



HANDS OFF CAIN – SPES CONTRA SPEM

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Hands off Cain appeal for the 6 political prisoners sentenced to death for PMOI membership in Iran

To

Mr Volker Turk

the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

and to

Ms. Mai Sato

the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran

Dear Excellencies,

Hands off Cain, the international association behind the approval of the UNGA Resolution calling for a universal moratorium on capital executions expresses alarm over a surge in executions during this year 2024 in Iran and over the recent death sentences concerning six political prisoners for PMOI membership.

Through our daily monitoring on news concerning the use of the death penalty, we may document the record number of at least 818 executions carried out this year and the fact that the Iranian regime's judiciary has sentenced to death Abolhassan Montazer, Pouya Ghobadi, Vahid Bani-Amrian, Babak Alipour, Ali Akbar Daneshvarkar, and Mohammad Taghavi, all political prisoners, following months of interrogation and torture. The charges against them include "membership in the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI/MEK)," "collusion and conspiracy against national security," "armed rebellion against the government," "forming a group to disrupt national security," and "destruction of public property using a launcher."

These criminal rulings were issued by Judge Iman Afshari, head of the Revolutionary Court, Branch 26, in Tehran. The same court also

sentenced Mojtaba and Ali Taghavi, brothers of Mohammad Taghavi, to imprisonment and exile.

Abolhassan Montazer, 65, an architecture graduate and a political prisoner from the 1980s, has been arrested and imprisoned multiple times, including in 2018 and 2020. He was last arrested in January 2024 and suffers from heart, lung, and kidney diseases, and arthritis; Pouya Ghobadi, 32, an electrical engineer, was arrested in March 2024. He had previously been arrested twice;

Vahid Bani-Amrian, 32, holding a master's degree in management, was arrested in January 2024. He has spent a total of 4 years in prison across multiple arrests since 2017;

Babak Alipour, 33, a law graduate, was arrested in January 2024. He had earlier been detained in November 2018 in Rasht and served 4 years in prison;

Ali Akbar Daneshvarkar, 57, a civil engineer, was arrested in January 2024;

Mohammad Taghavi, 58, a political prisoner from the 1980s and 1990s, was previously arrested in 2020 and imprisoned for 3 years on charges of association with the PMOI/MEK;

Mojtaba and Ali Taghavi were sentenced solely because they are the brothers of Mohammad Taghavi.

Hands off Cain is aware of crimes committed by the Iranian authorities on civilian population and especially on members and sympathisers of the People's Mojahedin Organisation of Iran (PMOI), also known as the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK) who have been victims, as recognised also by the UN Report titled "Atrocity Crimes" and published on the OHCHR website on 22 July 2024, of crimes against humanity in the past.

However, as also the Report quotes, three and a half decades onwards – over 35 years – the persecution is continuing and those with criminal responsibility for these grave and most serious violations of human rights and crimes under international law remain in power and control.

This is the reason why *Hands off Cain* calls on you to take immediate action to save these six prisoners' lives and secure the release of all political prisoners as well as to renew the appeal for the introduction of a moratorium on all the capital executions in Iran.