

# Iran

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