

Kurdish American Committee for Democracy In Iran

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Press Release

Kurdish Journalist M. Adnan Hassanpour, and Kurdish Activist Hiwa Butimar Sentenced To Death In Iran

On July 17, 2007 two Kurdish journalists and social activists were sentenced to death for their work in Kurdish human rights and the Kurdish media. The trial had been accompanied by unconfirmed suggestions in the Iranian media that the two men - journalist Adnan Hassanpour and social activist Hiwa Butimar - were working with "banned Iranian-Kurdish groups" that oppose the Islamic government. Mr. Hassanpour's lawyer, Dr. Saleh Nikbakhat, who was not allowed in the Islamic Revolutionary Court, told the media that he would appeal their death sentences.

Mr. Hassanpour was arrested January 25, 2007 in front of his home in his hometown of Marivan, in the province of Kurdistan of Iran. He was taken to a detention facility run by the Ministry of Intelligence in the provincial capital, Sannandaj, where he has had been held incommunicado - putting him at risk of torture or ill treatment. Since he was taken to Sannandaj in February he has not been allowed access to a defending lawyer or to his family.

Mr. Adnan Hassanpour is a former member of the editorial board of the Kurdish-Persian weekly journal *Aso*, which the Iranian authorities closed down in August 2005. The journal had been suspended on the orders of the Culture and Islamic Orientation Ministry, because it carried articles about the very tense situation in Iranian Kurdistan.

The Islamic Regime of Iran continues to imprison the greatest number of journalists and human rights activists in the world. The situation of journalists in the Kurdish part of Iran worsens daily.

We believe that the death sentence against Mr. Hassanpour and Mr. Boutimar is in contravention of the human rights convention and is a violation of basic rights. We strongly condemn their detention and trial at the hands of Iranian authorities. We urgently ask all human rights defenders and pro-democracy activists around the world to force the Islamic Republic of Iran to stop the execution, torture, and imprisonment of Kurdish and non-Kurdish human rights defenders and journalists in Iran.

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