

URGENT ACTION

THREE PRISONERS AT RISK OF EXECUTION

Amirhossein Moradi, Mohammad Rajabi and Saeed Tamjidi have been sentenced to death in connection with acts of arson that took place during protests in November 2019. Their trial was grossly unfair. They were denied access to lawyers during the investigation phase and say they were tortured. Amirhossein Moradi says he was coerced into giving a “confession” that was broadcast on state television and used as evidence to convict them.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

*Head of the Judiciary Ebrahim Raisi
c/o Permanent Mission of Iran to the UN
Chemin du Petit-Saconnex 28
1209 Geneva, Switzerland*

Dear Mr Raisi,

Amirhossein Moradi, Mohammad Rajabi and Saeed Tamjidi are at risk of execution after Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran convicted them of several charges including “enmity against God” (moharebeh) and sentenced them to death. On 18 February 2020, during his weekly press conference, Iran’s judiciary spokesperson accused them of being “riot leaders” who had “set fire to banks and petrol stations [during the nationwide protests in November 2019] and had filmed their criminal acts and sent the videos to foreign media”. They were also sentenced to between 11 and 16 years in prison and flogging on charges including “armed robbery”, which were related to separate incidents, according to an informed source. Their lawyers received the verdict in mid-February 2020.

All states have a legitimate interest in prosecuting criminal acts of violence, but the trial of the three men, which took place on 5-6 January 2020, was grossly unfair. Amirhossein Moradi, 25, was arrested on 19 November 2019 and held for a week in a ministry of intelligence detention centre in Tehran before being transferred to Tehran’s Evin prison for a month. He was held in prolonged solitary confinement and interrogated without a lawyer present. He has said that he was subjected to torture and other ill-treatment, including through beatings, electric shock treatment and an interrogator standing on his chest. He has said he only “confessed” after his interrogators promised to provide him with medical treatment for the injuries he sustained, which they later refused. Mohammad Rajabi, 25, and Saeed Tamjidi, 27, were arrested on 28 December 2019 and held initially in a ministry of intelligence detention centre in Tehran. They have also said they were subjected to torture and other ill-treatment, including through being kicked, beaten with batons and hung upside down while repeatedly beaten on their legs and feet. All were subjected to enforced disappearance for weeks after their arrests and denied access to a lawyer during the investigation phase of their case. Amirhossein Moradi’s “confession”, which was broadcast in a propaganda video on state television days before their trial took place, was used as evidence to convict them. The three men are currently imprisoned in Fashafouyeh prison, in Tehran province.

I urge you to quash the death sentences of Amirhossein Moradi, Mohammad Rajabi and Saeed Tamjidi and order a fair retrial without recourse to the death penalty. Please give them access to their families and lawyers and ensure that their torture allegations are investigated and those suspected of responsibility brought to justice in fair trials. Please take measures to ensure “confessions” allegedly obtained under torture and other ill-treatment are not produced, broadcast or used as evidence in court and immediately establish an official moratorium on executions with a view to abolishing the death penalty.

Yours sincerely,

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 24 December 2019, prior to their trial, the state broadcaster, the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting corporation, broadcast a video showing the “confessions” of one woman and 12 men, including Amirhossein Moradi. The blurred faces of the individuals were shown “confessing” to various actions in relation to the protests: participating in them; sending pictures and videos of them to family and friends or to media outside Iran; encouraging people to take part in them; or committing acts of violence in them. Amirhossein Moradi said that he was coerced into the “confession” following torture. Amnesty International does not have information on the treatment of the other 12 individuals in this video. However, since none of them is believed to have had access to a lawyer by that point and the well-established pattern of coerced public “confessions” in such cases, Amnesty International is concerned that none of them would have been able to give their consent freely to their appearance in the video.

Between 15 and 19 November 2019, the Iranian authorities carried out a brutal crackdown on protests which took place in more than 100 cities across the country. According to credible sources, more than 300 people were killed, and thousands injured as security forces used unlawful, including lethal, force. The authorities arrested thousands of protesters, many arbitrarily. Also targeted for arbitrary arrest and detention were journalists, students and human rights defenders, including minority rights and labour rights activists, and people from ethnic minority groups. The authorities have subjected some detainees to enforced disappearance, torture and other ill-treatment. The families of many detainees have been threatened and warned not to speak to the media. While most of the demonstrations appear to have been peaceful, in some instances, as the crackdown by security forces escalated, a small number of protesters turned to stone-throwing and acts of arson and damage to banks, seminaries and other property.

States have a duty to take effective measures to protect the public from threats to life and physical integrity, including by prosecuting those suspected of violent crime. However, such measures must adhere fully to international human rights standards, including the right to a fair trial, and must preclude resort to the death penalty.

Iran’s Islamic Penal Code defines the crime of “enmity against God” as “Taking up arms with the intention of [taking] people’s lives, property or honour in order to cause fear among them in a manner that causes insecurity in the atmosphere.” The law fails to clarify how an act must be carried out in order to “cause insecurity in the atmosphere”, leaving the determination on this to the discretion of judges. In contravention of international law, the provision on “enmity against God” provides for the death penalty in circumstances where an individual’s actions have not resulted in intentional loss of life.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases without exception regardless of the nature of the crime, the characteristics of the offender, or the method used by the state to kill the prisoner. The organization considers the death penalty a violation of the right to life and the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Persian, English,
You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 10 April 2020
Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Amirhossein Moradi (he; him), Mohammad Rajabi (he; him), Saeed Tamjidi (he; him)