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Press Statement

Sean McCormack, Spokesman

Washington, DC

August 15, 2007

Government of Iran Sentences Journalists to Death Continues to Thwart Independent Views

By sentencing journalist Adnan Hassanpour and writer and environmental activist Abdolwahed (Hiwa) Butimar to death after a fundamentally flawed trial, the Iranian government has once again shown a willingness to both trample on the rights of its citizens and disregard the most basic standards of acceptable international behavior.

Other reports that the regime has intensified its campaign against the Iranian press paint a sadly familiar and troubling picture of what is happening in Iran under the Ahmadi-Nejad government. A significant number of Iranian editors, journalists, and bloggers have been harassed, arrested and convicted for exercising their universal right to freedom of expression and assembly, highlighting the regime's intolerance toward the expression of independent views.

Iranian authorities continue to keep their citizens from accessing unbiased information by cracking down on independent media outlets, harassing internet providers, and confiscating satellite dishes. A free press and active civil society are fundamental elements of any democracy and are essential to the ability of the Iranian people to protect their basic rights. We call on the Iranian authorities to cease persecution of journalists and activists and urge them to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The United States stands with all people of Iran struggling for their universal rights, including freedom from discrimination, and justice in their country.

2007/696

Released on August 15, 2007





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