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Head of judiciary

Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei

**c/o** Embassy of Iran to the European Union

Avenue Franklin Roosevelt No. 15

1050 Bruxelles

Belgium

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Dear Mr Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei,

**Mohammad Reza Azizi, aged 21, is at risk of imminent execution in Adel Abad prison in Shiraz, Fars province, following his conviction related to a crime that took place when he was just 17 years old. His execution was scheduled on two previous occasions including on 21 October 2024. Most recently, his execution was halted following public outcries, but he remains at risk of execution.**

Mohammad Reza Azizi was arrested in September 2020, and interrogated without a lawyer present. On 15 August 2021, Branch 1 of Criminal Court One of Fars province convicted then still 17-year-old Mohammad Reza Azizi of murder and sentenced him to death under the principle of qesas (retribution-in-kind). The court relied on his «confessions» made during interrogations to issue its verdict, according to legal documents reviewed by Amnesty International. Amnesty International is concerned that his «confessions» were extracted under coercive circumstances. The organization has long documented the pattern of Iranian security and intelligence bodies holding individuals incommunicado during the investigative phase, questioning them without their lawyers present, and subjecting them to torture or other ill-treatment to force them to self-incriminate. The court also disregarded key evidence, including witness testimony from the defence. Branch 26 of the Supreme Court upheld Mohammad Reza Azizi’s conviction and death sentence in November 2021. In their rulings, reviewed by Amnesty International, both courts acknowledged that Mohammad Reza Azizi was under 18 at the time of the crime, but accepted the finding of the Legal Medicine Organization of Iran, which is a state forensic institute under the supervision of the judiciary, that he had attained «mental growth and maturity» at the time of the crime. The Supreme Court rejected at least one request for judicial review. Another was submitted before his execution was scheduled for 21 October and remains pending.

Iran continues to sentence to death and execute people who were under the age of 18 at the time of the crime for which they were convicted, in violation of their obligations under international law.

**I urge you to immediately halt the scheduled execution of Mohammad Reza Azizi, quash both his conviction and death sentence, and grant him a fair retrial in full compliance with international law and the principles of juvenile justice, excluding «confessions» and without resorting to the death penalty. I call on you to immediately establish an official moratorium on all executions and completely abolish the use of the death penalty against persons who were under the age of 18 at the time of the alleged crime, in line with Iran’s obligations under international law, pending full abolition of the death penalty.**

Yours sincerely,

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**Copie**

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