

PRISONERS

# Iranian Motor Courier Faces Death Penalty over Online Posts

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Hassan Khalkhal Zard, a 32-year-old Iranian man who has languished behind bars for 11 weeks, is facing the death penalty for his online activities, IranWire has learned.

Khalkhal Zard was arrested on October 1 by intelligence agents of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and is now being held in the quarantine ward of Gonbad-e Kavus prison in the northeastern city of Galikesh, according to a source close to him.

He is facing three serious charges: insulting the holy tenets of Islam, insulting the leader of the Islamic Republic and blasphemy, which can carry the death penalty.

The accusations are based on Khalkhal Zard's Instagram posts, in which he occasionally shared his frustrations with the policies of the Islamic Republic.

"Please don't let them commit their crime in silence before it's too late. The people of Iran should know for which imaginary crimes young people are being killed," the source said.

Khalkhal Zard is from Galikesh, in Golestan province, but he has worked as a motor courier in Tehran for years.

His motorcycle was stolen in May and, during a trip to Galikash to visit his family, he went to the prosecutor's office on October 1 in an attempt to get updates on his case.

"The motorcycle was crucial for him as it was his livelihood, and he faced significant challenges without it," the source said.

At the prosecutor's office, Hassan was handed over to intelligence agents of the IRGC.

He spent 10 days at the Intelligence Department's detention center in Galikesh before being moved to Gonbad-e Kavus prison.

"Like many others, Hassan was discontented, fatigued, and frustrated by the state of the country," the source said. "Only God knows what awaits people like him who endure deprivation and suffering."

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