

Shilan Mirzaee: Activist could be sentenced to death in Iran as she faces imminent deportation from Turkey

Shilan Mirzaee was dragged out of her home in front of her crying son after being arrested by Turkish officers. The 40-year-old has sought asylum in Turkey since 2016, dedicating her time to advocating for Iranian political refugees and supporting marginalised groups in Iran.

By Sahar Zand, news reporter

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Shilan Mirzaee was arrested by Turkish police this week



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An Iranian activist based in Turkey is in danger of imminent deportation to Iran, where she could face torture, interrogation, a lengthy sentence, and even capital punishment.

Just over two weeks after the Iranian activist [Narges Mohammadi was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize](#), the outspoken Iranian human rights and political activist Shilan Mirzaee was arrested by three Turkish officers on Tuesday in her home in Turkey.

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who was present at the time of the arrest, claimed she was told verbally by the Turkish police that "**Iran** wants you and we are going to hand you over to them".



The 40-year-old activist and her husband

In a rushed video that Ms Mirzaee managed to record on her smartphone before being taken away, she said: "The police are waiting outside my house to take me away.




"I don't know why, but whatever the reason for the arrest and any danger I'm faced with as a result, is a violation of my rights. I'm recording this video so that you can be my voice."



Shilan Mirzaee managed to record this video before being taken away

Ms Mirzaee was taken to the Bandirma deportation centre, where she refused to sign a deportation document after being questioned about her activism.

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Authorities informed her that her presence in Turkey poses a "national security" risk and she should leave Turkey. If Ms Mirzaee returns to Iran, she could face severe charges, potentially leading to the death penalty.

As an exiled Iranian activist and outspoken critic of human rights violations by the government of Iran, the 40-year-old mother-of-two has sought asylum in Turkey since 2016, dedicating her time to advocating for Iranian political refugees and supporting marginalised groups within Iran, including political prisoners, LGBTQ communities, and ethnic and religious minorities.

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Shilan Mirzaee with her family

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Ms Mirzaee has dedicated the past year to aiding victims of Iran's Woman, Life, Freedom movement, stemming from the tragic death of **Mahsa Amini** and resulting in extensive casualties and mass imprisonments.

In response, in an intensifying campaign of intimidation and harassment, the Iranian security forces have detained various dissidents, including human rights campaigners, activists, and academics.

However, the crackdown on protests extends beyond Iran, with Ms Mirzaee facing continuous threats and harassment from Iranian authorities across the Turkish border.



Protests mark anniversary of Mahsa Amini's death

"The constant pressure that me, my children and my husband have been under from the Iranian authorities has been unimaginable," Ms Mirzaee told Sky News in an emotional interview last month.

"They want to make me return to Iran because they want to silence me."



Supporters of women's rights in Iran raise signs with Mahsa Amini's picture on the anniversary of her death

She also said that she had been contacted by the Iranian embassy in Turkey, warning her to stop her activism and to turn herself in at the consulate.

Ms Mirzaee refused as she believed that as soon as she set foot in Iran, a hefty prison sentence and even execution could await her. "I told them, I'm not coming, do your worst," she said, and now her husband believes that they have done just that.

Sky News has contacted the Turkish Interior Ministry and the Office of Immigration for comment.

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