**10 October 2024**

**World Day against the Death penalty**

**Statement on alarming increase of executions in Iran**

This year’s World Day Against the Death Penalty holds particular significance for the Islamic Republic of Iran, where we continue to witness an alarming increase in the use of the death penalty, with over 400 executions reportedly carried out this year almost half of these executions for drug-related offenses.

Iran's capital offences extend well beyond the international standards to include drug-related offences, adultery, same sex sexual acts, political offences, and religious offences, rendering these executions arbitrary in nature.

Of particular concern is the use of death penalty and lengthy prison sentences against women, particularly those from minority backgrounds, on charges relating to national security offences such as ‘armed rebellion against the State.’ Their convictions arise from their advocacy for women’s rights, and often follow judicial proceedings that do not uphold the principles of due process or fair trial.

This rise in death sentences against women activists is aimed at repressing the ‘Woman, Life, Freedom’ movement, which began in September 2022 following the tragic death of Jina Mahsa Amini.

We remain deeply concerned about the lack of accountability for the death of Jina Mahsa Amini, which triggered the September 2022 protests, where 551 persons, including 49 women and 68 children have been killed. This environment of impunity paved the way to further oppression and discrimination against women and girls in Iran, including the arbitrary use of the death penalty.

Rather than addressing the movement's demands for accountability, human rights, and gender equality, Iranian authorities have responded with intensified violence and punitive measures.

Iran’s policies and legal framework conflate activism with threats to national security, undermining freedom of expression and assembly.

The use of the death penalty against women activists and supporters of the ‘Woman, Life, Freedom’ movement needs to be understood within the wider context of an aggressive crackdown on women's autonomy, particularly through the enforcement of mandatory hijab laws. The 'Noor' plan and the pending Hijab and Chastity Bill further illustrates how capital punishment intersects with other forms of State oppression to create an atmosphere of pervasive fear and control.

In the face of this repression, the courage of the Iranian people shines through. The ‘No to Execution Tuesdays’ campaign—a prisoner-led initiative in which prisoners go on a hunger strike each Tuesday against the death penalty—demonstrates the unwavering commitment to continue the advocacy for human rights and justice.

The Government of Iran must ensure meaningful accountability for all cases of unlawful killings committed since 2022, including through the prosecution of perpetrators, reparation for families, and adoption of measures of nonrecurrence.

We further request the Iranian authorities to immediately halt all executions, particularly those related to protests and activism, on this World Day against the Death Penalty. We call for a moratorium on the death penalty with a view to its complete abolition and urge the international community to amplify the voices of existing campaigners to end capital punishment and to uphold the rights of women and girls.

ENDS

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