

UN rights experts urge Iran to halt imminent execution of juvenile Amirhossein Pourjafar

18 October 2017 – United Nations human rights experts on Wednesday urgently appealed to Iran to halt tomorrow's execution of Amirhossein Pourjafar, who was sentenced to death when he was 16 years old.

"The Iranian authorities must immediately [halt the execution](#) of this juvenile offender and annul the death sentence against him in compliance with their international obligations," said the experts in a statement issued by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights ([OHCHR](#)).

"International standards unequivocally forbid imposing the death sentence on anyone under 18 years of age," they added.

The experts said that despite being strictly prohibited by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which Iran is party, the country continued to execute juvenile offenders.

In 2016, the Committee on the Rights of the Child strongly urged Iran to end the execution of people who committed a crime while under the age of 18. However, the country has executed at least four juvenile offenders since January, and at least 86 more are known to be on death row – although the actual figure may be higher.

Several months ago, Iran executed Alireza Tajiki, who was arrested in 2012 at age 15. Prior to his execution, he had spent four years on death row amid reports of torture and violations of his right to a fair trial.

Mr. Pourjafar was sentenced to death in September 2016 after being convicted of raping and murdering a seven-year-old girl. The court said he had attained "mental maturity" at the time of the crime and had understood the nature and consequences of his actions. The Supreme Court upheld the sentence in January 2017.

"We deplore the continued scheduling of the executions of juvenile offenders," the experts stressed. "Iran should immediately and unconditionally abolish the sentencing of children to death, and engage in a comprehensive process of commutation of all death sentences issued against children, in line with juvenile justice standards."

The experts are: Asma Jahangir, Special Rapporteur on the situation of [human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran](#); Agnes Callamard, Special Rapporteur on [extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions](#); and Renate Winter, current Chairperson of the [Committee on the Rights of the Child](#).

Special Rapporteurs and independent experts are appointed by the Geneva-based

UN Human Rights Council to examine and report back on a specific human rights theme or a country situation. The positions are honorary and the experts are not UN staff, nor are they paid for their work.