

Iran

July 21, 2023

By [RFE/RL's Radio Farda](#)

Iranian Activists Urge UN Rights Chief To Intervene As Fears Of Boxer's Imminent Execution Grow



Mohammad Javad Vafaei Sani was arrested in March 2020 following his participation in protests over a sudden gas price hike in November of the previous year. Since being sent to prison, he has reportedly been subjected to torture.

Dozens of human rights activists have urged Volker Turk, the United Nations high commissioner for human rights, to intervene and try to halt the imminent execution of Mohammad Javad Vafaei Sani, who was arrested in Iran in 2020 following unrest over a sharp hike in gas prices.

The [plea](#), signed by 85 lawyers, human rights activists, and NGO representatives, urges Turk to step in publicly and exert whatever pressure possible to prevent the execution of the 27-year-old former boxing champion.

The Iranian Human Rights Center reported on July 20 that Vafaei Sani had been informed his death sentence is now definite and that he has been moved to an undisclosed location. It added there is currently a lack of information regarding his status and whereabouts, leading to fears authorities are preparing to carry out his death sentence.

The United Nations Human Rights Office confirmed receipt of the letter and said it is under review.

Vafaei Sani was arrested in March 2020 following his participation in protests over a sudden gas price hike in November of the previous year. He was accused of "instigating and deliberately causing damage to certain sites, inclusive of governmental edifices."

Babak Paknia, the lawyer handling his case, stated in December 2022 that the court found Vafaei Sani guilty of "corruption on Earth" and subsequently sentenced him to death.

Since being sent to prison, he has reportedly been subjected to torture in an effort to extract a confession that he supports the People's Mujahedin of Iran, which is outlawed in Iran.

The rate of executions in Iran has been rising sharply, particularly in the wake of widespread protests that swept across the country last year following the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini while in police custody for an alleged head scarf violation.

Amnesty International says the regime in Tehran executes more people than any other country in the world other than China, while the Abdorrahman Boroumand Center, a Washington-based organization specializing in Iranian human rights research, said in a [recent report](#) that 135 executions were carried out in Iran in May alone.

The letter to Turk from the human rights activists says the wave of executions is a "ruthless attempt by the Islamic republic authorities to instil fear and quell a population that is no longer prepared to tolerate a corrupt and tyrannical regime."

Written by Ardeshir Tayebi based on an original story in Persian by RFE/RL's Radio Farda



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Iranian activist Sepideh Gholian (file photo)

Human rights activists beg UN to intervene over Iranian boxer facing execution

Mohammad Javad Vafaei-Sani was sentenced to death for participating in anti-government protests in 2019 sparked by rising gas prices

By AFP
20 July 2023, 5:49 pm



A demonstrator holds up a sign reading 'Stop Executions in Iran' as Iranian opposition protesters carry their national flags in Paris during a rally to protest against the visit of the Iranian president, Hassan Rouhani, in France, Thursday, January 28, 2016. (AP Photo/Zacharie Scheurer)

GENEVA, Switzerland – Dozens of rights experts and NGOs have asked the UN rights chief to intervene urgently to prevent the execution of an Iranian boxing champion sentenced to death over his role in 2019 protests.

The appeal came after Mohammad Javad Vafaei-Sani on Wednesday saw his execution verdict confirmed to him before he was taken to a secluded section of the Vakilabad prison in the city of Mashhad where he is being held, according to the letter sent to Volker Turk overnight.

“We request your urgent public intervention to save the life of Iranian political prisoner (Mohammad Javad Vafaei-Sani),” said the letter, which was signed by 85 international rights advocates and groups.



A former head of the International Criminal Court, 19 current and former UN officials, former government ministers and seven Nobel laureates were among the signatories to the letter, seen by AFP.

The 27-year-old local Mashhad boxing champion was arrested in early 2020 for taking part in anti-government protests the previous November, sparked by a sudden fuel price rise.

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He was sentenced to death in January 2022 after being convicted of arson and destruction of government buildings, the Norway-based Iran Human Rights (IHR) NGO said at the time.



The exiled National Council of Resistance of Iran, the political wing of the People’s Mujahedin (MEK) opposition group – both outlawed in Iran – has said the charges against him included supporting the MEK.

The letter to Turk maintained that Vafaei-Sani had been tortured for several months prior to his death sentence for “corruption on Earth.”

Iran executes more people annually than any nation other than China, according to rights groups including London-based Amnesty International.

The pace of the executions has been relatively rapid in 2023, with IHR recently reporting nearly 370 executions since the start of the year.

Iran has drawn particular criticism for the growing number of executions in connection with the massive demonstrations following the death in custody last September of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini, who had been arrested for allegedly violating the strict dress rule for women based on Islamic Sharia law.

A UN fact-finding mission said earlier this month that Iran had executed seven men in connection with the Amini protests, calling on Tehran to stop the “chilling” practice.

“These political executions are a callous attempt by the authorities to frighten and silence an increasingly restive population no longer willing to accept their corrupt and oppressive rule,” the letter to Turk said. “We ask that you make an urgent public call for the Iranian authorities to halt [Vafaei-Sani’s] imminent execution sentence.”

The UN rights office confirmed that it had received the letter.

“We have received information on this case and are following up on it and gathering additional information,” a spokesman told AFP, without providing further details.

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Iranian boxer Mohammad Javad Vafa'i Sani

Activists Call On UN Rights Chief To Prevent Execution Of Iranian Boxer

Thursday, 07/20/2023

Iran Protests

Human Rights



Dozens of rights activists, prominent lawyers and former prosecutors have written to the UN Human Rights chief urging him to try to prevent the execution of an Iranian boxer.

Mohammad Javad Vafa'i Sani who was imprisoned for his role in anti-government protests in 2019 was informed on Wednesday that his execution verdict had been finalized, according to the letter sent to the UN official dated July 19.

"We ask that you make an urgent public call for the Iranian authorities to halt Vafa'i Sani's imminent execution sentence," said the document, signed by 83 people including the former head of the International Criminal Court Judge Sang-Hyun Song, more than a dozen current and former UN human rights officials as well as former prosecutors.

Iran's judiciary was not immediately available to comment on the matter. However, his lawyer Babak Paknia said in a tweet that the judiciary had not notified them about the verdict.

A spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk said: "We have received information on this case and are following up on it and gathering additional information."

Iran was rocked by major protests last year sparked by the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini in September 2022 while in the custody of the country's morality police.

Since then, at least seven people have been executed for verdicts linked to the unrest, which the clerical rulers have accused the country's foes of fomenting.

Turk has been pushing for a trip to the country and a meeting with Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, although there has been little if any indication those efforts are bearing fruit.

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IRAN: APPELLO AD AGIRE CON URGENZA PER SCONGIURARE L'ESECUZIONE DEL PRIGIONIERO POLITICO MOHAMMAD JAVAD VAFA'I THANI

DOCUMENTI



Mohammad Javad Vafa'i Thani

19 Luglio 2023 : Mohammad Javad Vafa'i Thani, un prigioniero politico simpatizzante dell'Organizzazione dei Mojahedin del Popolo dell'Iran (PMOI/MEK), il 19 luglio 2023 è stato condannato a morte nella Repubblica Islamica.

La condanna capitale è stata emessa da un giudice nel carcere di Vakil Abad a Mashhad, capitale della Regione nord-orientale di Razavi Khorasan.

Condannato con l'accusa fasulla di "corruzione sulla Terra", Vafa'i Thani è stato portato in un luogo sconosciuto dopo essere stato informato della sua condanna a morte, sempre il 19 luglio.

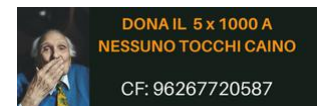
Vafa'i Thani, 27 anni, tra i campioni di pugilato dei club di Mashhad, era stato arrestato nel marzo 2019 e torturato a lungo.

La Resistenza iraniana chiede alle Nazioni Unite, all'Unione Europea, agli Stati membri e a tutte le organizzazioni e agli organismi per i diritti umani di intervenire con urgenza per salvare la vita di questo prigioniero politico ed evitare la sua esecuzione dopo aver scontato una pena detentiva di quattro anni.

(Fonte: Segreteria del Consiglio Nazionale della Resistenza dell'Iran (NCRI), 19/07/2023)

- ▶ IRAN - 2 UOMINI GIUSTIZIATI A KARAJ IL 6 GIUGNO (/DOCUMENTO/IRAN-2-UOMINI-GIUSTIZIATI-A-KARAJ-IL-6-GIUGNO-60376516)
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IRAN: APPELLO AD AGIRE CON URGENZA PER SCONGIURARE L'ESECUZIONE DEL PRIGIONIERO POLITICO MOHAMMAD JAVAD VAFA'I THANI

(/azioneurgente/iran-appello-ad-agire-con-urgenza-per-scongiorare-l-esecuzione-del-prigioniero-politico-mohammad-javad-vafa-i-thani-60378860)19 Luglio 2023

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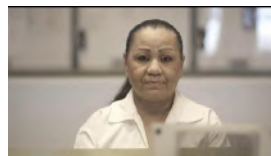
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(/azioneurgente/nessuna-azione-urgente-60359156)26

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NOTIZIE



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ITALIA - MANIFESTAZIONE DEL MOVIMENTO SPIRITUALE CINESE FALUN GONG

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NEWS

UN Rights Chief Urged to Help Prevent Execution of Iranian Boxer

JULY 21, 2023

🕒 2 MIN READ



📷 Mohammad Javad Vafa'i Sani, a 27-year-old local boxing champion in the north-eastern city of Mashhad, was arrested for taking part in nationwide unrest in November 2019. He was informed on July 19 that his execution verdict had been finalized, according to the letter



Nearly 100 current and former United Nations officials, human rights and legal experts and Nobel laureates have signed a letter urging the UN Human Rights chief to intervene to prevent the execution of a boxer in Iran.

Mohammad Javad Vafa'i Sani, a 27-year-old local boxing champion in the north-eastern city of Mashhad, was arrested for taking part in nationwide unrest in November 2019. He was informed on July 19 that his execution verdict had been finalized, [according to the letter](#).

The boxer's lawyer, Babak Paknia, said [in a tweet](#) that the judiciary had not notified them about the verdict of the Revolutionary Court in Mashhad. He also said that the ruling can be appealed before the Supreme Court within 20 days.

"We ask that you make an urgent public call for the Iranian authorities to halt [Vafa'i Sani's] imminent execution sentence," said the letter, signed by 96 people including the former head of the International Criminal Court Judge Sang-Hyun Song, more than a dozen current and former UN human rights officials as well as former prosecutors.

The boxer "was then summoned and taken by a prison guard to an unknown location," it added. "There is no further information about his current whereabouts."

Pettorine, collari, guinzagli

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A spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk said: "We have received information on this case and are following up on it and gathering additional information."

Thousands of Iranians took to the streets of more than 100 cities and towns in November 2019 to protest the government's decision to raise gas prices. The protests quickly turned political, with many chanting against the Islamic regime and its leaders.

Human rights groups have confirmed the death of more than 300 people, including children, in the unrest, but the Reuters news agency reported that the actual number of people killed was around 1,500.

Human rights activists have raised alarm over the Iranian authorities' dramatic escalation of executions in recent months, following last year's nationwide protests sparked by the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini in September while in police custody.

"In recent months, the Iranian authorities have executed at least seven other protesters on similar bogus charges with total impunity," the letter reads. "These political executions are a callous attempt by the authorities to frighten and silence an increasingly restive population no longer willing to accept their corrupt and oppressive rule."

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After wrestler's execution, Iran sentences boxing champion to death

Mohammad Javad Vafaei-Sani had been detained in February 2020 for taking part in protests in November 2019 sparked by a sudden fuel price rise.

Monday 17/01/2022



A 2020 file picture shows a protester holding a portrait of Iranian wrestler Navid Afkari during a demonstration on the Dam Square in Amsterdam, against the Iranian government. (AFP)

TEHRAN-

Iran has sentenced to death a local boxing champion over his role in 2019 protests, activists said, fearing that another athlete risks execution after a wrestler was put to death.

The death sentence issued against Mohammad Javad Vafaei-Sani comes just over a year after the execution of wrestling champion Navid Afkari in September 2020, which prompted an international outcry and calls for Iran to be barred from sporting events.

The Norway-based Iran Human Rights (IHR) NGO said that Vafaei-Sani, 26, was sentenced to death after being convicted of arson and destruction of government buildings.

He had been detained in February 2020 and one of the charges against him was taking part in protests in November 2019 sparked by a sudden fuel price rise, it said.

His lawyer Babak Paknia confirmed the verdict on Twitter and announced plans to appeal to the supreme court.

IHR described Vafaei-Sani as a "champion" boxer in the eastern city of Mashhad where he was currently being held.

Social media users urged the authorities to spare his life, with the hashtag #SaveMohammadJavad trending on Twitter.

The exiled National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), the political wing of the People's Mujahedin (MEK) opposition group, both outlawed in Iran, said in a statement that the charges against him included supporting the MEK.

It described him as a junior boxing champion.

Navid Afkari, a 27-year-old wrestler who had won national competitions, was hanged in September 2020 in the southern city of Shiraz after being convicted of committing murder during protests that rocked the city two years before.

He had complained of being tortured into confessing, with methods that included beating and having alcohol squirted up his nose.

His brothers Habib and Vahid meanwhile remain in jail in solitary confinement, according to activists.

The United for Navid group of his supporters has called on USA Wrestling to cancel a planned invitation next month for Iranian wrestlers to take part in a friendly match.

Iran executes more people annually than any nation other than China and activists have voiced concern that the numbers hanged appeared to have increased again in 2021 after a recent downward trend.





IRAN - APPELLO INTERNAZIONALE PER SALVARE LA VITA A MOHAMMAD JAVAD VAFAEI

AZIONI URGENTI



IRAN - Mohammad Javad Vafaei-Sani

13 Gennaio 2022 : Appello internazionale per salvare la vita a Mohammad Javad Vafaei, prigioniero politico condannato a morte.

La magistratura del regime clericale ha condannato a morte il prigioniero politico Mohammad Javad Vafaei Sani dopo averlo torturato e isolato per 2 anni con l'accusa di "sostenere i Mujahideen-e Khalq (MEK)", "corruzione sulla terra", "incitamento e distruzione di alcuni luoghi, compreso l'edificio del penitenziario statale". La sentenza è stata consegnata al suo avvocato. Seyed Mohammad Javad Vafaei, 26 anni, è un campione di boxe nel sistema scolastico di Mashhad ed è stato arrestato nel marzo 2020 a Mashhad. Il tribunale dei mullah aveva fissato una cauzione di 30 miliardi di toman per rilasciarlo in libertà provvisoria, ma è una cifra che la sua famiglia non poteva permettersi. Con l'espansione delle attività delle Unità di Resistenza e la diffusione delle proteste sociali, e con il crescente afflusso di giovani nei ranghi delle reti del MEK in Iran, il regime in crisi ha disperatamente intensificato le esecuzioni e la repressione. La Resistenza Iraniana esorta il Segretario Generale delle Nazioni Unite, il Consiglio delle Nazioni Unite per i Diritti Umani e l'Alto Commissario delle Nazioni Unite per i Diritti Umani, e tutti gli organismi per i diritti umani, così come l'Unione Europea e i suoi Stati membri, ad agire con urgenza per salvare la vita di questo prigioniero politico.

Iran: Political Prisoner Mohammad Javad Vafaei, Sentenced to Death (ncr-iran.org) (<https://www.ncr-iran.org/en/ncr-statements/statement-human-rights/iran-political-prisoner-mohammad-javad-vafaei-sentenced-to-death-international-call-to-save-his-life/>)

(fonte: Segreteria del Consiglio Nazionale della Resistenza Iraniana - CNRI)



IRAN: APPELLO AD AGIRE CON URGENZA PER SCONGIURARE L'ESECUZIONE DEL PRIGIONIERO POLITICO MOHAMMAD JAVAD VAFAEI THANI

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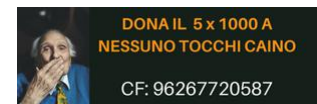
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Mohammad Javad Vafa'i Thani, un prigioniero politico simpatizzante dell'Organizzazione dei Mojahedin del Popolo dell'Iran (PMOI/MEK), il 19 luglio 2023 è stato condannato a morte nella Repubblica Islamica.

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Luglio 2023 (/notizia/italia-manifestazione-



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PRISONER

SENTENCE

MOHAMMAD JAVAD VAFAEI SANI

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CURRENT DETENTION STATUS

IN PRISON, CONVICTED BY COURT

ACTIVITY PERSECUTED FOR

OTHER OR UNKNOWN

GENDER
MALEAGE
27RELIGION
PROBABLY
SHIAAETHNICITY
PROBABLY
FARS / GILAK
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BIOGRAPHY

COUNTRY OF
CITIZENSHIP
IRANAFFILIATED WITH
Nationwide
Protests - 11/2019

RELATED TO

ARRESTS

DATE OF ARREST	ACTIVITY PERSECUTED FOR	CHARGED WITH	SENTENCE	CITY, PROVINCE OF ARREST
7/2/2020	Other or Unknown	Committing corruption on earth - Art. 286 IPC		Mashhad

TIMELINE

Reverse Chronological

EXPLANATION

Millions of demonstrators protests in several cities of Iran, after the petrol price rise. Though, the early hours of the protests were aimed at the petrol price rise, soon after the protests turned against the government. From the earliest moments firing on protesters began in many places and security forces killed or injured hundreds. November's nationwide protests consider as the largest uprising against the government till now by many people, and the Islamic Republic's reaction admitted as the largest crackdown on non-partisan protesters

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