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Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by the International Educational Development, Inc., a non-governmental organization on the roster

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[13 February 2012]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

The death penalty in the Islamic Republic of Iran**

International Educational Development, Inc. (IED), the Association of Humanitarian Lawyers (AHL), and the Association pour les Droits Humains au Kurdistan d'Iran-Geneva (KMMK-G) bring to the attention of the Council the fact that in 2011 Iranian authorities carried out more than 600 executions and imprisoned more journalists and bloggers than any other country. There have already been 43 executions between 1 and 15 January 2012. The number executed is most likely considerably higher, as there are many secret detention centers and many executions carried out secretly. Moreover, the Iranian authorities prosecuted dozens of outspoken lawyers, journalists, and rights activists for their peaceful speech and associational activities. We fear that many of them face execution. Iran's judiciary works hand-in-hand with security and intelligence forces to harass, imprison and convict opposition and rights activists, despite increasing international condemnation of the country's rights record. In our view, Iran simply does not care about condemnation of their government for their human rights violations as they consider they have strong allies.

Juvenile execution, stoning sentence practices, raping before execution of virgin girls, collective execution in the public sphere are the daily practices of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The use of death penalty against political opponents is meant to terrorize the peaceful activists who seek full political freedoms and, in particular, to pursue free and democratic elections, freedom for political prisoners, and freedom of the press, speech, assembly and association. The current government plans to keep control of political power no matter what it takes to do so.

Use of the death penalty is high in the areas with ethnic or religious minorities. For example, according to the Kurdistan Human Rights Organization as many as 80 % of executions in Iran are of Kurdish activists.¹ Many of Kurdish prisoners are human rights, civil rights or women's rights activists and they include teachers, journalists, women's rights activists and students. Many are tried merely for using the Kurdish language. Most of them have been subjected to severe physical and psychological torture and have been sentenced to lengthy prison terms. The trials of individuals belonging to ethnic minorities in Iran take place behind closed doors, without a defence lawyer and on numerous occasions without the presence of the accused.

Iranian law allows capital punishment for people who have reached puberty, defined as age 9 for girls and 15 for boys. We are also extremely concerned by the reported executions of children under the age of 18 in 2011 that constitute clear violations of international law.

Kurdish women activists are routinely raped before execution, especially if young and a virgin. Rapes are carried out by the "Pasdaran" forces (the revolutionary guards).² According to their religious beliefs, a virgin girl goes to paradise when she dies while a non-virgin executed for crimes goes to hell.

We are pleased at the appointment of Special Rapporteur Ahmed Shaheen and his efforts to obtain the co-operation of the Iranian authorities as he carries out his mandate. Unfortunately, the Iranian authorities indicate that they will not allow him to visit the country. We urge that they comply with the Rapporteur's request to visit, as complying

** The Association of Humanitarian Lawyers and the Association pour les Droits Humains au Kurdistan d'Iran-Geneva, NGOs without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.

¹ See, www.kaboudwand.com

² (<http://linksunten.indymedia.org/de/node/18911>, www.kurdistanmedia.com, and www.medyanews.com in Kurdish)

with United Nations mandates is a condition of Membership in the United Nations. Special Rapporteur Shaheed is consulting all stakeholders, and we look forward to working with him. We especially request him to address, on an urgency basis, the use of the death penalty in Iran. Finally, we urge the Council to call for a moratorium on the death penalty in Iran and to condemn Iranian for serious abuse of the death penalty due to execution of juveniles, execution of political prisoners and prisoners of conscience, use the death penalty as a tool of repression against members of nationalities and religious groups, and the rape of women and girls before they are executed.
