

# **AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL**

## **QUOTE**

**11 January 2018**

### **Iran: EU must highlight human rights concerns at meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister**

Ahead of a meeting between the Iranian, German, French and UK Foreign Ministers and Federica Mogherini, Iverna McGowan, Director of the Amnesty International, European Institutions Office, said:

“EU foreign ministers are sitting down to face their Iranian counterpart, amidst alarming reports of over 3000 people held in detention with no access to their families and lawyers, at least 22 deaths by security forces against unarmed protesters and at least four deaths in custody. This cannot be business as usual, we urge the EU High Representative and the EU Ministers here today to call out the ongoing assault on human rights and demand that the Iranian authorities take immediate and concrete steps to put a halt to it”

Amnesty International is urging EU representatives to call on their Iranian counterparts for the release of those held solely for peacefully taking part in demonstrations and for prompt, impartial and independent investigations to be carried out into the deaths at protests and in custody. The organisation is also asking that EU representatives urge Iran to protect all detainees from torture, respect the fair trial rights of those charged with recognizable criminal offences, and allow international monitors, including the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran, to conduct independent inspections of Evin and other prisons wherein the detainees are held.

For more information or to arrange an interview, contact Alison Abrahams on [alison.abrahams@amnesty.org](mailto:alison.abrahams@amnesty.org) +32 2 548 27 73 or +32 483 680 812

#### **Background**

More than three thousand people have been arrested and detained in Iran since 28 December 2017 when thousands of Iranians began flocking to the streets across the country to speak out against poverty, corruption, political repression and authoritarianism.

As of 9 January, there were reports that at least five people had died in custody in the context of this crackdown. This included 23-year old **Sina Ghanbari** and two other people whose names are not yet known in the 'quarantine' section of Tehran's Evin prison; **Vahid Heydari** in Arak, Markazi province and **Mohsen Adeli** in Dezfoul, Khuzestan province. On 10 January, the Iranian authorities denied that Mohsen Adeli had died in custody. Independent local activists subsequently reported that he had been fatally shot during the protests in Dezfoul. In the other four cases, the authorities have rushed to the judgment that the deaths in custody resulted from suicide, which has been strongly disputed by activists and several family members. Two of those four deaths in custody have been reported by prominent human rights lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh.