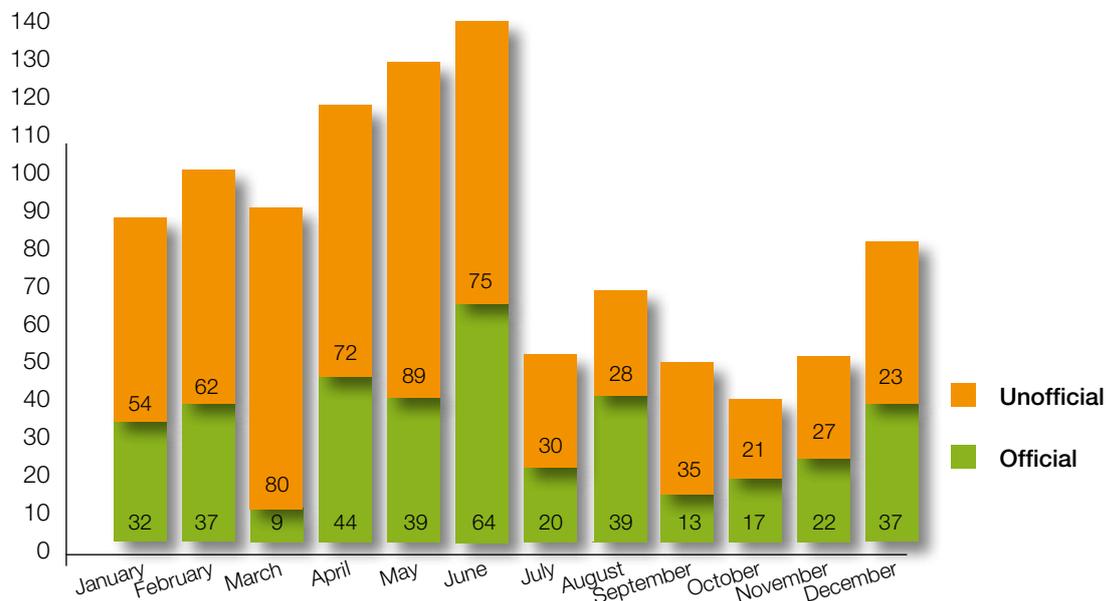
## FACTS AND FIGURES

### HIGHEST NUMBER OF EXECUTIONS IN MORE THAN 25 YEARS



Since the first annual report by IHR in 2008 the number of executions increased by about 300%. With 969 executions 2015 was the year with the highest number of executions since 1990. (Numbers prior to 2008 are reported by Amnesty International).

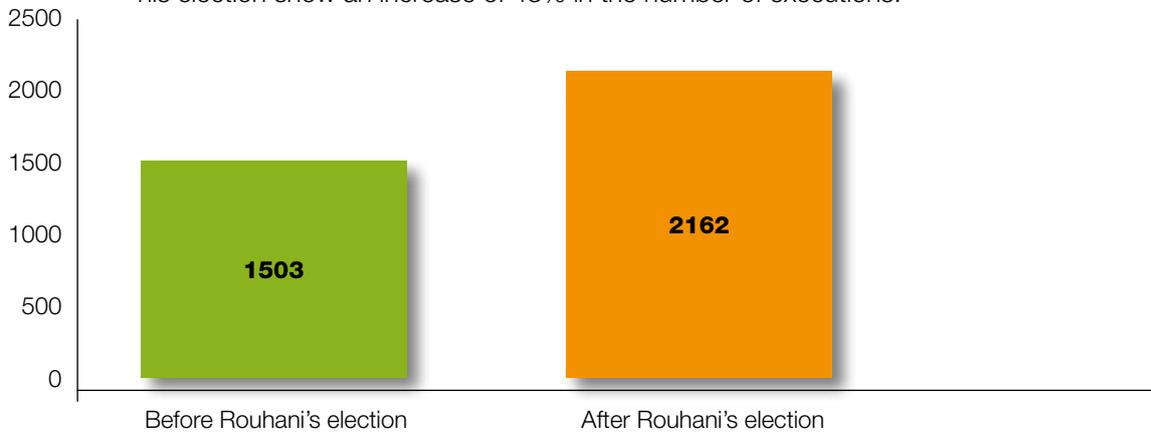
### MONTHLY EXECUTIONS IN 2015: DEADLIEST MONTHS AND DAYS



The monthly number of executions was generally high in 2015 compared to the previous years. With 38 executions, October was the month with lowest number of monthly executions (1.2 executions per day), while June was the “bloodiest” month with 139 executions (more than 4 executions per day). In the first half of the year 657 people were executed according to the present report, an average of 3.6 executions per day.

## EXECUTION TRENDS UNDER PRESIDENT ROUHANI

Since the election of Hassan Rouhani in June 2013, at least 2162 people have been executed. A comparison between the 2.5 years after Hassan Rouhani's election and the 2.5 years before his election show an increase of 43% in the number of executions.



Although it is the judiciary which issues and implements death sentences, neither President Rouhani nor members of his cabinet expressed any dissatisfaction about the large number of executions. On the contrary, on the few occasions when President Rouhani or Foreign minister Zarif made statements about the death penalty they have defended Iran's high number of executions.

## PUBLIC EXECUTIONS

Despite massive international criticism and debate inside the country, Iranian authorities continue public executions.



Photo: Mehr News Agency, May 27, 2015.

Picture above shows a public execution of three young men on May 27, 2015, in Mashhad (Khorasan Razavi). The men were convicted of *Moharebeh* for involvement in an armed robbery.

Public executions have repeatedly been criticized by the UN. In a joint statement issued on May 8, 2015, two UN Special Rapporteurs drew special attention to continued reports of executions taking place in public in 2015. In this statement Ahmed Shaheed, the UN Special Rapporteur on

the situation of human rights in Iran, and Christof Heyns the UN Thematic Rapporteur on extrajudicial executions said, "Executions staged in public have a dehumanising effect on both the victim and those who witness the execution, reinforcing the already cruel, inhuman and degrading nature of the death penalty"<sup>1</sup>.

1 <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?LangID=E&NewsID=15937>

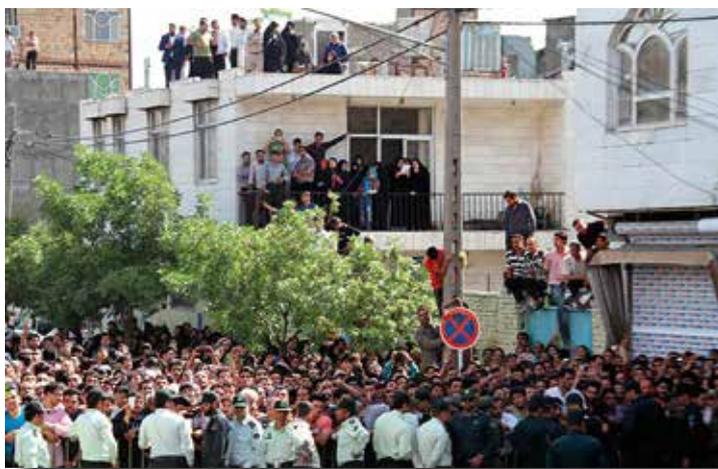


**IRANIAN AUTHORITIES' RESPONSE TO CRITICISM  
AGAINST PUBLIC EXECUTIONS**

In response to the joint statement of the UN Special Rapporteurs (discussed above), the “High Council for Human Rights” of the Iranian Judiciary issued an official statement saying, “Public executions take place only in some limited and special circumstances, including incidents which distort public sentiment, to act as a deterrent to decrease the number of drug-related crimes. It should also be noted that the mentioned sentences are provided to avoid the presence of minors at the scene of executions”<sup>2</sup>.

This statement has been echoed by the Iranian authorities on several occasions in international fora.

The numbers and the pictures published by the state-controlled media show the opposite. In 2015, the official and state controlled Iranian media reported 57 public executions in 2015, compared to 53 public executions the year before. The executions took place in different Iranian towns and cities, in the morning in front of hundreds of citizens. The days prior to the executions



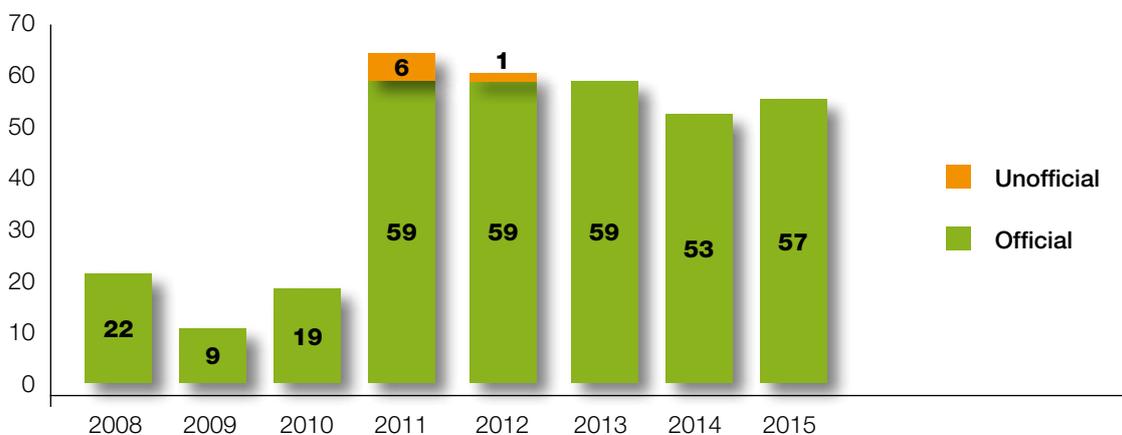
the authorities typically mounted banners across the town with the time and place, inviting people to attend the public executions. Photos from multiple public executions in 2015 show children in the crowds. All the pictures are from the state controlled Iranian media.

**Public execution of three young men (previous picture) in a residential area of Mashhad in front of a crowd. Some people can watch the executions from their homes.**

In the following sections we present the statistics, geographic distributions, and the official charges of those publicly executed. We also present some of the pictures published by the state controlled Iranian media showing public executions in front of children.

**PUBLIC EXECUTIONS SINCE 2008**

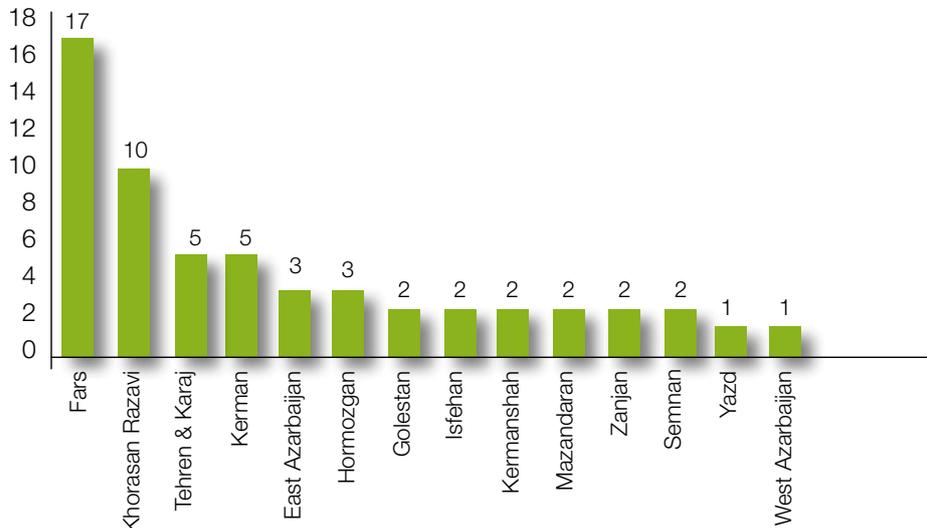
The diagram above shows public executions since 2008. In the last five years there has been an average of 55-60 public executions each year.



2 <http://en.humanrights-iran.ir/news-22714.aspx>

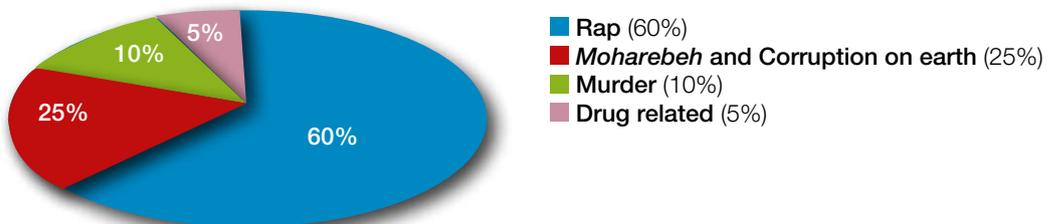
**GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLIC EXECUTIONS**

As in previous years, Fars province (Southern Iran) was the site of highest number of public executions. A significant increase (compared to the last seven years) was observed in Khorasan Razavi where 10 people were publicly executed in 2015.



**OFFICIAL CHARGES FOR THOSE EXECUTED IN PUBLIC:**

The majority of those executed in public were convicted of rape or sexual assault. The second group involved those charged with *Moharebeh* (waging war against God) mainly for armed robbery and three of those executed publicly were charged with drug related offences.



**CHILDREN WATCHING PUBLIC EXECUTIONS**

**Left:** A family with two children watching a public execution from their car (Shiraz, January 17, 2015). Photo: Mehr News Agency. **Right:** Two children and one woman watching a public execution of three men from the window of their home (Mashhad, May 27, 2015).



Mehr News Agency



Mehr News Agency, May 27, 2015



**Left:** Children among the crowd watching public executions of three men in Karaj (July 29, 2015)<sup>3</sup>. **Right:** One child watching a public execution from the window in Shiraz (January 17, 2015)



Mehr News Agency



Public execution of a man on June 1, 2015 in Jiroft (Southeastern Iran). People of all ages, including children, are watching the execution.



Hilal, June 1, 2015



Hilal, June 1, 2015

3 Mashregdaily, July 29, 2015: Public executions of three rapists in Karaj

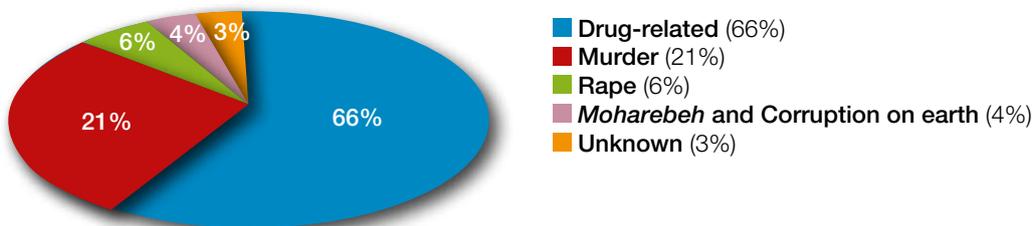


## CHARGES

The number of capital crimes in Iran is among the highest in the world. Charges such as “adultery, incest, rape, sodomy, insulting the Prophet Mohammad and other great Prophets, possessing or selling illicit drugs, theft for the fourth time, premeditated murder, *moharebeh* (waging war against God), *ifsad-fil-arz* (corruption on earth), fraud and human trafficking” are capital offences.<sup>4</sup> Many of the charges are not considered as the most serious crimes and therefore do not meet the ICCPR minimum standards.<sup>5</sup>

An overview of the new Islamic Penal Code (IPC) and offences punishable by death was presented in the 2013 annual report.<sup>6</sup>

### EXECUTIONS IN 2015 BASED ON CHARGES:



The chart above shows what charges led to executions in 2015. Drug related offences accounted for the majority of executions in 2015. As in the previous three years murder charges were the second most common charge leading to death sentences. *Moharebeh* and corruption on earth were used for a wide range of charges ranging from kidnapping and armed robbery to political and ideological affiliation,

It is important to emphasize that the charges mentioned in this report are those issued by the Iranian judiciary. Many of the trials leading to death sentences are unfair according to the international standards. The use of torture to coerce confessions is widespread in Iran. Due to the lack of transparency in the Iranian judiciary, most of the charges mentioned in this report have not been confirmed by independent sources. There is also evidence that charges were fabricated against some prisoners.

### DRUG-RELATED CHARGES

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 kilograms of opium and the other aforementioned drugs (punishable on third conviction); smuggling into Iran, dealing, producing, distributing or exporting more than 30 grams of heroin, morphine, cocaine or their derivatives.

4 United Nations, *Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran: Report of the Secretary-General*, U.N. Doc. A/68/377, Sept. 10, 2013, ¶ 14.; see also Iran Human Rights and Together Against the Death Penalty, *Annual Report on the Death Penalty in Iran – 2013*, 15-18.

5 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 6

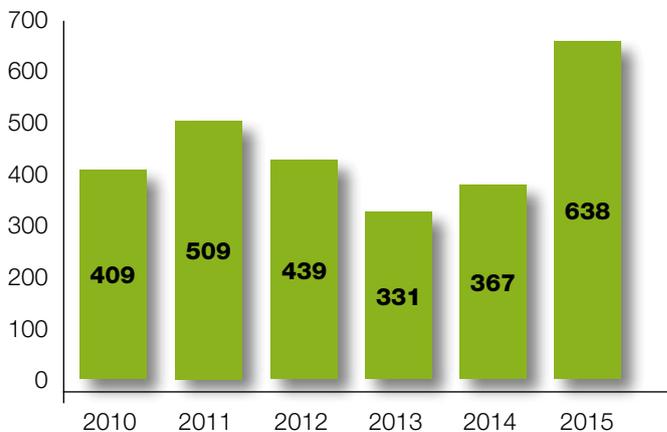
6 *Annual Report on the Death Penalty in Iran – 2013*, 10-13



**DRUG-RELATED EXECUTIONS**

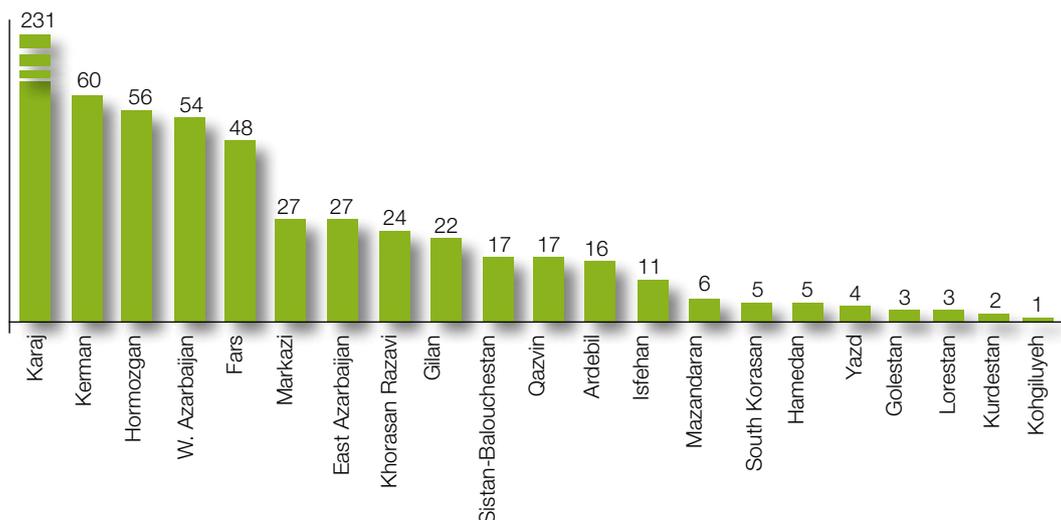
At least 638 people were executed in 2015 for drug related charges. This is the highest number since 1990. Most of those who are sentenced to death for drug related offences are carriers belonging to marginalized groups in Iranian society, in particular the ethnic regions such as Balouchistan and Kurdistan. During a recent visit to Balouchistan in February 2016, the Iranian Vice President Shahindokht Mollavardi told the reporters that there is a village in Balouchistan where every man was executed for drug charges<sup>7, 8</sup>. Iranian authorities repeatedly admitted that the executions have not deterred drug trafficking, and the drug problem has been increasing despite executions of hundreds of people for drug related offences<sup>9</sup>. But the executions continue at a higher rate than before. Unfair trials, lack of access to lawyer and coerced confessions are also issues that those accused of drug related offences must face. Finally, the United Nations' Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) continues its cooperation with the Iranian authorities in fighting against drug trafficking. These are the issues that will be discussed in the following sections.

**DRUG-RELATED EXECUTIONS SINCE 2010**



More than 2690 people were executed in the six years from 2010 to 2015. With more than 638 executions, 2015 was the deadliest year since 1990 with regards to drug-related executions.

**GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF DRUG-RELATED EXECUTIONS**



7 <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/every-man-in-iran-village-executed-on-drugs-charges-death-penalty-capital-punishment-human-rights-a6898036.html>

8 [http://www.bbc.com/persian/iran/2016/02/160224\\_i26\\_ir94\\_election\\_molaverdi\\_executions](http://www.bbc.com/persian/iran/2016/02/160224_i26_ir94_election_molaverdi_executions)

9 Mehr News Agency, February 2015: Situation of the drug abuse in Iran

Prisons of Karaj, in particular Ghezelhesar (see below), where prisoners from Tehran/Karaj area are held, had the highest number of drug-related executions. Kerman (Southeastern Iran), Hormozgan (southern border) and Urmia (northwestern border) also had a high number of drug-related executions. Most of the executions were not announced by the official media.

### MASS-EXECUTIONS OF GHEZELHESAR PRISON



Iran Human Rights

Ghezelhesar Prison, also called the death camp, is home to more than 3000 death row prisoners sentenced to death for drug related charges. In 2015 at least 200 prisoners were executed in this prison. The executions dramatically increased after a group of Ghezelhesar death row prisoners gathered peacefully in the prison yard on May 21, 2015, calling on the Iranian Supreme leader Ali Khamenei to reduce their sentences. In the following 5 weeks more than 70 prisoners were hanged in the groups of 11 to 17 in Ghezelhesar or neighboring prisons<sup>10</sup>. One of the 13 prisoners, who were transferred for execution on May 31, stabbed another prisoner to death in order to postpone the execution<sup>11</sup>. It is well known on death row that when a prisoner, who is sentenced to death for drug related charges, commits a murder his death sentence for drug related charges is postponed since “*qisas*” (retribution in kind) is given higher priority. IHR has published several interviews of death row prisoners in Ghezelhesar<sup>12 13</sup>.

**Peaceful gathering of the death row prisoners in the yard of Ghezelhesar Prison on May 21, 2015. Prisoners carried banners calling on Iran’s Supreme leader to reduce their sentence to life in prison. Most of the prisoners were executed during the following days and weeks. Photo: Iran Human Rights**

### CASE:

**Innocent school teacher<sup>14</sup>:** Mahmood Barati was a school teacher without any prior criminal record and the father of a three-year old boy when he was arrested in 2006. He was sentenced to death solely based on the false testimony of a drug convict. The testimony was later withdrawn on two occasions. Still, the recantations did not help Mahmood. He was executed in the Ghezelhesar prison on September 7, 2015. According to witness testimonies, Mahmood had been tortured and forced to confess.

### CALL FOR CHANGE IN THE LEGISLATION

In December 2015 the official Iranian media announced that 70 members of Iran’s Parliament signed a proposal for a change in legislation in order to end the death penalty for drug offences<sup>15</sup>. The proposal calls for a life sentence instead of death for drug offenders who have not been involved in armed drug trafficking.

However, the bill must be approved by Iran’s Guardian Council before it can be passed. The process of getting the bill passed could take years, and in that time Iranian authorities are able to continue executing individuals for non-violent drug offences. Moreover, the bill does not call for an end to the death penalty for all drug related offences, and suggests that individuals who are involved in “armed drug trafficking” should still be sentenced to death.

10 Iran Human Rights, June 13, 2015: Ghezelhesar mass-executions continue  
11 Iran Human Rights, May 31, 2015: 13 prisoners transferred for execution in Ghezelhesar prison  
12 Iran Human Rights, June 13, 2015: Voices from Ghezelhesar-  
13 Iran Human Rights, June 12, 2015: Voices and video from the death row: Ghezelhesar mass-executions  
14 Iran Human Rights, September 10, 2015: School teacher executed for drug charges  
15 ISNA, December 8, 2015: Life imprisonment instead of death penalty for drug offences



### **Lack of due process not addressed by the proposed legislation**

The Iranian authorities claim that many of those sentenced to death for drug-related charges are involved in organized armed smuggling. However, there is an overall lack of transparency in the Iranian judicial process. Besides, all those convicted of drug-related charges were tried by the Revolutionary Courts behind closed doors, and most of those executed are not identified by name. IHR and other human rights groups received many reports of unfair trials and confessions under torture<sup>16</sup>. Investigations by IHR indicate that most of the individuals who were executed in Iran on drug related charges were not involved in armed drug smuggling, did not have access to a fair trial or a just investigation, and were denied access to a lawyer. Witness statements given to IHR indicate that people arrested and accused of possession or trafficking of drugs, are systematically tortured in the detention centres until they give a confession. Consequently, unless significant improvements are made in the judicial process, changing the legislation will not necessarily lead to a reduction in the number of executions.

Commenting on the proposal Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam, spokesperson of IHR, said: “We welcome any changes to the law that would help stop the death penalty in Iran, but the indicator for us will be a decrease in the number of executions and not just a proposal to the Parliament”.

### **The driving force for a change in legislation: International pressure or lack of deterrence in drug crimes?**

The first mention of a need for change in anti-drug legislation came on December 4, 2014, when Javad Larijani, head of the judiciary’s “High Council for the Human Rights” said in an interview with France 24, “No one is happy to see that the number of executions is high.” Javad Larijani continued, “We are crusading to change this law. If we are successful, if the law passes in Parliament, almost 80% of the executions will go away.<sup>17</sup> This is big news for us, regardless of Western criticism.” Interestingly, his statement was published also by the state-run Fars News Agency.<sup>18</sup> Almost at the same time, the head of the Judiciary Ayatollah Sadeq Larijani addressed the need to revise the legislation in a meeting with judiciary officials.

However, nine months earlier in March 2014, the same Javad Larijani addressed the UN’s “Human Rights Council” about drug related executions saying: “We expect the world to be grateful for this great service to humanity”. He continued: “Unfortunately, instead of celebrating Iran, international organizations see the increased number of executions caused by Iran’s assertive confrontation with drugs as a vehicle for human rights attacks on the Islamic Republic of Iran.”<sup>19, 20</sup>.

This last statement has been the Islamic Republic’s official position for many years.

It is unlikely that the Iranian judiciary suddenly came, in less than 9 months, to recognizing the fact that the death penalty does not deter drug related crimes.

Iran has used the death penalty for drug related crimes since the very beginning of the Islamic Republic in 1979, and both crime rates and drug abuses have increased in the past three decades.

The international attention on the death penalty for drug related offences is, however, rather new. In recent years a growing number of global institutions and agencies have expressed public concern about Iran’s use of the death penalty for drug related offences, and called for an end to international cooperation with Iranian counter-narcotics efforts.

16 <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/12/16/iran-bid-end-drug-offense-executions>

17 Mohammad Javad Larijani’s interview with France24, December 4, 2014

18 <http://www.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=13930914000637>

19 <http://www.tasnimnews.com/Home/Single/302871>

20 <http://www.iranhumanrights.org/2014/03/larijani-executions/>

In October 2015, the European Parliament passed a resolution by 569 votes to 38 majority condemning Iran's high rate of drug-related executions, and calling on the European Commission and member States "to reaffirm the categorical principle that European aid and assistance, including to UNODC counter-narcotics programs, may not facilitate law enforcement operations that lead to the death sentences and the execution of those arrested"<sup>21</sup>.

The resolution follows decisions by individual donor State to withdraw funding from UNODC operations in Iran. In 2013, Denmark withdrew its support for such efforts, stating that "the donations are leading to executions"<sup>22</sup>. The United Kingdom subsequently did the same, citing "the exact same concerns" as Denmark<sup>23</sup>. Ireland also took similar action, with the then-Foreign Minister explaining that "we have made it very clear to the UNODC that we could not be party to any funding in relation to where the death penalty is used so liberally and used almost exclusively for drug traffickers"<sup>24</sup>.

Actions like these follow sustained civil society campaigns such as Reprieve's "Stop Aid for Executions" project (SAFE), which calls for international counter-narcotics aid to be made conditional on recipient states abolishing the death penalty for drug offences<sup>25</sup>. Groups which have urged UNODC to freeze counter-narcotics funding to Iran include Reprieve, Harm Reduction International, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Iran Human Rights, and Ensemble Contre la Peine de Mort<sup>26</sup>.

So most likely, the change in rhetoric, which hopefully will lead to a change in legislation, is the result of international pressure on the Iranian authorities, on UNODC and on the European countries cooperating with UNODC in fighting drug trafficking in Iran. Continuation of the current policy with arbitrary execution of drug offenders and announcing it proudly as a service to mankind has simply become too costly for Iran and its European partners. Whether the change of tone from the Iranian authorities is just a change of rhetoric to appease the European partners, or an honest wish to reduce the number of drug-related executions, remains to be seen. What is certain is that pressure must continue and political consequences of the executions must not diminish.

#### UNODC COOPERATION WITH IRAN

The United Nations' Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has cooperated with Iran in the fight against drug-trafficking for the past decades. Several European states provided millions of dollars worth of support through UNODC to counter-narcotics forces in Iran.

Reprieve recently published the results of a two-year investigation which linked UNODC "supply reduction" programs to more than 3,000 executions in Iran<sup>27</sup>. These links were established by reviewing specific UNODC counter-narcotics programs which aimed to increase arrests and prosecutions of drug offenders, and comparing the timings of these efforts with recorded convictions, death sentences and executions.

Based on Reprieve's findings, abolitionist Governments provided more than \$14.9 million to aggressive law enforcement operations in Iran which led directly to death sentences<sup>28</sup>. This funding was used to train anti-narcotics agencies, the establishment of border offices where drug mules are frequently arrested, and equipment used for pursuing alleged drug carriers (including body scanners, sniffer dogs and night vision goggles).

21 European Parliament resolution of 8 October 2015 on the death penalty

22 The Copenhagen Post, 9 April 2013: Denmark ends Iranian drug crime support

23 Clegg, Nick, 2013. Writing to Maya Foa of Reprieve. [Letter] (Personal Communication 17 December)

24 <http://www.rte.ie/news/2013/1108/485366-ireland-anti-drug-iran/>

25 <http://www.reprieve.org.uk/case-study/safe/>

26 <https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/12/17/un-freeze-funding-iran-counter-narcotics-efforts>

27 Reprieve – European Aid for Executions, December 2014

28 Reprieve – European Aid for Executions, December 2014



In February 2015 UNODC Executive Director Yury Fedotov gave a speech in Tehran noting that “no country can compete with Iran when it comes to the amount of narcotics discovered and seized”<sup>29</sup>. According to Reprieve’s investigations, UNODC continued to fund operations by Iranian drug police in 2015 through its Iran Country Program 2010-15, and also through its Regional Program for Afghanistan and the neighboring countries. Both programs claimed, among their “successes”, seizures of quantities such that those arrested will have faced the death penalty<sup>30</sup>. In early 2015 Reprieve uncovered a formal UN evaluation of UNODC’s Iranian operations, which warned of a potential “funding crisis” if donors withdrew support due to human rights concerns. The document suggested that the human rights policy UNODC published in 2012<sup>31</sup> – calling for a “temporary freeze or withdrawal” in funding if drug offenders are executed – was neither “promoted nor implemented” in Iran. It also noted that “no action” was taken to prevent death sentences and executions as a result of the UNODC’s work<sup>32</sup>.

Despite these warnings, in December 2015 Mr. Fedotov announced a new \$20 million funding settlement for anti-drug operations in the country – a deal which represents a doubling in the agency’s support for Iranian counter-narcotics efforts<sup>33</sup>. The UNODC’s new Iran Country Program is expected to run between 2015 and 2019. The UNODC has not disclosed who will donate to the project, or what human rights safeguards will be imposed to prevent it facilitating drug related executions.

### ROUHANI GOVERNMENT DEPENDS THE EXECUTIONS

The dramatic increase in the number of executions after the election of President Rouhani has been, according to some, a reflection of the power struggle between the conservative Judiciary and the “moderate” government of President Rouhani. However, the statements by the government and the judiciary regarding the death penalty for drug related offences reflect another reality.

**Judiciary and Expediency Council:** Since December 2014 the judiciary and the High Council for the Human Rights (affiliated with the judiciary) expressed discontent about the high number of drug related executions and mentioned the need for a new legislation<sup>34</sup>. This has been supported by several judges and prosecutors. Saeed Safaeian from the Expediency Council also supported the idea of restricting the use of the death penalty for drug related offences<sup>35</sup>.

**Government:** Under a visit to a drug de-addiction, Iran’s interior minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli told the reporters “Judiciary should not show mercy to drug dealers; (drug) smugglers must be hanged”<sup>36</sup>. He was the first member of the Rouhani’s cabinet expressing a position on the death penalty for drug related offences.

Both President Rouhani and his Foreign Minister Javad Zarif avoided making statements about the death penalty. In a rare interview with the Italian daily paper, *Corriere della Sera*, in response to a question about the high number of executions, Mr. Rouhani said: “Most executions in Iran are related to drug trafficking crimes, due to the long and porous border shared with our Afghan neighbor. If we abolish the death penalty, we would make it easier for drugs to enter European countries, and that would be dangerous for you”<sup>37</sup>. This response was almost echoed by the Iranian Foreign Minister Zarif in a hearing at the EU Parliament in February 2016: “On the death penalty: Iran captures, seizes, 85% of the opium seized in the world. We were

29 <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/19/un-fund-iran-anti-drugs-programme-executions-unodc-death-penalty>  
30 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iran/12106299/EU-aid-cash-linked-to-death-penalty-in-Iran.html>  
31 [https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/UNODC\\_Human\\_rights\\_position\\_paper\\_2012.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/UNODC_Human_rights_position_paper_2012.pdf)  
32 UNODC, 2014 Independent mid-term In-depth Evaluation of the UNODC Country Programme for the Islamic Republic of Iran (2011-2014), pp. 31-32 (Held on file at Reprieve).  
33 <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/speeches/2015/remarks-at-the-high-level-meeting-of-partners-for-afghanistan-and-neighbouring-countries.html>  
34 <http://iranhr.net/en/articles/2408/>  
35 Mehr news agency, December 12, 2015: Details about the proposal of removing a punishment  
36 Hamshahri online, March 7, 2015: The judiciary should not show mercy to drug dealers  
37 *Corriere della sera*, November 15, 2015: “Rouhani: A new era between Iran and the West”

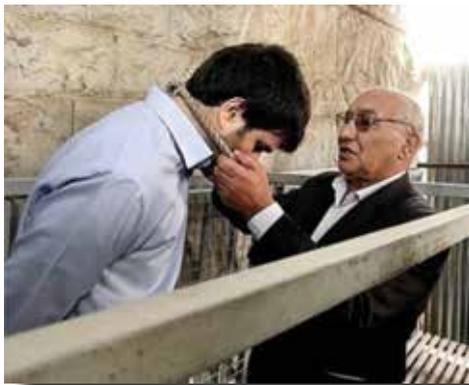
approached by drug traffickers in the 1990s. They told us, let us transit drugs through Iran we will not leave any residues, we will take it to Europe where it is most economical for us, most rewarding financially<sup>38,39</sup>.

Although the Judiciary approved execution of more than 638 people for drug offences in 2015, and the Supreme leader did not use his power to reduce the number of executions by granting amnesty, there is no indication that the President or his government opposes the executions. President Rouhani and his Foreign Minister have defended the executions on the international arena and the interior minister has even warned the Judiciary against softening the punishments.

## QISAS

*Qisas* refers to retribution in kind. The *qisas* death sentence was retained for murder in the new IPC. Because murder is specifically punished under *qisas*, the penal code of Iran does not specifically state that convicted murderers are subject to the death penalty, but rather to “*qisas*” which means “retribution in kind” or retaliation. The state effectively puts the responsibility of the executions for murder on the shoulders of the victim’s family. In addition, under the Iran Penal Code (IPC), the death penalty is generally subject to discriminatory application<sup>40</sup>.

## QISAS AND FORGIVENESS



Elahieh Pour Hossein, Young Journalists Club News Agency

Iranian authorities claim that *qisas* (retribution in kind) is a private right which the authorities can not deny or control. According to the *qisas* law, the immediate family members of a murder victim, who have reached adulthood, can decide whether the one convicted of murder should be executed or not. However, there are cases where a person charged with murder was sentenced to death, despite the adult family members of the victim having chosen forgiveness instead of retribution. In March 2015 a court sentenced to death a man charged with murder, despite the murder victim’s only adult child having forgiven the murderer. The prosecutor had asked for *qisas* on behalf of the victim’s minor children<sup>41</sup>.

**Father of a murder victim pardons his son’s murderer by taking off the rope around his neck few moments before the execution on May 6, 2015 in Shiraz. The murder victim was a security officer who had been shot to death in 2010<sup>42</sup>.**

## PEOPLE CHOOSE FORGIVENESS

In the past three years the forgiveness movement has grown significantly and in 2015 more people chose forgiveness over retribution. Civil society groups have played an important role in this progress<sup>43</sup>. According to the Iranian judiciary, the number of “forgiveness” cases in the Iranian year 1392 (20 March 2013- 20 March 2014) and 1393 (20 March 2014 to 20 March 2015) were 375 and 395 respectively. The same source announced the number of forgiveness cases in the first six months of the current Iranian year (20 March 2015 to 20 September 2015) to be 251<sup>44</sup>. This represents a significant increase in the “forgiveness” trend.

As for the execution numbers, not all the forgiveness cases are announced by the Iranian media. By monitoring the Iranian media IHR has identified 142 forgiveness cases from March

38 <http://iranhr.net/en/articles/2445/>

39 <http://audiovisual.europarl.europa.eu/Assetdetail.aspx?ref=I116175>

40 Annual report on the death penalty in Iran- 2013, page 11.

41 <http://jamejamonline.ir/online/1926284284816087956>

42 YJC News Agency, May 6, 2015: Forgiveness at the moment of retribution

43 <http://www.rferl.org/content/iran-death-penalty-mercy-trend/25464857.html>

44 <http://www.jonoubnews.ir/showpage.aspx?id=174268>



to September 2015, first half of the current Iranian year- (56% of the 251 mentioned by the judiciary). The total number of forgiveness cases included in the 2015 annual report is 262. The following diagrams based on the IHR report show a comparison between the forgiveness and retribution trends in Iran. They are based on the numbers collected by IHR.

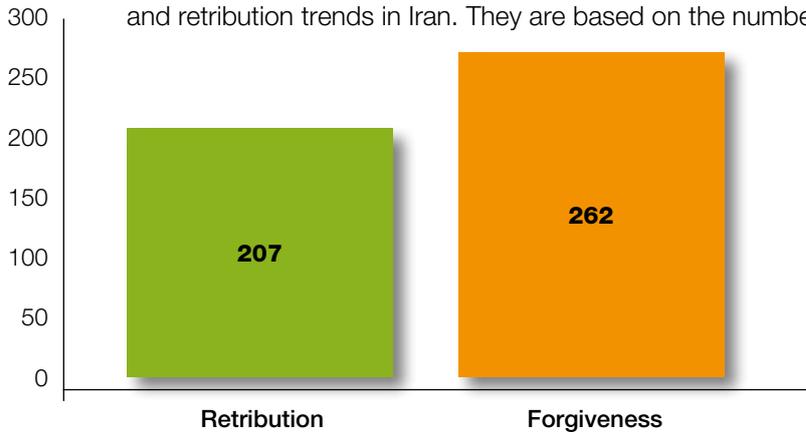


Diagram showing the number of the implemented retribution death sentences (black) and forgiveness cases (blue) in 2015. The number of forgiveness cases was 26% higher than the number of retribution executions, according to the IHR reports.

RETRIBUTION AND FORGIVENESS:  
MONTHLY BREAKDOWN AND GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION)

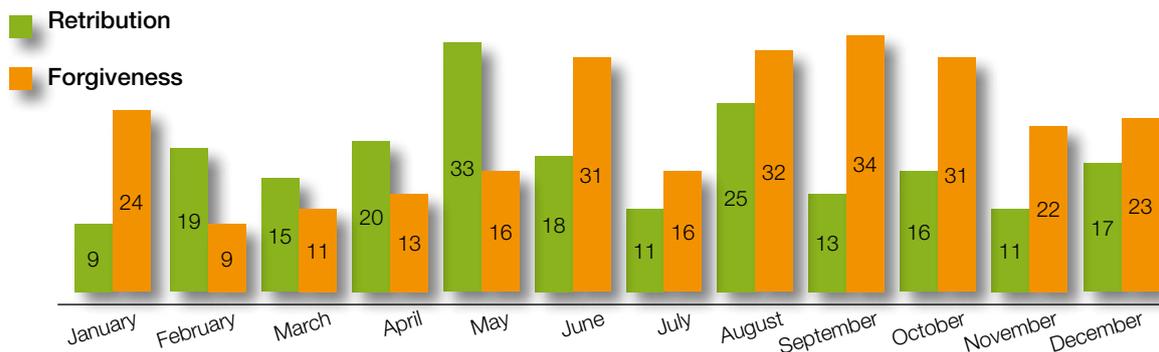


Diagram above shows the monthly breakdown of the implemented *qisas* (retribution) death sentences (black) compared to the “forgiveness” cases (blue). The number of forgiveness cases was significantly higher in the second half of 2015.

RETRIBUTION AND FORGIVENESS: GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

In 2015 IHR registered forgiveness cases in 29 out of 31 provinces in Iran. In comparison retribution death sentences were reported from 20 of the provinces.

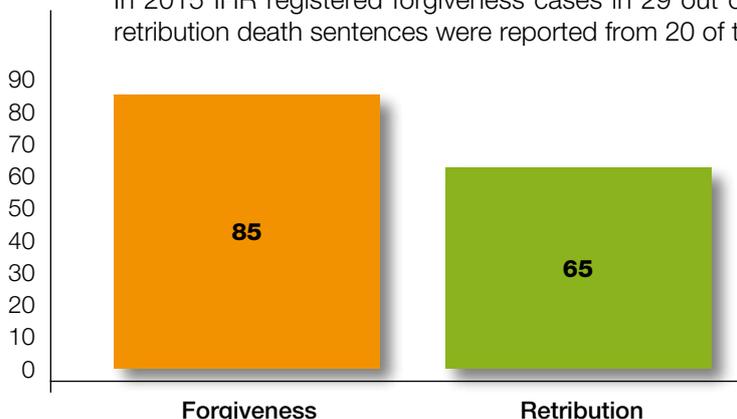
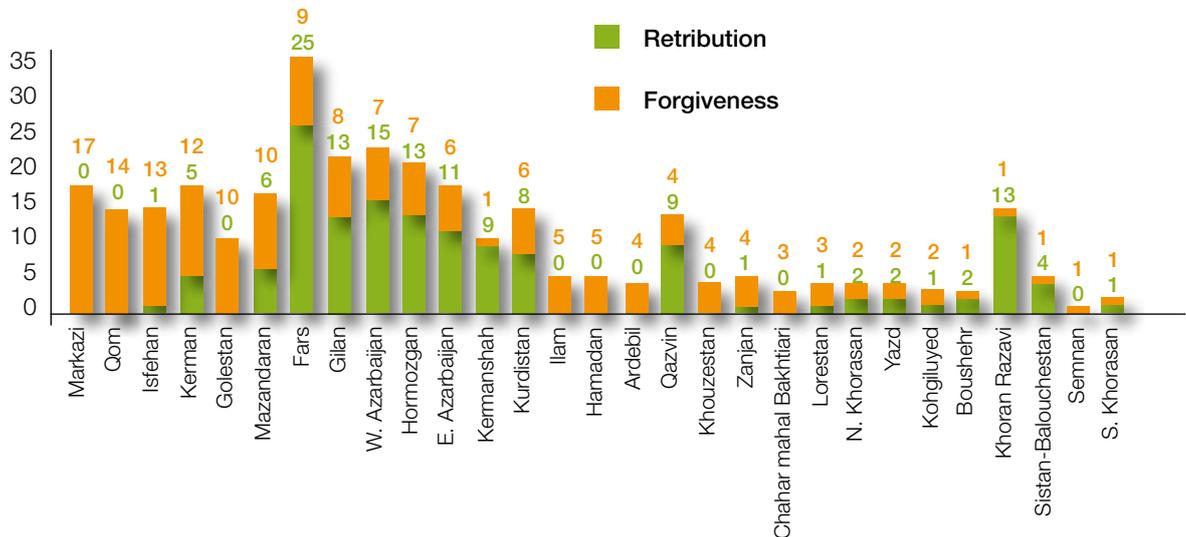


Diagram: Prisons in the Tehran/ Karaj area were the sites of the highest number of both forgiveness and retribution cases. The number of forgiveness cases were 30% higher than that of the retribution executions.



Diagram: Provinces of Fars (Southern Iran) and Khorasan Razavi (Northeastern Iran) had the highest number of retribution death sentences (black) compared to forgiveness cases (blue). Notably, Fars and Khorasan Razavi were also the provinces with the highest number of public executions (See page 15). This might support the idea that public executions besides being inhumane, also promote a culture of violence and brutality among the people. Markazi, Qom, Golestan and Isfahan were the provinces with the highest number of forgiveness cases and few or no cases of retribution death sentences.



## MOHAREBEH, CORRUPTION ON EARTH AND REBELLION

Due to their vague definition, the charges of “*Moharebeh*” (waging war against God) and “*Ilsad fel Arz*” or “Corruption on Earth” are used against a wide range of offences. Furthermore, there is a considerable subjectivity in regards to issuing these charges.

### MOHAREBEH, CORRUPTION ON EARTH AND REBELLION IN THE LAW<sup>45</sup>

Article 279 of the new IPC 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.

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.”

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 opposition groups abroad, even if they were non-violent. The new penal code provides for their punishment under the notion of “corruption on earth and 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, 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 centers or assists in establishing them.”

*Corruption on earth* is especially being used by Iranian judges in cases where a death sentence would otherwise be difficult to justify based on other charges and available evidence.

45 Iran Human Rights Documentation Center, July 2013: New Islamic Penal Code



**EXECUTIONS FOR MOHAREBEH AND CORRUPTION ON EARTH IN 2015**

In 2015 at least 40 people were executed with *Moharebeh* and Corruption on earth charges. Thirteen of them are reportedly executed for their political or ideological affiliation. Notably, all those executed for political and ideological affiliations belonged to ethnic and/or religious minorities of Iran.

**Six Sunni Kurdish prisoners: Convicted of *Moharebeh*, 10 minutes trial, no lawyer<sup>46</sup>:**



Hamed Ahmadi, Jamshid Dehghani and his younger brother Jahangir Dehghani, Kamal Molayee, Hadi Hosseini and Sedigh Mohammadi were sentenced to death after being convicted of vaguely-worded offences including *Moharebeh* (enmity against God) and “corruption on earth”. They were subjected to torture, ill-treatment and unfair trial. They were accused along with six others of involvement in the assassination of a senior Sunni cleric with ties to the Iranian authorities. They denied any involvement, saying that their arrest and detention preceded the assassination by several months.



Families of the six Sunni prisoners and several human rights defenders had gathered outside the Rajaishahr prison several hours before the executions. Picture shows the human rights advocate Narges Mohammadi (holding the daughter of one of the prisoners) and Mohammad Nourizad, both members of the abolitionist campaign LEGAM (Step by step to end the death penalty).

**Mansour Arvand: Propaganda against the regime and working with a banned Kurdish political party<sup>47</sup>**



According to unofficial reports, Mansour Arvand, a Kurdish political prisoner was hanged on June 14, 2015, in Miandoab Prison. Arvand’s brother, Esmail, confirmed the reports to Iran Human Rights and added, “My brother was not accused of any acts of violence in his case file.” Iranian authorities arrested Arvand on June 14, 2010 and sentenced him to death for “Working with the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran”, “Propaganda against the regime”, and “*Moharebeh*”. Authorities reportedly did not allow Arvand a visit with his family prior to executing him. The picture is from footage by the Iranian Press TV showing Mansour Arvand in handcuffs.

46 <http://iranhr.net/en/articles/1180/>

47 <http://iranhr.net/en/articles/1220/>



**Behrouz Alkhani: Association with a banned Kurdish opposition group and false allegation of murder<sup>48</sup>:**



On August 27, 2015, Kurdish political prisoner Behrouz Alkhani was hanged in Urmia Central Prison. Behrouz Alkhani was arrested in January 2009 and accused of affiliations with the armed Kurdish group PJAK. Several months later, he was also accused of taking part in the murder of a judicial authority. He was sentenced to death in Branch 1 of the Revolutionary Court in Urmia for *Moharebeh* through association with PJAK. In another court hearing he was issued a second death sentence, this time for murder. Alkhani has repeatedly denied the murder charge. «The murder charge is an unfounded lie. They've charged him with murder, because they're out to kill him,» says Alkhani's father Fars Alkhani.

**Habibollah Afshari, Ali Afshari<sup>49</sup>, Sirwan Najavi<sup>50</sup>**

Habibollah and Ali Afshari (brothers) were arrested and charged with *Moharebeh* for membership in the banned Kurdish opposition group Komeleh. Sirwan Najavi, was convicted of membership in the banned Kurdish group PJAK. In February 2015 these prisoners, together with two other prisoners Saman Naseem and Yunes Aghayan, were transferred from their ward at the Urmia prison to an unknown location<sup>51</sup>. According to reports the Afshari brothers were executed in February, while Sirwan Najavi was transferred to the prison of Tabriz (East Azerbaijan) and executed the summer of 2015. All the prisoners had been subjected to torture and unfair judicial processes. Ebrahim Shapouri, Saman Naseem and Yunes Aghayan are reportedly still alive.

**Abdolghani Gongozehei<sup>52</sup> Rigi and Jeiham Rigi:  
Cooperation with militant Baluchi groups**

Abdolghani Rigi was convicted of *Moharebeh* and executed in December and Jeiham Rigi was executed in February 2015. They were reportedly subjected to torture and unfair trials. Baluchistan is probably the most marginalized region in Iran and news of the human rights abuses in this province do not get sufficient attention. It is highly probable that the number of individuals executed for affiliation with Baluchi militant groups are much higher than what is reported here.

48 <http://iranhr.net/en/articles/2292/>

49 <http://en.icae-iran.com/archives/241>

50 <https://hra-news.org/fa/execution/a-1848>

51 <http://iranhr.net/en/articles/1170/>

52 <http://iranhr.net/fa/articles/2402/>



## JUVENILES

Iran remains as one of the few countries sentencing juveniles to death and it executes more juvenile offenders than any other country in the world. In violation to the Convention on the rights of the child (CRC) which Iran has ratified, Iranian authorities executed at least 3 juvenile offenders in 2015. According to IHR's annual reports, at least 45 juvenile offenders have been executed in the period of 2008-2015 in Iran. Amnesty International recently reported about the execution of 73 juvenile offenders between 2005 and 2015<sup>53</sup> (REF). There are currently about 160 juvenile offenders on the death row in Iranian prisons.<sup>54</sup>

## LEGISLATIONS

The new Islamic Penal Code (IPC) adopted in 2013 explicitly defines the "age of criminal responsibility" for children as the age of maturity under *shari'a* law, meaning that girls over nine years of age and boys over fifteen years of age are eligible for execution if convicted of "crimes against God" (such as apostasy) or "retribution crimes" (such as "intentional murder").<sup>55</sup> Article 91 of the IPC states that juvenile offenders under the age of 18 who commit *hodoud* or *qisas* offenses may not be sentenced to death if the judge determines the offender lacked "adequate mental maturity and the ability to reason" based on forensic evidence.<sup>56</sup> This article allows judges to assess a juvenile offender's mental maturity at the time of the offence, and potentially, to impose an alternative punishment to the death penalty on the basis of the outcome. In 2014, Iran's Supreme Court confirmed that all juvenile offenders on death row could apply for retrial. However, Article 91 is vaguely worded and inconsistently and arbitrarily applied. In 2015, IHR has identified few cases where the death sentences of juvenile offenders were commuted based on Article 91:

- A juvenile offender was pardoned under Article 91 after being sentenced to death in 2010. He was convicted of murder after killing a thief with a machete in self-defense. He said when protesting his sentence, "We were just sitting in a park and drinking alcohol when a young man approached us and attempted to take our phones from us. I refused, so he drew out a machete to stab me. I was able to use his machete to stab him, and also managed to get the weapon out of his hand and stab him a few more times. I was the one who delivered him to the hospital." His sentence was changed to five years in prison and lashings for consuming alcohol.
- Arman was accused of murder at age 16, and was pardoned under Article 91 on September 22, 2015. His sentence was reduced to a five year prison term and the payment of blood money to the victim's family.
- After seven years in prison, Somayeh, who was arrested at the age of 12 along with her mother for participating in the murder of her father, was released under Article 91. She was sentenced to death twice by Branch 74 of Tehran's Criminal Court, and her sentence was confirmed by Iran's Supreme Court. Somayeh's mother remains on death row.

## JUVENILE OFFENDERS EXECUTED IN 2015

IHR confirmed the execution of three juvenile offenders in 2015. The actual number might be higher as IHR received other unconfirmed reports on juvenile executions. These cases have not been included in the present report due to lack of sufficient details.

53 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/3112/2016/en/>

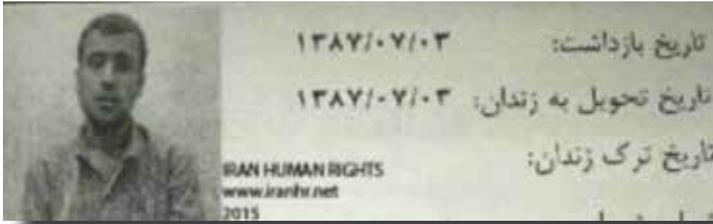
54 <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=14780&LangID=E>

55 *Id.*, Art. 147, (2013); Human Rights Watch, *Codifying Repression: An Assessment of Iran's New Penal Code* (Human Rights Watch, 2012), 21-22. The ages of 9 and 15 years is according to the lunar calendar.

56 *Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran: Report of the Secretary-General*, ¶17, U.N. Doc. A/68/377 (Sept. 10, 2013); Iran Penal Code (2013), Art. 91



**Javad Saberi**<sup>57</sup> was arrested at age 17 for an alleged murder and was sentenced to death. He was executed on April 16, 2015 in the Rajaishahr prison of Karaj, despite suffering from serious mental illness and having spent time in Amin Abad mental hospital. Despite this history of mental illness, the court does not appear to have taken Saberi's mental illness into account when determining his mental maturity. The execution of



Javad Saberi was not announced by the Iranian authorities but IHR managed to confirm the execution based on his prison documents (picture) and witness testimonies.

**Fatemeh Salbehi**<sup>58</sup> was executed after her conviction was upheld following a reevaluation of her mental maturity. Salbehi was convicted of murdering her husband, whom she married when she was 16 years old. The murder took place one year after the marriage, when she was 17. She was executed on October 13, 2015, in the Adelabad prison of Shiraz. During her original trial in 2010, a state medical organization expert found Salbehi had exhibited severe depression and suicidal thoughts at the time of her husband's death. This finding appears to have played little role in the reevaluation of her mental maturity. The assessment under Article 91 consisted of only three hours of questions focused on how frequently she



prayed, whether she studied religious texts at school, and whether or not she understood that killing was «haram». No psychology experts participated in the evaluation. On the basis of this flawed assessment, the court ruled Salbehi mature enough to be sentenced as an adult.

**Samad Zahabi**<sup>59</sup>



On October 6, 2015, Samad Zahabi was secretly executed in Kermanshah's Dizel Abad Prison in Kermashah province for shooting a fellow shepherd during an argument. He was 17 years old at the time of the alleged crime. Zahabi was sentenced to death in March 2013, despite the fact that he said the shooting was unintentional and in self-defense. No notice was given to Zahabi's family, and his lawyer did not receive the required 48-hour notice prior to his execution.

The three cases above illustrate that Iran's differentiated criminal system, despite the recent changes in the ICP, it does not provide a guarantee that juveniles will not be executed. At the time of writing this report, the juvenile offender Amir Amrollahi was sentenced to death for the second time, after a retrial and following a decade in prison<sup>60</sup>. The court rejected the conclusion of an official forensic report which stated he had not attained "mental growth and maturity" at the time of the crime, in November 2005, when he was 16 years old. Amir Amrollahi is in danger of imminent execution<sup>61</sup>.

In a report submitted to CRC, the Advocates for Human Rights and IHR emphasized that in order to comply with international law, Iran must cease the execution of juvenile offenders altogether and alter its definition of a child to include all offenders under the age of 18<sup>62</sup>.

57 <http://iranhr.net/en/articles/1192/>

58 <http://iranhr.net/en/articles/2341/>

59 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2015/10/iran-juvenile-offenders-executed/>

60 <http://iranhr.net/en/articles/248/>

61 Amnesty International, March 2, 2016: Iran: Commute Amir Amrollahi's Death Sentence

62 [http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CRC/Shared%20Documents/IRN/INT\\_CRC\\_NGO\\_IRN\\_22615\\_E.pdf](http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CRC/Shared%20Documents/IRN/INT_CRC_NGO_IRN_22615_E.pdf)



## WOMEN

According to reports gathered by IHR, at least 19 women were executed in 2015 in Iran. Five of the executions were reported by official sources. Since more than 50% of those executed are only identified by their initials or not identified at all, there is a possibility that the number of women executed is higher than reported here.

### SOME FACTS ABOUT THE WOMEN EXECUTED IN 2015:

- 19 executions where only 5 were announced by the authorities
- 15 were executed for drug-related charges but only 2 were announced by the authorities
- 4 were convicted of murder and sentenced to *qisas* but only 3 were announced by the authorities
- Charges for one of the women were not known
- One of the women (Fatemeh Salbehi) was 17 years of age when she allegedly committed murder

A list of the 19 women executed in 2015 along with more details are shown in Annex 1.

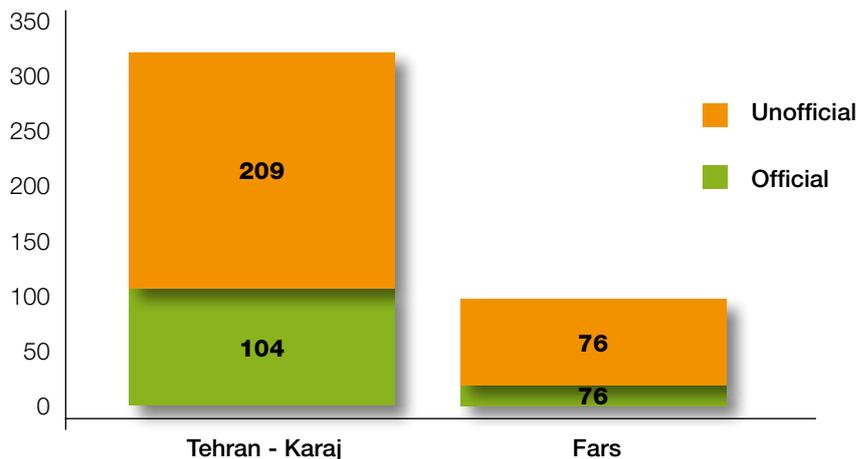


## SECRET AND UNANNOUNCED EXECUTIONS

About 60% of all executions included in this report were not announced by the authorities. IHR has received reports on several hundred executions that were not announced by official Iranian sources. Some of these executions were carried out secretly, without the family or the lawyer being informed, and some were simply not announced by the official media. Only unofficial reports with a sufficient amount of information are included in this report. The actual numbers are believed to be much higher. In 2015, IHR received reports of secret or unannounced executions from 16 different prisons across the country. In the ethnic regions of Baluchistan, Azerbaijan (East and West-) and Kurdistan, more than 97% of the executions were either carried out secretly or were not announced by the official media.

## GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF ALL EXECUTIONS

As in previous years the large prisons in the Karaj/Tehran area were the sites of the highest number of unannounced executions. Geographical distribution of all executions is presented in the diagrams below.

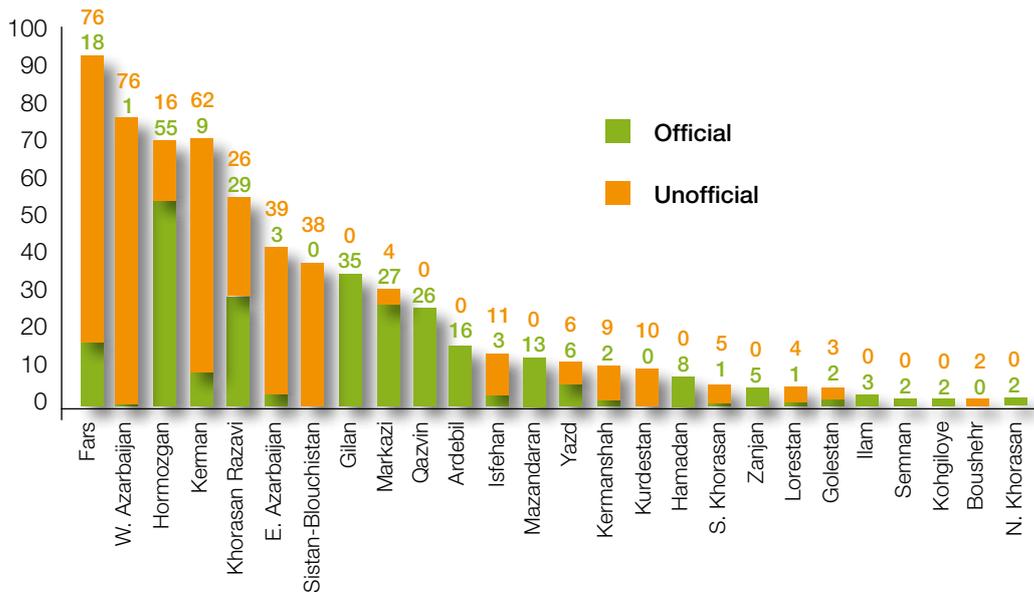


The diagram above shows the official (green) and unofficial/unannounced (yellow) executions in the two provinces with the highest number of executions in 2015. Ghezelhesar and Rajaishahr prisons in Karja were the sites of highest number of both officially announced and unannounced executions in 2015. All prisoners of Ghezelhesar prison<sup>63</sup> were convicted of drug related offences while in Rajaishahr<sup>64</sup> the largest numbers involved murder/*qisas* charges. The majority of the executions were not announced by the authorities.

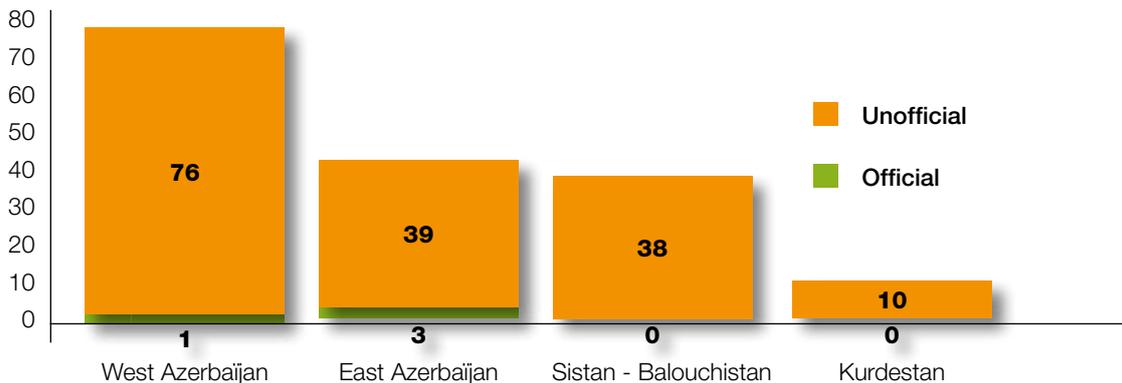
Fars province (Southern Iran, capital Shiraz) was the province with the second highest number of executions. Seventeen out of eighteen executions officially announced by the authorities were conducted in public. Only one of 77 executions in the prisons were announced by the authorities.

63 <http://iranhr.net/en/articles/1204/>

64 <http://iranhr.net/en/articles/1190/>



The diagram above shows the geographical distribution of the official (green) and unofficial/unannounced (yellow) executions in other parts of Iran than the in the Tehran/Karaj area. Prisons in the provinces of Fars (south), West Azerbaijan (northwest), Hormozgan (south) and Kerman (southeast) had the highest number of executions. Hormozgan province had the highest number of officially announced executions.



Prisons in the ethnic regions of Iran have the highest percentage of unannounced or secret executions. More than 95% of all executions in the ethnic regions of Iran provinces of West and East Azerbaijan, Baluchistan and Kurdistan were not announced by the official media.

### SOME FACTS ABOUT THE SECRET OR UNANNOUNCED EXECUTIONS IN 2015:

- At least 596 (61%) executions were not announced by the official Iranian sources
- Drug related offences accounted for the charges in 77% of the unannounced executions
- Executions of women and foreign citizens (mainly Afghani and Pakistani) were mainly not announced
- Executions for none of the political or security-related charges were announced by the official sources

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO:

### THE UNITED NATIONS

- Renew the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on human rights in Iran
- Freeze all cooperation involving law enforcement against drug trafficking until Iran removed the death penalty for drug offences from its law
- 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 and guarantee fair trials from Iranian authorities
- 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, cease the execution of juvenile offenders altogether and alter the definition of a child to include all offenders under the age of 18
- Request an immediate halt to discriminatory practices against ethnic and religious minorities
- Condition all funding to the UNODC international programs that fight against international drug trafficking on a moratorium on death sentences for drug offences

### THE IRANIAN AUTHORITIES

- Put an immediate moratorium on all the executions
- Comply with all the international obligations including the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)

## ANNEXES

### WOMEN LIST

	Date	Name	Age	Charge	Place	Source	Comments
1	1/1/2015	Unknown	Unknown	Drug Trafficking	Kerman- Bam	HRANA	Unofficial
2	1/1/2015	Unknown	Unknown	Drug Trafficking	Kerman- Bam	HRANA	Unofficial
3	1/1/2015	Unknown	Unknown	Drug Trafficking	Kerman- Bam	HRANA	Unofficial
4	1/1/2015	Unknown	Unknown	Drug Trafficking	Kerman- Bam	HRANA	Unofficial
5	25/1/2015	Mehri Raisi	Unknown	Drug Trafficking	Kerman	IHR	Unofficial
6	26/2/2015	Marzie Hossein zehi	Unknown	Drug Trafficking	Kerman	HRANA	Unofficial
7	7/3/2015	Mehnoush Ghavasi	50	Drug Trafficking	Karaj- Ghezel Hesar	HRAD	Unofficial
8	7/3/2015	Unknown	N/A	Drug Trafficking	Karaj- Ghezel Hesar	HRAD	Unofficial
9	25/4/2015	F. Y.	48	Drug Trafficking	Gilan- Rasht	Gilan Judiciary	Official
10	12/5/2015	Batoul A.	Unknown	Drug Trafficking	Markazi- Arak	Markazi Judiciary	Official
11	30/5/2015	Fateme Mehrbani	39	Murder	Karaj- Ghezel Hesar	HRDI	Unofficial
12	30/5/2015	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Karaj- Ghezel Hesar	HRDI	Unofficial
13	2/6/2015	Unknown	32	Murder	Tehran	Mehr News	Official
14	29/7/2015	Paridokht Molaei	43	Drug Trafficking	Karaj- Ghezel Hesar	HAD	Unofficial
15	30/7/2015	Unknown	Unknown	Drug Trafficking	Kerman	HRANA	Unofficial
16	10/8/2015	Fateme Hadadi	29	Murder	Karaj- Rajaishahr	HAD	Unofficial
17	13/10/2015	Fatemeh Salbehi	23- (17 at the time of the offence)	Murder	Fars- Shiraz	Tabnak	Official
18	12/11/2015	Hajar Safari	Unknown	Drug Trafficking	E. Azarbaijan- Tabriz	KHN	Unofficial
19	6/12/2015	F. Zanjani	Unknown	Murder	Qazvin	Parsineh	Official

## JUVENILE LIST

	Date	Name	Age	Charge	Place	Source	Comment
1	15/4/2015	Javad Saberi	Juvenile	Murder	Karaj- Rajaishahr	IHR	Unofficial
2	6/10/2015	Samad Zahabi	-18	Murder	Kermanshah- Dizelabad	Amnesty	Unofficial
3	13/10/2015	Fatemeh Salbehi	23- and 14 at the time	Murder	Fars- Shiraz	Tabnak	Official



## IRAN HUMAN RIGHTS

Iran Human Rights (IHR) is a non-profit, politically independent organization with members and supporters inside and outside Iran.

The organization started its work in 2005 and is since 2009 registered as an international non-governmental organization based in Oslo, Norway. Promotion of abolition of the death penalty in Iran has been the core of IHR's activities. Monitoring, reporting, advocacy and empowerment are IHR's main instruments in the struggle against human rights violations in general and death penalty in particular. IHR has a broad network inside Iran and its reports on the death penalty are points of reference in international documents.

IHR has been a member of the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty (WCADP) since 2009, and an elected member of its Steering Committee since 2011.

Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam is the co-founder and international spokesperson of IHR.



## ENSEMBLE CONTRE LA PEINE DE MORT (ECPM)

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 NGO 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 6th World Congress against the Death Penalty in Oslo in 2015 (after Strasbourg 2001, Montreal 2004, Paris 2007, Geneva 2010, Madrid 2013) organized by ECPM, was exceptional in terms of State representation, participation of retentionist countries and involvement of the public and the media.

ECPM is the founder of the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty (WCADP) and member of the international network Impact Iran ([impactiran.org](http://impactiran.org))

Raphaël Chenuil-Hazan is the Executive director of ECPM and Vice-President of the WCADP





A public execution in Shiraz (Fars province, southern Iran), January 17, 2015. Hundreds of people, including children were present at the execution scene. Photo by M.Reza Dehdari, Mehr News Agency

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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.