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Afghans rally against executions in Iran

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KABUL - More than a hundred people on Thursday rallied in Kabul against the execution of death-row Afghans in Iranian jails, asking the neighbouring country to immediately release the bodies to the victims' relatives.

Most of the protestors, hailing from 15 provinces, were relatives of the victims. Carrying pictures of their dead kin, the demonstrators urged the government to step up efforts at transferring the corpses of their relatives from Iran.

Afghans on death row in Iranian jails should be shifted to their country of origin, they demanded, urging the Iranian government to stop the executions. The protestor said Iranian authorities were demanding 500,000 tumans for the delivery of each body.

Abdul Rahman, a resident of northern Takhar province, said his brother had been sentenced to death on the charge of drug trafficking in Iran. He urged the government in Tehran to convert his death penalty into life imprisonment.

He claimed of the more than 5,000 Afghans languishing in Iranian jails, 1,200 had been sentenced to death. "Iran daily executes 20 Afghan inmates," he said, adding 70 Afghans had been buried alive after being sentenced to death in Iran.

Reza Mujaddedi, a resident of southern Kandahar province, said he could not receive the body of his son executed in Iran. He alleged the Iranian government had asked him for money for delivery of his son's body.

But the Iranian embassy spokesman in Kabul rejected the claims as baseless, saying dead bodies of Afghans were being delivered to their relatives in line with an agreement between the neighbours.