



News | Prison

Iran sentences rapper Toomaj to prison over protests

The 33-year-old rapper was among thousands who protested against the gov'm't after Mahsa Amin died in police custody.



A woman holds a poster of rapper Toomaj Salehi, who was sentenced to six years and three months in prison over his participation in the Mahsa Amini protests [File: Robert Deyrail/Gamma-Rapho via Getty Images]

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Iran has sentenced popular rapper Toomaj Salehi to six years and three months in prison over his [participation in protests](#) that rocked the country last year.

A Twitter account run by his supporters announced the sentence on Monday, as did Ye-One Rhie, a member of the German parliament who has campaigned on his behalf. There was no immediate comment from Iranian authorities.

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Salehi was among thousands of mostly young Iranians who took to the streets last fall after the [death of Mahsa Amini](#), a 22-year-old woman who was arrested by Iran's morality police for allegedly violating the country's strict dress code and died in their custody.



The protests spread across the country and quickly escalated into calls for the overthrow of Iran's rulers.

The 33-year-old rapper, who was arrested last October, had criticised Iran's government in songs and music videos that were widely circulated online.

"Someone's crime was dancing with her hair in the wind," he rapped in a video with more than 450,000 views on YouTube – an apparent reference to Amini.

In another verse, he appears to predict the downfall of Iran's theocracy: "Your whole past is dark ... Forty-four years of your government, this is the year of failure."

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After his arrest, state media released a video showing him blindfolded and apologising for his words. Rights groups say Iran routinely tortures prisoners into making false confessions.

Following the protests, authorities [launched a heavy crackdown](#), in which some 500 people were killed and nearly 20,000 arrested, according to Human Rights Activists in Iran, a group that closely monitored the unrest. Authorities have said many of those detained were released or given reduced sentences.

Iran has [executed](#) a total of seven people in connection with the protests, accusing them of attacking security forces. They were convicted in secretive courts where rights groups say they were denied the right to defend themselves.

Salehi's supporters had feared that he too could face the death penalty.

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Iran protests: Musicians use lyrics to demand justice

SOURCE: NEWS AGENCIES