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I wish this was all a dream; Mohammad Boroughani on death row

January 11, 2023

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I wish everything that is happening was a dream, it has tired me out. This is what 19-year-old Mohammad Boroughani told his cellmates before being transferred to Evin Prison. Born on March 20, 2004, Mohammad Boroughani is a resident of Pakdasht in Karaj. Iran's Judiciary sentenced him to death after he was arrested during October 2022 gatherings. His father Hussein Boroughani says, "I am a worker. My son has been working for a contracting company for two years. He knew how to repair shoes years before."

The death sentence was issued for Mohammad Boroughani while he was denied the right to a chosen lawyer. His trial was held hastily in two or three sessions. The death penalty was handed down to him in the very first trial. It was then approved by the Supreme Court the following month.

Charges at court:

- In the first hearing on Saturday, October 29, 2022, Judge Salavati who presided over the court at Tehran's Branch 15 (on God). The public court found Mohammad Boroughani guilty of using a cold weapon against state forces. Other charges against him include clashing with security forces and setting fire to the governorate building in Pakdasht.
- On Monday, January 2, 2023, social media posts indicated that Mohammad Boroughani's death sentence had been overturned. The death penalty had changed to "one year imprisonment and 74 lashes." On the same day, the Iranian Judiciary announced that Mohammad Boroughani's death sentence had been upheld by the Supreme Court on December 5, 2022.
- On November 16, 2022, the Revolutionary Court issued a preliminary death sentence for four detained protesters. The court's announcement included death for Mohammad Boroughani on charges of using a cold weapon and carrying out armed attack. It stated that Mohammad Boroughani had intentionally stabbed a security guard aiming to kill him. He was accused of causing insecurity for citizens and terrorizing them and also sentenced to death for setting fire to the Pakdasht City Hall and destroying its properties.

Like other death row prisoners, Mohammad Boroughani had not committed a Moharebeh crime. He was deprived of his lawyer and his statements in court were given following the most severe tortures. There are many doubts in the case, and it appears issuing death sentences for detained protesters is to create fear.

Mohammad Boroughani is currently held in Ward 10 of Hall 31 in Rajai Shahr Prison, near to Karaj. He is kept without segregation of crimes and remains alongside dangerous criminals charged with murder, rape, and acid attacks.

Guilty of leading protest:

Iran's Judiciary Media Center claimed, "there was an Instagram conversation on Mohammad Boroughani's cellphone in which he told a friend to attend the gatherings. His friend replies that he only has one Qama (dagger)."

The Judiciary claims that images obtained from his mobile phone show Mohammad Boroughani was a protest leader.

The Judiciary described him as a "protest leader" for "agitating locals to participate in riots, asking them to build hand grenades like they did for on Chaharshanbe Suri (festival of fire,) and showing up at the governor's building. In an Instagram Story he announces the location and set time of the gathering. After joining each other and attacking the officers, they filmed themselves."

Seyed Sadegh Keshani, a Judicial lawyer, wrote of how Mohammad Boroughani's death sentence is unfair. He said, "Apparently, the main documents that led to the death sentence is from the defendant's own phone. Especially the film he takes of himself when attacking the individual. This fact shows the defendant is unprofessional and a normal person. The film does not show the stabbing is intended to 'kill.' Thereby, there is no basis for sentencing Moharebeh."

In the film used as evidence against Mohammad Boroughani, an officer is seen running away. His head is slightly injured, and they have taken his baton. Youths scream "do not show up here"!

Mohammad Boroughani is charged with carrying a dagger but even the Judiciary claims that it was not used. The film shows the officer is completely healthy. He only had slight scratches and was on the run. The charge was simply for carrying the cold weapon.

According to another clip posted on Instagram, the defendant invited his friends to a rally in Shobe (Branch) Square. It is more than a kilometer away from the Pakdasht governor's office. This proves the defendant was not involved in the crime of Moharebeh.

On Sunday, January 8, 2023, Mohammad Boroughani was transferred to solitary confinement in Gohardasht Prison as Iran's procedure to carry out the death sentence.

Immediately after the news spread online, in the early hours of Monday, January 9, 2023, people gathered in front of Gohardasht Prison. They chanted anti-government slogans calling for the abolition of the death sentences of Mohammad Boroughani and Mohammad Ghobadlou.

Iran's judiciary was forced to withdraw from the executions of these two individuals after a large turnout in front of Rajai Shahr Prison. However, in reaction to the gathered people, Iran's Judiciary claimed that it had no intention of execution.

On January 11, 2023, Iran's Supreme Court announced a moratorium on the death penalty of Mohammad Boroughani, saying that the 19-year-old protester's case will be re-investigated.

Iran's Human Rights Monitor had alerted human rights entities of the great danger, noting that Iranian authorities are using the death penalty as a tool of "political repression in order to create fear among the people and to end the popular uprising."



Mohammad Boroughani

Mohammad Boroughani (Persian: محمد بروغنی; born 29 March 2003) is an Iranian man facing a death sentence for his participation in the Mahsa Amini protests. He was found guilty of *Moharebeh*, which translates to "Waging War Against God," and was sentenced to death.^{[1][2][3]} Boroughani and another death-row inmate, Mohammad Ghobadloo, have emerged as new faces of outrage in Iran in response to the political executions of Mahsa Amini protestors. Hundreds of demonstrators gathered at Karaj's Rajayi-shahr Prison on January 9, 2023, when word spread that Boroughani and Ghobadloo had been sent to solitary confinement before of their scheduled execution.^{[4][5][6][7][8]} Boroughani's execution was temporarily halted two days later.^{[9][10]} Boroughani's trial on October 29, 2022, was also notable because it was the first trial directly linked to the Mahsa Amini protests, which drew widespread condemnation from human rights organizations and the international community.^{[3][11]}

Arrest and allegations by Iranian officials

In late September or early October 2022, Boroughani was one of the protesters detained by Iranian officials during the Pakdasht demonstrations.^[12] Iranian officials accused him of deliberately setting fire to the Pakdasht governor's office. He was charged with *Moharebeh*, which translates to "Waging War Against God," because he allegedly brandished a machete while leading a mob in an assault on the Pakdasht governor's office, set fire to the building, and attacked and injured a government official.^{[12][11]} Officials have also accused him, based on the content of his postings on social media, of inciting the participation of his fellow citizens in the protests.^{[12][11]}

Trial, appeals, and criticism

The court hearing for Boroughani took place on 29 October 2022, in Tehran's Islamic Revolutionary Court, with Judge Abolqasem Salavati presiding over the proceedings. According to Sharia law, he was judged guilty of the crime of *Moharebeh*, which carries the death penalty. The court did not let Boroughani choose his own attorney to represent him.^{[12][11]} (The Inquisitorial system in Iran is in accordance with Islamic law.) Boroughani was tried in a court along with five other protestors who were all charged with crimes punishable by death, most notably *Moharebeh* ("Waging War Against God") and *Mofsed-e-filarz* ("Corruption on Earth").^{[13][12][11]} Judge Salavati had the ability to impose a lesser punishment, which may have included deportation of the defendant, but he chose not to do so.^[14]

Judge Salavati faces U.S. sanctions for meting out harsh punishments. In a statement, the United States Department of the Treasury criticized Salavati for handing down more than one hundred death sentences and lengthy prison sentences to political prisoners, human rights activists, media workers, and "others seeking to exercise their freedom of assembly".^[15]

Boroughani filed an appeal against the decision, and on 11 December 2022, the Supreme Court of Iran affirmed the verdict, despite the fact that Boroughani was not represented by his lawyer at the time of the appeal.^[16]

Responses

Iranian citizens

Several activists, lawyers, and Iranian citizens have condemned Boroughani's death sentence on social media.^[17] Hundreds of protesters gathered at the Rajayi-shahr Prison in Karaj on January 9, 2023, when word circulated that Boroughani and another death-row prisoner, Mohammad Ghobadloo, had been transferred to solitary confinement ahead of their scheduled execution.^{[4][5][6]} Boroughani's execution was temporarily halted two days later.^[9]

Activists and human rights organizations

Amnesty International called on Iranian officials to "stop using the death penalty as a tool of political repression against protesters in their desperate attempt to end the popular uprising."^[18] On 14 December 2022, Amnesty warned that Boroughani's execution might be imminent, noting that he "[had] been moved to Rajai Shahr prison in Karaj, Alborz province, sparking fears that his execution may be imminent".^{[19][17]}

International officials

Martin Didenhofen, a member of the German parliament, announced on 9 December 2022, that he would take "political sponsorship" of Boroughani.^{[20][21]} Political patronage or sponsorship in Germany is a mechanism that allows members of parliament to pick a particular political prisoner for the purpose of using their political influence to advocate for the prisoner's release.^[21] Generally speaking, this is accomplished through addressing the ambassador as well as the appropriate governmental and international agencies that are concerned with human rights.^[21]

See also

- Death sentences during the Mahsa Amini protests

Mohammad Boroughani	
Born	March 29, 2003
Nationality	 Iranian
Known for	Death sentence related to the Mahsa Amini protests
Criminal charge	Moharebeh ("Waging War Against God")
Penalty	Death

- [Mohammad Ghobadloo](#)
- [Execution of Mohsen Shekari](#)
- [Execution of Majidreza Rahnavaard](#)
- [Execution of Mohammad Mehdi Karami](#)
- [Execution of Mohammad Hosseini](#)

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MIDDLE EAST

Iran suspends execution of protester for retrial

Iran rocked by protests sparked by woman's death in police custody

Ahmet Dursun | 12.01.2023



ANKARA



The Iranian judiciary has suspended the execution of a protester for a retrial, according to local media.



A request for the retrial of Mohammed Boroghani, who was sentenced to death, will be examined, the judiciary-affiliated Mizan News said.



Boroghani's execution was postponed until the Supreme Court rules on his request for a retrial, the report said.

Boroghani was convicted by Iranian authorities of multiple counts, including attacking and injuring a security guard, disturbing public order and declaring war against the state.

He was sentenced to death on Oct. 29 and the verdict was upheld by the Supreme Court.

Iran has been rocked by sweeping protests in recent months sparked by the death of a 22-year-old woman in police custody in mid-September.

More than a dozen protesters have so far been sentenced to death in connection with the violence-marred protests and four have already been executed.

*Writing by Mahmoud Barakat

In one video posted on social media, he can be seen singing at a cafe accompanied by a guitar. “I now have one wish only, that is to see you one more time,” he sang. “You are my lone star.”

Sentenced to death

Mohammad Boroughani, 19.



Mohammad Boroughani.
via Twitter

Mohammad Boroughani was arrested in Pakdasht, an industrial city outside Tehran. He was accused of wielding a machete, setting fire to the governor’s building and injuring an official on duty with a knife. The court, citing Instagram messages, called him “a leader of the riots” in Pakdasht.

“I went out to the streets because of an Instagram story my friend posted. I don’t know anything about politics,” Mr. Boroughani said at his trial, according to a report by the semiofficial Tasnim News Agency. When the judge asked him why he took videos of the clashes he replied: “I ask for forgiveness and mercy. I got caught up in the moment and did these things.”

When Mr. Boroughani turned 18, he rapped about his life:

“I won’t forget the games of childhood, bikes and playing — we were so happy — now we don’t know if we are down or up — only memories are left, the more we get older the less joy — now my only friend is a cigarette and I’m suddenly 18.”

His father makes his living by gathering metal scraps to sell, according to Iranian media reports.

On Jan. 2, Iran’s Supreme Court announced that it had upheld the verdict against Mr. Boroughani.