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Iran: UN experts call for immediate halt to imminent amputation sentences for theft

GENEVA – UN human rights experts* today expressed grave concern at the imminent risk of finger amputation for three men detained in Iran and called for immediate intervention to prevent this irreversible punishment.

“These planned amputations violate the absolute prohibition of torture and ill-treatment,” the experts said. “Iran must immediately stop this severe corporal punishment, which violates international human rights standards.”

The three men were convicted of theft in November 2019 and sentenced to amputation under article 278 of the Islamic Penal Code. Iran’s Supreme Court upheld the verdict in May 2020, despite allegations that their confessions were extracted under torture.

“Confessions allegedly obtained through ill-treatment cannot justify these punishments,” the experts said. “Courts must investigate allegations of torture and exclude evidence obtained through coercion.”

Throughout their detention, the men have been on hunger strikes several times to protest prison conditions and their pending sentences.

In March 2025, the individuals were formally informed that their amputation sentences would be carried out as early as 11 April 2025.

Since the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979, the country has reportedly been enforcing amputation sentences, particularly in cases of theft. However, there is no official data on the exact number of such sentences carried out over the years. Currently, several other prisoners in Orumiyeh Central Prison are reportedly also facing amputation sentences in connection with theft charges.

This development follows a similar incident in October 2024, when two people in Orumiyeh Central Prison had four fingers each amputated from their right hands. The procedure was carried out using a guillotine.

“The practice of amputation as a punishment continues to raise serious concerns about human rights and the treatment of prisoners under Iranian law,” the experts said. “The lack of official data on the number of amputation sentences handed down and carried out reflects a worrying lack of transparency.”

“Domestic legislation cannot justify practices that violate international human rights obligations. The prohibition of torture and ill-treatment is absolute and allows no exceptions,” the experts said.

“We urge Iran to take concrete steps to abolish all forms of corporal punishment in law and practice and to ratify the Convention against Torture.”

The experts are in contact with Iranian authorities, seeking clarification and requesting immediate intervention to prevent these punishments from being carried out.

*The experts: **Mai Sato, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic republic of Iran**; **Alice Jill Edwards, Special Rapporteur on Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment** .

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