

Head of judiciary, Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei

c/o Embassy of Iran to the European Union

Avenue Franklin Roosevelt No. 15

1050 Bruxelles, Belgium

Dear Mr Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei,

I am gravely concerned that two men and one woman are at imminent risk of judicially-sanctioned blinding after their qesas (retribution-in-kind) sentences were sent to the Office for Implementation of Sentences. On 2 August 2022, Hamshahri Daily news, which is operated by the municipality of Tehran, reported that three separate blinding sentences were referred to Branch 3 of Tehran's Office for Implementation of Sentences. The article specified that among them was a woman sentenced by a criminal court in Kermanshah, Kermanshah province, to being blinded in her right eye, a prison term and payment of "blood money" (diyah) after being convicted of blinding the right eye of her neighbour with acid in 2011. Her conviction and sentence were upheld by the Supreme Court. The newspaper also reported that a man in Fars province was sentenced to being blinded in connection to the blinding of another person with a knife during a fight in 2017, while a second man in Qom province was sentenced to being blinded for the blinding of a person with a bullet in 2018. Without providing further details, the article stated that the two men's convictions and sentences "were upheld".

In recent months, Amnesty International has documented an alarming spike in the implementation of corporal punishment and death sentences. For instance, on 27 July 2022, Iranian authorities used a guillotine machine to amputate the fingers of Pouya Torabi, who had been convicted of theft. Prior to this, on 31 May 2022, the fingers of Sayed Barat Hosseini were amputated without anaesthetic. Both were transferred to Tehran's Evin prison from provincial prisons for the implementation of their amputation sentences. Corporal punishments constitute torture, a crime under international law, and which is prohibited under Article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Iran is a state party.

I call on you to immediately stop any plans to implement any blinding sentences, and quash the blinding sentences of all three as they amount to torture, and grant them fair retrials without resorting to corporal punishments. More broadly, I urge the Iranian authorities to abolish all forms of corporal punishment in law and practice and to treat prisoners and detainees with human dignity. Public education campaigns must be initiated aimed at preventing acts of violence including acid attacks, and ensure that survivors of such attacks are provided with effective remedies, including psycho-social and medical rehabilitation.

Yours sincerely,