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'Hard to comprehend': B.C. politician advocating for Iran protester learns of his execution



By **Negar Mojtahedi** • Global News

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A B.C. Member of Parliament says many Canadians are heartbroken today about an execution in Iran. Liberal John Aldag had been an advocate for the young protester whose life has been taken - despite pleas from around the world. Negar Mojtahedi reports. – Jan 23, 2024



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Twenty-three-year-old **Mohammad Ghobadlou** is the ninth person to have been executed in Iran in connection to nationwide protests that rocked Iran in 2022 after the in-custody death of Mahsa Jina Amini.

At least 746 people were executed in Iran in 2023, according to Norway-based Iran Human Rights. 51 executions have taken place 23 days into 2024.

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Member of Parliament for Cloverdale- Langley City John Aldag was a political sponsor of Ghobadlou. He felt connected to him after taking on his sponsorship last year.

Aldag says he has children the same age as Ghobadlou and felt he had like a father-son bond with him.

He took to social media to try and raise awareness to prevent his execution and said he felt helpless when he learned the news.

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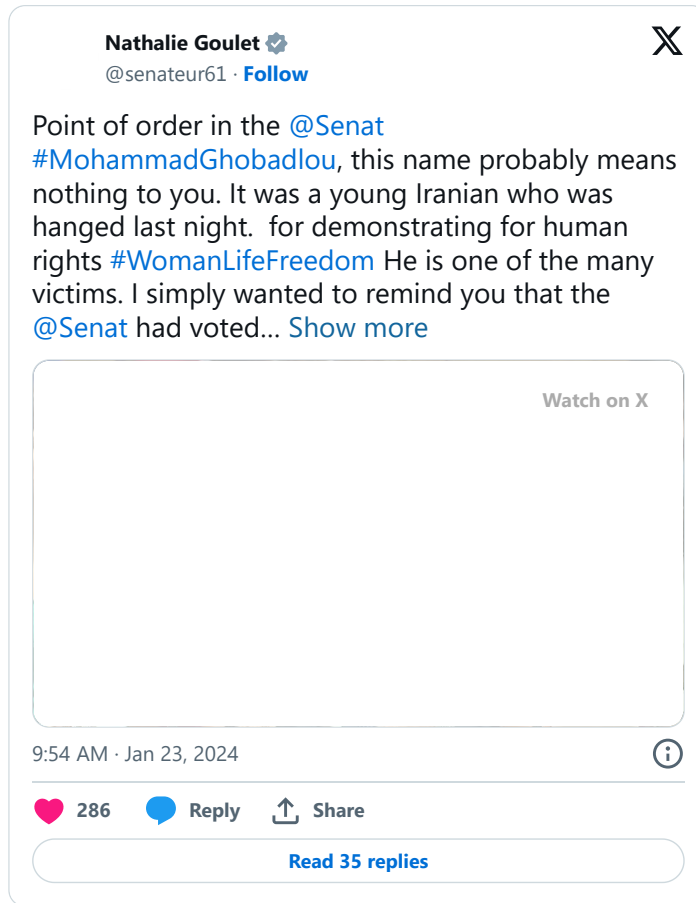
“It is hard to comprehend how a nation would execute their own citizens, particularly their youth, who stand for so much, the future of their country,” Aldag said.

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Around the world, people are reacting to his execution.

French senator Nathalie Goulet posted to X that Ghobadlou “was hanged for human rights” and called for tougher measures against the Islamic Republic.



Meantime, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France Stéphane Séjourné met with Iran’s Minister of Foreign Affairs in New York at the United Nations Security Council’s ministerial meeting.

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Hours after the state sanctioned neck snapping of a 23 year old in Iran,  FM [@steph_sejourne](#), greets  FM, [@Amirabdolahian](#).

👉 Mohammad Ghobadloo was hanged for taking part in Mahsa Amini uprising.

○ Liberte, Egalite, Fraternite

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According to Iran International, protestors gathered outside the Iranian consulate in Vienna and other major European cities to demand an end to executions in Iran.

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Jan. 23, '24. Residents of Ekbatan district, #Tehran, chant anti-regime slogans in response to the killing of #MohammadGhobadlou. "Down w/ the dictator" they shout. #IranRevolution #MahsaAmini

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«امروز احساس های غم و خشم در بین مردم ما وجود داشت، ولی این احساس ها را باید تبدیل به فریاد کرد. باید غم بزرگ را تبدیل به کار بزرگ کنیم و نگذاریم که خون های ریخته شده به هدر بروند و قطعاً هدر نمی روند. حکومت...»

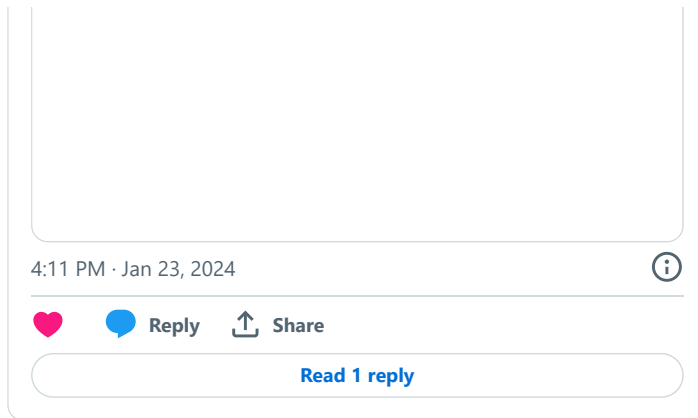
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Jan. 23, '24. Iranian diaspora in #Vienna hold protest rally in response to the killing of #MohammadGhobadlou this morning. Similar protests were reported in #Paris, #London, #Frankfurt, & #Berlin outside the embassies of the Islamic Republic.

ایران اینترنشنال @IranIntl

ویدیوی رسیده به ایران اینترنشنال نشان می دهد روز سه شنبه سوم بهمن ماه ایرانیان مقیم تریش در اعتراض به اعدام محمد قبادلو مقابل سفارت جمهوری اسلامی در وین تجمع برگزار کردند



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“To learn the news that it’s over. It’s tough,” Aldag said, who offered his condolences to Ghobadlou’s parents, adding he can’t imagine what his parents are going through.

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Family and mourners gathered Tuesday to bury the young man who reportedly suffered from a mental health condition. In Iran, a group of 50 psychiatrists wrote a letter to the judiciary to urge professionals to examine his health before his sentencing.

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Ghobadlou was arrested in September 2022, accused of killing a police officer by running him over with his car. Activists say there's no due process in Iran and no evidence to prove he committed that crime. They say he faced an unfair trial and was tortured.

His lawyer, Amir Raesian, posted to X, that the Supreme Court had overturned the sentence and that his execution had been stayed. He said he only learned of the execution just a few hours before it was carried out.

Middle East expert and journalist, Jonathan Harounoff, director of communications at the Jewish Institute for National Security of America, said Ghobadlou's execution was "a devastating development.

"It's a reminder that while there's so much attention on how the Islamic Republic of Iran has been doing and how it's been sowing chaos in the Middle East, specifically with Israel and its neighbours, it's a really stark reminder that Iran's own people as well are suffering," he said.

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He believes the execution may have been a distraction and retaliation campaign. He says Tehran is going after, in "a methodical and unforgiving fashion," people who had taken part in the Woman, Life, Freedom movement.

"Mohammad had wanted a better Iran, a freer Iran, and he paid the ultimate price for that," Harounoff added.

The world, he says has largely stayed silent and he predicts, we won't see any forceful reaction to this latest execution.

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