

Iran sentences pregnant Kurdish woman to death

► Officials say prisoner in early 20s had set fire to portrait of former Iranian supreme leader Ruhollah Khomeini



Female Iranian inmates in Evin jail, north of Tehran. AFP



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[Iran](#) has sentenced an ethnic Iranian-Kurdish pregnant woman being held in [Urmia Central Prison](#) to death, according to a report by *IranWire*.

Shahla Abdi, from the north-western province of West Azerbaijan and said to be in her early 20s, was initially arrested in Urmia in mid-October at the peak of mass protests that were [triggered by the death of Mahsa Amini](#) in morality police custody.

Ms Abdi is said to have received the death sentence after being accused of setting fire to a portrait of former Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

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A female inmate in Urmia Central told *IranWire* that Ms Abdi had been held at the jail for nearly a month before she was transferred to Tabriz Prison about three weeks ago.

Other prisoners said she might have been taken to a detention centre run by Iran's Ministry of Intelligence.

"When I saw this woman, she looked very young but weak and abused, and I realised that she was four months pregnant," the inmate told *IranWire*.

The website reported that Ms Abdi was kept in solitary confinement in Urmia where she was always accompanied by two officers to ensure she did not communicate with other inmates.



Demonstrators gather round a burning motorbike during a protest over the death of Mahsa Amini. AFP

"She was in a very shocked state," another inmate said. "It was obvious that she hadn't taken a shower for a long time, and her hair was very messy. She was very scared."

At least [517 protesters have been killed in Iran](#), and more than 19,200 people arrested, since the wave of Amini protests first swept the country in mid-September, according to Human Rights Activists in Iran, a group that has closely monitored the unrest. Iranian authorities have not provided an official count of those killed or detained.

Demonstrations started when the 22 year old died following her arrest by Iran's morality police over wearing her hijab "inappropriately". Women have been at the vanguard of the protests, with many publicly taking off the compulsory Islamic headscarf in defiance of the government.

IranWire is a website for Iranian citizen journalists founded by Maziar Bahari, an Iranian-Canadian journalist, filmmaker and human rights activist who spent time imprisoned in Tehran's notorious Evin jail in 2009.

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