Geneva, 23 April 2014

Statement by the International Commission against the Death Penalty: Executions in Iran including four juvenile offenders

The International Commission against the Death Penalty (ICDP) condemns the recent executions of at least eleven men including four juvenile offenders by authorities in Iran.

Since 2013, apart from Saudi Arabia, Iran is the only country that is known to impose and carry out the death penalty on juvenile offenders - those convicted of an alleged crime committed before the age of 18.

Three juvenile offenders (all men) – Ali Sharifi, Ali Fouladi and Ahmad Rahimi - were reportedly executed on 17 April in Bandar Abbas prison. Mr. Sharifi (29) had been detained since he was 14 years old; Mr. Fouladi (22) was a detainee since the age of 16 and Mr. Rahimi (21) was detained when he was 17 years of age.

Reports reaching ICDP suggest that another man – identified as Ebrahim Hajati (20) – was executed in Vakilabad prison in Mashhad on 20 April. Mr. Hajati was convicted of murder that he had committed when was 16 years of age.

Executions of juvenile offenders are strictly prohibited under international law. In January 2005, the last time the Child Rights Committee (the Committee) considered Iran’s periodic report, the Committee deplored the fact that executions of persons, who have committed a crime before the age of 18, had continued. The Committee, further, “urged the Iranian authorities to take the necessary steps to immediately suspend the execution of all death penalties imposed on persons for having committed a crime before the age of 18, to take the appropriate legal measures to convert them into penalties in conformity with the provisions of the Convention (Convention on the Rights of the Child) and to abolish the death penalty as a sentence imposed on persons for having committed crimes before the age of 18, as required by article 37 of the Convention.”

“The execution of the four juvenile offenders is a clear violation of Iran’s international obligations. I urge the authorities in Iran to immediately stop imposing death sentences and carrying out executions of those below the age of 18,” said ICDP President Federico Mayor.

In 2014, at least six juvenile offenders have been reportedly executed in Iran, while in 2013 the death sentences of at least 8 juvenile offenders were carried out.

ICDP also condemns the reported executions of at least seven men. A man – identified as Zargham Jahangiri (27) – was executed on the same day along with the three juvenile offenders in Bandar Abbas on 17 April. Five men, including a 68 year-old man, were reportedly executed in Gohardasht prison in city of Karaj. Official reports suggest
that a 24 year-old man was executed in the prison in Mashhad on 21 April.

According to the United Nations, some 160 countries from all regions have abolished the death penalty or do not execute – having recognized that modern justice systems can protect the public from crime without the irrevocable and cruel nature of the death penalty and the constant risk of executing an innocent person.

ICDP calls on the authorities in Iran to stop any further executions, to commute all death sentences to terms of imprisonment and declare an official moratorium on executions as a first step towards abolition of capital punishment in line with United Nations General Assembly Resolutions adopted in 2007, 2008, 2010 and 2012.

Federico Mayor
President of the International Commission Against the Death Penalty

Background

ICDP was founded in Madrid in October 2010. ICDP is composed of 15 persons of high international standing from all regions of the world who act with total independence and neutrality and work under its President Mr. Federico Mayor.

ICDP opposes the death penalty under any circumstances believing that it violates the right to life enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. ICDP promotes the abolition of capital punishment in law in those states that observe a de facto moratorium on the use of the death penalty and promotes moratoriums on executions in states that rarely use the death penalty. In states that continue to carry out executions ICDP urges strict adherence to international standards.

ICDP works with the United Nations and other international and regional organizations, governments and nongovernmental organizations to further the abolition of capital punishment worldwide.

The work of the ICDP is supported by a diverse group of 18 states from all regions of the world that are committed to abolition of the death penalty. Its secretariat is based in Geneva.