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**Statement by the spokesperson of
EU High Representative Catherine Ashton
on possible execution of Sakineh Mohammadi-Ashtiani**

The spokesperson of Catherine Ashton, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission, issued the following statement today:

"Catherine Ashton is deeply concerned by reports that the execution of Ms Sakineh Mohammadi-Ashtiani may be imminent. She demands that Iran halts the execution and convert her sentence.

Ms Mohammadi-Ashtiani has been at risk of execution by stoning for adultery, a particularly cruel method of execution which amounts to unacceptable torture. The EU joined many other countries and organisations in condemning this sentence as a clear violation of Iran's international obligations under the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights.

While the Iranian authorities have given assurances that Ms Ashtiani would not be killed by stoning, she has since faced charges for alleged complicity in the murder of her husband and may be executed by hanging. Neither sentence is acceptable.

Catherine Ashton is also concerned that Ms Ashtiani was not given a fair trial, not least in view of the detention of her lawyer, Mr Javid Houtan Kian, (and her son who has campaigned for her release).

Under these circumstances, Catherine Ashton reiterates her call on Iran to halt Ms Ashtiani's execution and to convert her sentence.

Catherine Ashton reaffirms the EU's opposition to the death penalty under all circumstances and calls on Iran to consider a moratorium on executions pending the abolition of the death penalty in accordance with UN General Assembly resolutions 62/149 and 63/168.

She also reminds Iran of its acceptance, during its Universal Periodic Review at the UN Human Rights Council, to respect at least the minimum standards and the provisions of ICCPR and CRC concerning the death penalty, for as long as it is maintained."

P R E S S

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