



Pouya Molaei-Rad, 18, who was shot multiple times by Iranian security forces on June 11, 2023

Police Killing Of Young Man In Iran Raises Tensions

6 hours ago 3 minutes

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Regime agents in Iran shot and killed a relative of a 9-year-old boy murdered during protests in November, as people gathered at his grave to mark his birthday.

The boy, Kian Pirfalak died when security forces fired at his family car for no apparent reason. Almost overnight, the child became a symbol of regime brutality on social media and during street protests.

Sunday was his 10th birthday and the people of his town Izeh, in the oil-rich province of Khuzestan, tried to gather at the cemetery to commemorate him but faced both regular police and forces sent by the Revolutionary Guard which had deployed in the town to prevent possible protests.

Pouya Molaei-Rad, an 18-year-old student and cousin of Kian's mother was shot and killed by security agents near the cemetery in unclear circumstances. Eyewitnesses say that there was a confrontation with the police. [A video showed the multiple gunshot wounds](#) on the chest.

The government immediately alleged that the young man was driving toward the cemetery when he hit three security personnel and was shot multiple

times, dying in hospital later. But the wounds on the victim's chest seem like straight shots, which many people see as evidence that he was not shot inside the car.

The circumstances of the shooting are not entirely clear. Some say he was caught off-guard by the sudden appearance of security forces on the road as he was driving, while the government says he intentionally ran over security agents.

Nevertheless, the incident has turned into a rallying cry for all regime opponents in Iran and abroad.

The child victim and his 18-year-old relative come from the large and fiercely independent Bakhtiari tribal people, which have to a large extent become urbanized, but maintain kinship loyalties.

Their killings will for a long time antagonize ethnic Bakhtiaris toward the Islamic regime. In the tribal culture, no one can rest until revenge is exacted for the killing of a blood kin.

As Kian Perfalak was laid to rest on November 18, his mother Mahmonir (Zaynab) Molaei-Rad made a fiery speech at her son's grave. She conveyed a strong message of protest against Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei who she seemed to hold directly responsible for her son's killing.

Iranian opposition figures abroad issued messages Sunday as soon as the news of Molaei's killing emerged.

Exiled Prince Reza Pahlavi tweeted: "The criminal regime has murdered another of our youth. The name of Pouya Molai-Rad, this young Bakhtiari patriot, has become eternal. This child-killing regime, however, is not eternal."

He added that the "evil" regime "will be removed and the perpetrators of the murder of Iranian children and youth will face trial. This is a national and unbreakable promise."

Alireza Akhondi, an Iranian-born member of Sweden's parliament and an active opposition figure **said in a Persian tweet** that the day when the "criminal regime will be toppled with the will of the people" is not too far away and vowed that the perpetrators of regime crimes will be held responsible.

US-based **opposition figure Masih Alinejad tweeted** that even family members of Moalei-Rad and Pirmalak have been arrested after Sunday's incident.

"The Islamic Republic has become one of the world's top executioners of its own citizens. The only way the clerical regime has engaged with an educated youthful society is through the muzzle of a gun," Alinejad said.

Hossein Ronaghi, an opposition activist in Iran and a former political prisoner praised Mahmonir Molaei-Rad, saying that Kian's mother "is the darling of hearts in Iran..."

Iran Protests

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