



Iran

Iran says it executed four people it claims engaged in 'sabotage' for Israel

Three men and one woman hanged on charges of 'moharebeh' - or waging war against God

Israel-Gaza war - live updates

Patrick Wintour *Diplomatic editor*

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Iran has announced it has hanged four people it claims were engaged in “sabotage” on behalf of [Israel](#).

They were executed in Iran’s north-west province of West Azerbaijan, the judiciary’s Mizan website reported.

The three men and one woman had been sentenced to death on charges of “moharebeh”, or “waging war against God”, and “corruption on Earth” through their “collaboration with the Zionist regime”.

The group “committed extensive actions against the country’s security under the guidance of Mossad”, Mizan said.

The three men were identified as Vafa Hanareh, Aram Omari and Rahman Parhazo. The one woman was named as Nasim Namazi.

The four were charged with kidnapping Iranian security forces to extract intelligence and were also accused of setting fire to the cars and apartments of some agents.

Several others working with the same group were each sentenced to 10 years in jail, Mizan said, without providing additional details.

Iranian intelligence said it had put the group under surveillance for at least four months, starting in January 2022 until their arrest that May, when they were transferred from a neighbouring country to Iran, according to the state-run news agency, Irna.

The hangings came days after an Israeli airstrike in a Damascus neighbourhood on Monday **killed Sayyed Razi Mousavi**, a high-ranking Iranian general.

Iranian officials and allied militant groups in the region had vowed revenge for the killing but did not immediately launch any retaliatory strike.

The funeral of the longtime adviser of the Iranian paramilitary Revolutionary Guards in Syria was held in Tehran on Thursday. Iran accused Israel of being responsible for the airstrike and the funeral was punctuated with chants of "death to Israel". Mousavi was responsible for coordinating the military alliance between Syria and Iran, an important part of Iran's regional network of allies.

Israel fears Iran has been speeding up the delivery of rockets and missiles through Syria, and is also trying to transfer defence systems against Israeli helicopters and UAVs to Hezbollah, the Iranian-aligned militia based in Lebanon.

The strike against Mousavi was seen as a warning to Iran that against increasing the support it gives to Hezbollah.

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When the former Albanian dictator Enver Hoxha delivered his New Year message back in 1967, he pulled the cord marked "truth bomb". "This year will be harder than last year," he declared. "It will, however, be easier than next year." I mean ... on the one hand: thanks for not sugar-coating it, Enver. On the other: way to kill the party buzz, you monster!

I don't want to murder the atmosphere (or indeed any dissidents) by reminding you of the news year you've just lived through - or by warning you of the news year you're about to live through. It's not big, it's not clever, and it's sure as heck not seasonal.

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With that, it simply remains is for me to wish you a very happy holidays, and a splendid new year. Goodness knows you've earned it.

Marina Hyde

**not formally*



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