



04:15 Titre Aval  
05:00 IITV News (12) - DC  
06:15 Talk Show with Sima Sabet

A candlelight vigil for 16-year-old Sarina Esmailzadeh, killed during the protests, by her classmates on October 31, 2022

## Iranians Pay Homage To Dead Protesters On Their Birthdays

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Iran Protests Human Rights

The government is threatening families of protesters who were killed in the Iranian uprising not to hold birthday ceremonies at their loved ones' graves.

The past few days marked the birthdays of several of the most iconic protesters who were either shot dead by security forces, such as Mahdis Hosseini and Peyman Manbari, executed on trumped up charges such as Saeed Yaqubi, or beaten to death such as 16-year-old Sarina Esmailzadeh whom so many have come to cherish.

Iranian social media is full of posts that share a common structure, all mentioning the name of a dead protester and what their age would be if they were alive on their birthdays.

While Iranians on social media are paying tribute to them as "the young and enlightened generation of Iran," the authorities have put pressure on their families to prevent gatherings for their birthdays fearing larger antiregime events.



Sarina Esmailzadeh

Sarina Esmailzadeh died on the way to hospital after being severely beaten in the head with batons during the early days of nationwide protests following the death in custody of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini. She had joined a protest in Karaj, a large city half an hour from the capital Tehran, on September 21. Regime officials claim she jumped from a neighbor's rooftop and killed herself. They insist her death was unrelated to protests, but the nature of her injury and death was **verified by Amnesty International**.

The 16-year-old YouTuber, whose funeral ceremony and the **40th day after her death** turned into large demonstrations, was among the first martyrs of the Iranian uprising and would have become 17 today if the Islamic Republic was not in power in Iran. Her name is now a trendy hashtag on twitter with tens of thousands of people talking about her or her video blogs on her birthday.

Sarina, who sang Hozier's 2013 hit song on a family road trip to the historic city of Kashan in her first vlog on YouTube titled "My First Vlog!", has a trove of posts about Iranian teens and the problems people face in the society.

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"Iranian teenagers are no longer the teenager of 20 years ago. They are aware of the situation in the world and ask themselves what they should have less than American teenagers," she said in of her whimsical yet witty videos after pointing out that the people in Iran only expect welfare and prosperity.

Former political prisoner Hossein Ronaghi said all the Iranian nation seeks justice for Sarina, calling on people to honor her and keep her memory alive however they can.

Mahdis Hosseini, another teenager would have also turned 17 on Friday if she was not injured by bullets during a protest in the northern city of Amol on September 21. She went into hiding for a couple of weeks without receiving hospital care, for fear of not being arrested. Two days after she returned home, she was left alone for several hours, and when her mother returned, she found her dead body.



#### Mahdis Hosseini

Peyman Manbari, who would have turned 26 on Saturday, was killed during a rally in the Kurdish-majority city of Sanandaj in October. His family and friends had planned to gather at his grave but had to cancel under threats and pressure by Iran's intelligence agencies.

Agents contacted the Manbari family and "told them that they don't even have the right to have a birthday for him in their own home," said Fatemeh Heydari, who lost her brother Javad in a crackdown on a protest rally in the city of Qazvin. "How many young lives, how many grieving families, how much endless sufferings are enough to satisfy your criminal nature so that you stop taking the lives of our loved ones?" she asked.

**Peyman Manbari**

If not executed, Saeed Yaghoubi's 38th birthday was also on Saturday. Saeed was hanged along with Saleh Mirhashemi and Majid Kazemi in May after they **were convicted over the death** of two IRGC Basij militia **members and a police officer** in protests in November.

Human rights campaigners say they were tortured into confessions, and there was no reliable evidence against them.

Leaked audio from police radio chatter from the night the three regime agents were killed indicates that they were shot by friendly fire of plainclothes forces. The victims had alibis, with the family of one of the victims saying there is CCTV video footage of their son at work.

According to the cousin of one the executed protesters, "the family of Saeed Yaghoubi (Yaqoubi) was not allowed to be near his grave on his birthday."

Iran's exiled prince Reza Pahlavi also tweeted in their honor, decrying "Khamenei's child and youth-killing regime." "The memories of these brave children of Iran are eternal," he added.

## Iran Protests

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