

Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers; the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences; Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran

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Excellency,

We have the honour to address you in our capacity as Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers; Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences; Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health and Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 26/12, 26/7, 25/13, 32/19, 24/6 and 28/21.

In this connection, we would like to bring to the attention of your Excellency's Government information we have received concerning the imminent execution of Ms. **Zeinab Sekaanvand Lokran**, who was sentenced to death on a murder conviction.

According to the information received:

On 1 March 2012, Ms. Zeinab Sekaanvand Lokran was arrested and detained at a police station where she allegedly confessed to the murder of her husband, Mr. Hossein Sarmadi. She was 17 years old at the time the alleged crime took place. She had married Mr. Sarmadi when she was 15 years old, and had registered several complaints with the police about the domestic abuse she was subjected to. The police reportedly consistently failed to conduct any investigation into her complaints.

Ms. Zeinab Sekaanvand Lokran was held in the police station for 20 days following her arrest, allegedly being subjected to physical abuse by male police officers in the form of beatings all over her body. During this time, she reportedly confessed to having stabbed her husband because of the months of physical and verbal abuse she had suffered and because he was denying her a divorce. Ms. Zeinab Sekaanvand Lokran was then moved from the holding cells in the local

police station to Khoy Prison, where she was detained for a year, and then to Oroumieh Central Prison, where she is currently detained.

In October 2014, she was convicted and sentenced to death under qesas (“retribution in kind”) by branch 2 of Urmia’s criminal court following a trial that was unfair trial. Her death sentence was confirmed by branch 8 of Iran's Supreme Court. It is reported that Ms. Lokran only had access to a state-appointed lawyer during the final hearing of her trial. In the course of this hearing, she retracted her confession and told the judge that her husband’s brother had committed the murder and told her that if she accepted responsibility he would pardon her as is customary under Islamic law. The court allegedly erred on several counts. Firstly, it failed to apply juvenile sentencing provisions foreseen in Iran’s 2013 Islamic Penal Code. Secondly, it failed to order a forensic report to assess Ms. Lokran’s “mental growth and maturity” at the time of the alleged crime, which could have absolved her of the death penalty according to the 2013 Islamic Penal Code. Thirdly, it failed to investigate Ms. Lokran’s statements regarding her brother-in-law, only relying on the confessions she had made without the presence of a lawyer to issue a verdict.

In 2015, Ms. Lokran married a fellow detainee at Oroumieh Central Prison with the consent of authorities and became pregnant. Her execution was delayed by the authorities until after the birth of her child. On 30 September 2015, she gave birth to a still-born baby in a regular hospital. According to doctors, her baby had died in her womb two days earlier due to the shock caused by the execution of her cellmate and friend.

On 1 October 2015, the day after the birth, she was returned to the prison and has not been allowed to see a doctor for post-natal care or psycho-social support. Throughout her entire pregnancy, she was allegedly denied access to adequate and regular pre-natal care, including regular examinations and tests, and was only allowed one ultrasound scan. Moreover, she has not been given access to specialized healthcare for the depressive disorder she was diagnosed with by an official medical examination conducted following her arrest.

On 3 October 2016, Ms. Lokran was reportedly summoned to the office of sentences’ implementation of Urmia Central Prison where she was told by the authorities that her execution sentence could be carried out as early as 13 October.

We would like to express our serious concern that the death penalty may be carried out against Ms. Zeinab Sekaanvand Lokran, who was under 18 years old at the time of the alleged crime, which is in contravention of international human rights law. We are also deeply troubled by reported violations of due process and fair trial guarantees, including Ms. Lokran’s inadequate access to a lawyer, which is also in

contravention of Iran's international human rights obligations, in particular in cases where the death penalty may be imposed. In addition, we are seriously concerned about the alleged denial of adequate healthcare in detention, including pre-natal and post-natal care and specialized mental healthcare.

Without making any judgement as to the accuracy of the information made available to us, the above allegations appear to be in contravention of the right of every individual to life, security, and not to be arbitrarily deprived of life, as set out in article 6.1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), ratified by Iran on 24 June 1975, article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The allegations also appear to be in contravention of the rights of the child to not be sentenced to death, as set out in article 37.a of the Convention of the Rights of the Child, ratified by Iran on 13 July 1994. Furthermore, the detention and trial of Ms. Lokran appears to have been in contravention of articles 9 and 14 of the ICCPR and 37 and 40 of the CRC.

The alleged mistreatment of Ms. Zeinab Sekaanvand Lokran further violates the absolute and non-derogable prohibition of torture and cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment, as codified, inter alia, in the ICCPR and, in Human Rights Council Resolution 25/13 and in paragraph 1 of General Assembly Resolution 68/156.

We would also like to draw your Excellency's Government's attention to paragraph 7b of Human Rights Council Resolution 16/23, which urges States to take persistent, determined and effective measures to have all allegations of torture or other ill-treatment investigated promptly, effectively and impartially by an independent, competent domestic authority, as well as whenever there is reasonable ground to believe that such an act has been committed; to hold persons who encourage, order, tolerate or perpetrate such acts responsible, to have them brought to justice and punished in a manner commensurate with the gravity of the offence, including the officials in charge of the place of detention where the prohibited act is found to have been committed.

We would like to bring to Your Excellency's attention Article 1 of the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women which provides that the term "violence against women" means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.

Regarding access to adequate medical treatment in detention by Ms. Zeinab Sekaanvand Lokran, we would like to refer your Excellency's Government to article 12 of the Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights which establishes that States have an obligation to respect the right to health by, inter alia, refraining from denying or limiting equal access for all persons, including prisoners or detainees. (General Comment 14, Para. 34) In addition, we would like to underline the Basic Principles for the

Treatment of Prisoners, adopted by General Assembly resolution 45/111, according to which prisoners should have access to the health services available in the country without discrimination on the grounds of their legal situation (Principle 9). Moreover, as outlined by the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (see the revised version adopted on 5 November 2015 and renamed “Mandela Rules”), the provision of health care is the responsibility of the state authorities and prisoners should enjoy the same standards of health care that are available in the community (Rule 24(1)).

We would like to also underline the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules) adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 65/229, which complement the UN Standards Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, providing guidance for specific characteristics and needs for women in prison, in particular Rule 13 which states that Prison staff shall be made aware of times when women may feel particular distress, so as to be sensitive to their situation and ensure that the women are provided appropriate support.

The full texts of the human rights instruments and standards recalled above are available on www.ohchr.org or can be provided upon request.

In view of the urgency of the matter, and of the irreversibility of the punishment of the death penalty, **we call upon your Excellency’s Government to halt the execution of Ms. Zeinab Sekaanvand Lokran**, which on the facts available to us constitutes a violation of applicable international human rights standards, and thus an arbitrary execution. **We further urge you to ensure that Ms. Zeinab Sekaanvand Lokran’s death sentence is annulled and that she is re-tried** in compliance with international human rights norms and standards.

Your Excellency’s Government’s response will be made available in a report to be presented to the Human Rights Council for its consideration.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

Agnes Callamard
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Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers

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