

World

## Court sentences Iranian dissident rapper Toomaj Salehi to death, lawyer says

He was first arrested in 2022 after making public statements in support of the nationwide protests

Thomson Reuters · Posted: Apr 24, 2024 2:04 PM EDT | Last Updated: April 24



Prominent dissident rapper Toomaj Salehi is shown in an undisclosed location in Iran in this undated image. (Submitted by Negin Niknaam)

An Iranian revolutionary court has sentenced well-known Iranian rapper Toomaj Salehi to death for charges linked to Iran's 2022-23 unrest, his lawyer told Iranian newspaper Sharq on Wednesday.

Salehi in his songs supported months of protests in Iran in 2022 sparked by the death in police custody of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old Kurdish Iranian woman arrested for allegedly wearing an "improper" hijab.

Salehi was initially arrested in October 2022 after making public statements in support of the nationwide protests. In late 2023, just two weeks after [being released on bail](#), Salehi was arrested again.

He was sentenced to six years and three months in prison but avoided a death sentence due to a Supreme Court ruling.

- [Meet Iran's dissident rapper helping youth circumvent regime internet crackdown](#)
- [Iranian dissident rapper reportedly remains defiant under torture by regime](#)

"Branch One of the Revolutionary Court of [the central city of] Isfahan in an unprecedented move, did not enforce the Supreme Court's ruling ... and sentenced Salehi to the harshest punishment," his lawyer Amir Raisian told Sharq.

Iranian judiciary has not confirmed the sentence yet. Salehi has 20 days to appeal the ruling.

### ***WATCH | Social campaign to free Iranian rapper:***



#### **Social campaign launched on behalf of jailed Iranian rapper Toomaj**

▶ 1 year ago 1:28

Supporters of jailed dissident Iranian rapper Toomaj Salehi have launched this campaign on social media to bring attention to his case, saying he's at risk of execution.

## **Allegations of torture**

The outspoken critic of the Iranian regime [previously spent](#) a year and 21 days in detention, including 252 days in solitary confinement, in Isfahan Central Prison in Iran.

Activists and [advocates](#) maintain Toomaj was detained again because of a recent video message he filmed for Iranians and his fans. The [video](#), viewed more than half a million times, was Toomaj's first public address since he was freed on bail on Nov. 18.

- [Prominent Iranian rapper Toomaj freed on bail after over a year of arbitrary detention](#)
- [Prominent Iranian rapper Toomaj arrested again by regime forces, his whereabouts unknown](#)

For almost 15 minutes, he spoke bluntly and in detail about the torture — physical and mental — he says he endured at the hands of regime authorities since his arrest in 2022.

"I was tortured severely at the time of the arrest. They broke my hands and legs. They beat me a lot in my face and head. I tried to stop the punches with my hands, so my fingers broke ... and it was over a very lengthy period," Toomaj said.

### ***WATCH | Movement will only grow, rapper says:***



### **Iran's protest movement will only grow, says Toomaj**

► 2 years ago 2:32

Iranian dissident rapper Toomaj Salehi talks to CBC News about what's happening in his country.

---

*With files from CBC News*

[CBC's Journalistic Standards and Practices](#) | [About CBC News](#)

[Corrections and clarifications](#) | [Submit a news tip](#) | [Report error](#) ▼