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PRESS RELEASE

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Religious Discrimination Explicit in Iran's Penal Code

New York, 25 July – A court in Yazd has recently sentenced a man convicted of the public murder of a Baha'i to just 11 years in prison and 2 years away from home. The court justified the sentence by stating that according to the Islamic penal code, the accused and the victim are not equal for the general purpose of retributive justice. This astonishing provision clearly and deliberately deprives non-Muslims of the legal right to seek justice on equal-footing with the country's Muslim majority.

The murder of Farhang Amiri, a 63-year-old father of four children, occurred in September 2016 in Yazd on the street outside his home in public view. He was brutally stabbed to death by two brothers who immediately admitted to have been motivated by religious hatred.

The younger man was sentenced to half of his brother's sentence for aiding in the murder. The two men confessed to stabbing Farhang Amiri to death with the explicitly stated intention of killing a Baha'i.

These sentences for the killing of an innocent man clearly demonstrate the inherent discrimination and injustice at the heart of Iran's penal code, which treats its own citizens on an unequal basis because of their religious belief.

“Such a verdict undermines the Iranian authorities' claims to equality for all their citizens before the law. Clearly, the legal system encourages violence against Baha'is, the largest religious minority,” said Bani Dugal, Principal Representative of the Baha'i International Community to the United Nations. “We call on Iranians to consider how their society can possibly advance when the legal system, which should dispense justice, manifests such breath-taking inequity.”

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