

PRISONERS

Three Iranian Protesters Executed despite Popular Opposition

MAY 19, 2023

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📷 Majid Kazemi, Saleh Mirhashemi and Saeed Yaghoubi were executed in Dastgerd prison in the central city of Isfahan on May 19



Iranian authorities have executed **three men** accused of deadly violence during last year's anti-government protests, despite public opposition and appeals by human rights groups.

Mizan, the judiciary's website, announced that **Majid Kazemi, Saleh Mirhashemi and Saeed Yaghoubi** were executed on May 19 in Dastgerd prison in the central city of Isfahan.

Authorities claim they were implicated in the deaths of two members of the Basij paramilitary force and a law enforcement officer during nationwide protests in Isfahan in November.

Human rights groups say the three were deprived of access to their chosen lawyers, **subjected to torture and**



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The US envoy for Iran, Robert Malley, had called the imminent execution of the three men “an affront to the human rights and basic dignity of all Iranians” that showed the government “has learned nothing from the protests.”

Special Envoy for Iran Robert Malley  

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Iran's possible imminent execution of Majid Kazemi, Saleh Mirhashemi, and Saeed Yaghoubi is an affront to the human rights and basic dignity of all Iranians and shows the regime has learned nothing from the protests. [#DoNotLetThemKillUs](#) 1/2

6:07 PM · May 18, 2023 

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Campaigners have denounced the Islamic Republic's escalation of executions in recent weeks and accused the authorities of using the death penalty as a means to intimidate Iranians.

Iranian authorities have cracked down hard on months-long nationwide protests sparked by the September death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini while in police custody.

More than 520 people were killed during demonstrations and over 20,000 others were unlawfully detained, activists say. Following biased trials, the judiciary has handed down stiff sentences, **including the death penalty**, to protesters.

The demonstrations have subsided in recent weeks, but there are still sporadic acts of defiance, including the refusal of a growing number of women to wear the mandatory head covering in public places.

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Iran condemned after executing three men over recent protests

By [Rob Picheta](#) and [Irene Nasser](#), CNN

Updated 7:07 AM EDT, Fri May 19, 2023



AFP/Getty Images

Protests rocked Iran last fall before being suppressed by the regime.

(CNN) — Iran has been condemned by international watchdogs after it executed three more men over recent protests that rocked the country.

Majid Kazemi, Saleh Mirhashemi and Saeed Yaqoubi were executed in Isfahan, judiciary news outlet Mizan News said on Friday. The three were accused of carrying out an attack that killed three security officers in Isfahan in November 2022 during anti-government protests.

The US State Department on Thursday urged Iran to refrain from carrying out the executions, calling the proceedings “sham trials.”

And Amnesty International said the men were “fast-tracked through Iran’s judicial system” without due process being observed



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It was the highest number of executions in the Islamic republic since 2015, according to a report released last month by the Norway-based Iran Human Rights (IHR) and the France-based Together Against the Death Penalty (ECPM) groups.

More than half of the executions last year took place after the protests erupted in September.

The US State Department condemned the latest planned executions of Kazemi, Mirhashemi and Yaqoubi on Thursday.

“The execution of these men, after what have been widely regarded as sham trials, would be an affront to human rights and basic dignity in Iran and everywhere,” said State Department Deputy Spokesperson Vedant Patel at a press briefing.

“It is clear from this episode that the Iranian regime has learned nothing from the protests that began with another death, the death of Mahsa Amini in September of last year,” Patel added.

The Hengaw Organization for Human Rights, another NGO that monitors human rights violations in Iran, said on [Twitter](#) that the three men “had the minimal defense rights of an accused.” The group decried what it called an “unfathomable wave of executions in Iran.”

Nationwide protests rocked Iran last fall, as decades of bitterness over the regime’s treatment of women and other issues boiled over after the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini while in the custody of the country’s so-called morality police.

Authorities violently repressed the months-long movement, which had posed one of the biggest domestic threats to Iran’s ruling clerical regime in more than a decade.

CNN’s Kareem El Damanhoury and Joseph Ataman contributed reporting.

PAID CONTENT



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The Dubious "Confessions" of Three Iranians at Imminent Risk of Execution

MAY 15, 2023

SOLMAZ EIKDAR

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On May 12, Amnesty International warned that Majid Kazemi, Saleh Mirhashemi and Saeed Yaghoubi could be executed at any time after the Supreme Court upheld their "unjust" convictions and death sentences earlier this month



The recent broadcast of a video showing the forced "confessions" of three Iranian men sentenced to death on Iranian state TV has raised concerns about their imminent execution in the central city of Isfahan.

On May 12, Amnesty International warned that Majid Kazemi, Saleh Mirhashemi and Saeed Yaghoubi could be executed at any time after the Supreme Court upheld their "unjust" convictions and death sentences earlier this month. The London-based human rights watchdog urged Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei to immediately halt any plans to execute the trio and quash their convictions and death sentences.

Mirhashemi was twice sentenced to death, while Kazemi and Yaghoubi were handed capital punishment and a 10-year prison sentence in relation to the death of three members of the paramilitary Basij force during protests in Tehran on November 15, 2022.

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He said that the broadcast of the forced "confessions" after the court upheld the verdicts terrified the trio's families.

After the case was referred to the Supreme Court, he also said, the families received information that Asadullah Jafari, the chief prosecutor of Isfahan province, sent two busloads of people to Tehran to gather in front of the court with the aim of exerting pressure to get the death sentences confirmed and quickly executed.

It is evident that Kazemi, Mirhashemi and Yaghoubi were coerced into making "confessions" for crimes they did not commit.

In the video broadcast on state TV, the defendants claimed to have had "access to weapons" and that they did "a lot of shooting." Although they mentioned the presence of other individuals who were also "shooting," they did not mention any violence directed toward security forces.

Besides, the Supreme Court acknowledged that Mirhashemi denied carrying any weapons, and the weapon allegedly belonging to him has not been recovered.

The video of the "confessions" is only 4 minutes and 16 seconds long, but it has been edited 53 times to include images from the night of the incident, the defendants' accusations against each other, the moment of their arrest and the reconstruction of the crime scene.

The clip contains several errors. For instance, it claims to show the moment when one of the defendants was arrested by agents of Isfahan's Sahib Al-Zaman Corps. However, the images clearly show that the defendant's hands are tied behind his back.

This calls into question the credibility of the entire video. If its creators are capable of making such a basic mistake, it is possible that they have also fabricated other parts of the video.

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Iran

UPDATED May 18, 2023

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

Three Jailed Iranian Protesters Send Plea For Help Fearing Their Executions Are Imminent



Names from left to right: Saleh Mirhashemi, Majid Kazemi, and Saeid Yaqoubi were implicated in an incident on November 16, 2022, during which two Basij paramilitary force members and a law enforcement officer were fatally shot in Isfahan.

Three jailed Iranian protesters who fear their execution is imminent have appealed to the public for support in a handwritten note saying, "Don't let them kill us."

The opposition activist collective 1500tasvir, known for its coverage of Iranian protest developments, released the note on May 17 after receiving it through intermediaries for the condemned men: Majid Kazemi, Saeid Yaqoubi, and Saleh Mirhashemi.

"Don't let them kill us. We need your help," read the [note](#), which was released amid reports the men were given a final meeting with their families and has heightened fears that their executions could occur at any moment.

Adding to the apprehension, state-run TV aired a video of the three defendants' "confessions" -- which the families and human rights organizations say were likely made under duress -- a night earlier, a move many saw as an attempt to justify carrying out the death penalty for the three, who were implicated in an incident on November 16, 2022, during which two Basij paramilitary force members and a law enforcement officer were fatally shot in Isfahan.

Amnesty International has said the three protesters have been deprived access to their chosen lawyers and were pushed into forced confessions. Some groups have said the three were tortured while in detention.



SEE ALSO:

[Amnesty Says Executions, Led By Iran, Skyrocketed Last Year](#)

The United States on May 18 urged Iran not to carry out the executions.

"We join the people of Iran and the international community in calling on Iran to not carry out these executions," State Department spokesman Vedant Patel said.

"The execution of these men after what have widely been regarded as sham trials would be an affront to human rights and basic dignity in Iran and everywhere," Patel told reporters.

Kazemi's case has caused concern in Australia, where some of his family live, with his cousin saying that he had only been involved in "peaceful protests" for change.

Other family members and and supporters of the three have held nightly vigils around a prison in the central Iranian city of Isfahan where they are being held. The **message** of their note has gone viral on Iranian social media platforms, with the hashtag "Don't let them kill us" becoming a rallying cry for their cause.

Ali Karimi, a former star of Iranian soccer, joined the campaign, posting on Instagram with the hashtag "Don't let them kill us":

"No soil has buried life within itself like the soil of Iran," he wrote.

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"No soil has buried life within itself like the soil of Iran," he **wrote**.

Iran has seen a surge in executions in recent months, a trend that has drawn widespread domestic and international condemnation.

Human rights organizations have strongly objected to the wave of death sentences, saying they are being issued against protesters in Iran after "sham trials" that are often rushed through the courts.

Amnesty said in an annual report on May 16 that Iran saw executions soar to 576 in 2022 from 314 the previous year. The Norway-based Iran Human Rights group says that so far this year, at least 243 people have been executed in Iran.

Lawmakers have pushed the judiciary to render the death penalty in trials for those arrested during unrest sparked by the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini in September while she was in police custody for allegedly wearing a head scarf improperly.

The protests have involved tens of thousands of Iranians and are seen as one of the biggest threats to the Islamic leadership since it took power in 1979.

So far at least four protesters have been executed.

Human rights activists say authorities in Iran are using the executions to try to instill fear in society rather than to combat crime.

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

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Names from left to right: Saleh Mirhashemi, Majid Kazemi, Saeed Yaghoubi © Private

May 17, 2023

Iran: International community must take bold action to prevent the execution of three tortured protesters

Responding to fears over the imminent execution in Iran of three protesters – Majid Kazemi, Saleh Mirhashemi and Saeed Yaghoubi – from Esfahan after state media broadcast their forced “confessions” and the Supreme Court upheld their unjust conviction and death sentence despite torture and fair trial concerns, Diana Eltahawy, Amnesty International’s Deputy Director for the Middle East and North Africa, said:

“The shocking manner in which the trial and sentencing of these protesters was fast-tracked through Iran’s judicial system amid the use of torture-tainted ‘confessions’, serious procedural flaws and a lack of evidence is another example of the Iranian authorities’ brazen disregard for the rights to life and fair trial. Majid Kazemi said in an audio recording from prison that he was forced to make false self-incriminating statements after interrogators beat him, gave him electric shocks, subjected him to mock executions, and threatened to rape him, execute his brothers and harass his parents.

“The use of the death penalty against these men is a blatant act of vengeance against a courageous generation of protesters for steadfastly demanding the rights of Iranian people during the past seven months. It is further evidence that the authorities are taking increasingly violent and extreme measures to torment and terrorize people in Iran to end the protests at any cost and impose silence and subservience through brute force.

“Amid the authorities’ horrific execution spree of scores of people since the end of April 2023, the international community must take urgent and bold action to stop the execution of these protesters before it is too late. Prison authorities told their families that today was their final visit. The international community must also press the Iranian authorities to immediately establish an official moratorium on executions. We urge all states to exercise universal jurisdiction over all Iranian officials reasonably suspected of criminal responsibility for crimes under international law.”

BACKGROUND

Majid Kazemi, Saleh Mirhashemi and Saeed Yaghoubi were arrested in November 2022 following their participation in protests in Esfahan city amid the nationwide protests triggered by the death in custody of Mahsa (Zhin) Amini.

According to informed sources, the three men were subjected to torture while forcibly disappeared and forced to make incriminating statements, which formed the basis of the criminal case against them. Sources said that interrogators suspended Majid Kazemi upside down and showed him a video of them torturing his brother, whom they also detained. They also subjected Majid Kazemi to mock executions at least 15 times by standing him on a chair and putting a rope around his neck, only to pull him down at the last moment. In the days leading up to the trial, they threatened to kill his brothers if he did not accept his charges and “confess” to whatever they said.

In an [audio message](#) from inside Dastgerd Prison, where the men are held, Majid Kazemi said: “I swear to God I am innocent. I didn’t have any weapons on me. They [security forces] kept beating me and ordering me to say this weapon is mine. ... I told them I would say whatever they wanted, just please leave my family alone. I did whatever they wanted because of the torture.”

The men were put on trial in December 2022 and January 2023 and sentenced to death on the charge of “enmity against God” (*moharebeh*) for the alleged possession of a firearm. On 10 May, the authorities announced that the men’s sentences had been upheld by the Supreme Court despite due process violations, significant procedural flaws, lack of evidence, and torture allegations that were never investigated. According to informed sources, the authorities had told the men’s families on several occasions before the Supreme Court’s decision that they would be pardoned and released due to lack of evidence.

The families were called for a visit with the men today, during which prison authorities told them that this was their final visitation, leading to serious concerns that they may be executed as early as tomorrow morning. The families have called for a protest outside Dastgerd prison at 10pm Tehran time tonight.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases without exception, regardless of the nature or circumstances of the crime; guilt, innocence or other characteristics of the individual; or the method used by the state to carry out the execution; because the death penalty violates the right to life as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The death penalty is the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment.

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Stop execution of Saeed Yaghoubi, 3rd-row defendant in Khane Isfahan case

January 18, 2023



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Saeed Yaghoubi, 37, is from Isfahan, the youngest child of the family, and the caretaker of his 81-year-old mother and 85-year-old father. During the nationwide protests in Isfahan on November 18, 2022, Iran's Judiciary arrested and sentenced him to death. Saeed Yaghoubi was an athlete and worked at the real estate firm in Khane Isfahan's neighborhood.

Saeed's Charges

On the evening of November 16, 2022, during the Protests in Isfahan, two Basiji members and one security officer, who were involved in suppressing the protesters, were shot dead in the "Negahbani Square of Khane Isfahan Neighborhood." Iran's Judiciary has claimed that the detained protesters linked to the case "shot" the three security agents, Mohsen Cheraghy, Mohsen Hamidi, and Mohammad Karimi dead. Saeed Yaghoubi is the third defendant in this case.

Court's verdict

Saeed Yaghoubi Kordsafali, son of KaramAli, the third defendant in the case, was sentenced to death for waging war on God (Moharebeh), by attempting to pull a gun and using a waist Colt. Saeed Yaghoubi is also charged with 10 years in prison on charges of membership in illegal groups and communities with the intent to disrupt state security, and assembly and collusion resulting in crimes against the country's internal security.

The Judiciary has stated that the sentences handed down for the defendants were "preliminary rulings and can be appealed by the Supreme Court."

The death sentences against Saeed Yaghoubi and two other defendants in the case have been carried out without due process and legal standards. All rulings given were based on forced confessions carried out under brutal torture that cannot be invoked. In a phone call with their family, the two other defendants said they were forced to confess under torture.

Not much information about the condition of this detained protester exists, and no phone call from or with the defendant is out.

According to a close source who was present at court and saw Saeed, he attended the court in a worrying and distressed state. His hair had turned white, whereas Saeed's hair was not white before, and his face appeared older. It was evident that he had been brutally tortured for forced confessions.

In a video posted online on December 20, 2022, Saeed Yaghoubi's mother said that her son was arrested on November 18, 2022, while working at a real estate firm in Isfahan. She had not been informed about his arrest for more than a month.

In another video posted on social media on January 10, 2023, the mother calls for the release of her son. She said Saeed was the "breadwinner and handyman" of their home. She says that she has no one else apart from Saeed.

"An 85-year-old father, an 81-year-old mother... This is their son Saeed, their breadwinner and handyman. Please accompany my child and bring him back to me." Saeed cared for his elderly parents and with his imprisonment, his family is left without help.

More than 30,000 Iranians were arrested during nationwide protests in Iran that began on September 16, 2022. At least 109 protesters are at risk of being executed or issued death sentences.

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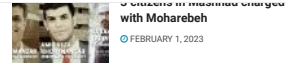
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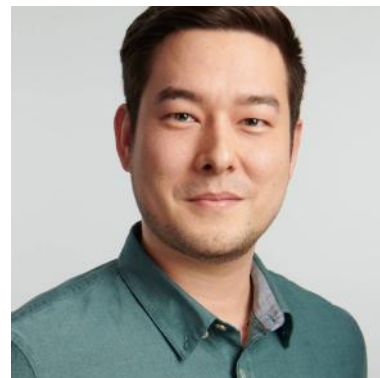
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30-year-old Saeed Yaghoubi was arrested in Isfahan on November 18th, and accused of taking part in the death of an IR security officer. The judge charged him with Waging War against God and in an unjust court without a lawyer of his choice and any solid evidence, and sentenced him to death. His life is in imminent danger. Swipe right to read more about Saeed.

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