

Universal Periodic Review of Iran

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Iran's Use of Amputations as Criminal Punishment

Background

Article 278 of the Islamic Penal Code of 2013 provides for the amputation of four fingers of individuals convicted of theft. This sentence violates Article 7 of the ICCPR, which prohibits cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Numerous individuals have been subjected to this punishment over the last four decades. According to a report by an Iranian news outlet, there have been 21 cases of amputation for theft since 2007. Most recently, on October 29, 2024, two individuals convicted of theft who were held in Oroumieh prison were subjected to this punishment and four of their fingers were amputated.

A regulatory code promulgated by the Iranian judiciary in 2019 delineates the circumstances under which amputation sentences should be implemented.¹ Notably, Article 82 of this regulatory code states that amputation should not be carried out with anesthesia, unless it can be determined that the amputation will cause injury to other organs.

Recommendations

- **Repeal** Article 278 of the Islamic Penal Code of 2013 and replace the punishment of amputation with other forms of punishment that would facilitate rehabilitation of individuals convicted of theft.
- **Impose an immediate moratorium** on the issuing and implementation of amputations until the repeal of Article 278 of the Islamic Penal Code.

About the Iran Human Rights Documentation Center

The Iran Human Rights Documentation Center (IHRDC), founded in 2005, is an NGO dedicated to documenting human rights abuses and fostering accountability, rule of law and democracy in Iran. IHRDC has been in consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) since 2018.

¹ <https://shorturl.at/GjoUH>