

# ANNUAL REPORT ON THE DEATH PENALTY IN IRAN 2024



IRAN  
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AGAINST  
THE DEATH  
PENALTY

**ANNUAL  
REPORT  
ON THE  
DEATH  
PENALTY  
IN IRAN  
2024**

Cover photo: Executed protester Mohsen Shekari's mother holds a sign at his grave in Tehran that reads: "We support the prisoners' No Death Penalty Tuesdays strikes, #NoDeathPenalty"

Back photo: Public hanging of Mohammad Ali Salamat in a Hamadan city park on 12 November 2024.

This report was prepared by Iran Human Rights (IHRNGO) with the support of ECPM (Together Against the Death Penalty). Since 2012, IHRNGO<sup>1</sup> and ECPM<sup>2</sup> have been working together on the publication, international release and circulation of annual reports on the death penalty in Iran.

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1 <http://iranhr.net/en/>

2 <http://www.ecpm.org/en/>

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## GLOSSARY

<b>Baghy</b>	Armed rebellion against the state
<b>Diya</b>	Blood money
<b>Efsad-fil-arz</b>	Corruption on Earth
<b>Elm-e-qazi</b>	Knowledge of the judge
<b>Ertedad</b>	Apostasy
<b>Estizan</b>	Authorisation required by the Head of Judiciary for <i>qisas</i> executions
<b>Fiqh</b>	Islamic jurisprudence
<b>Hadd (pl. hudud)</b>	Fixed punishment for offences mandated by <i>Sharia</i>
<b>Lavat</b>	Sodomy
<b>Moharebeh</b>	Enmity against God
<b>Mosahegheh</b>	Lesbian sex
<b>Qadf</b>	False accusations of sodomy or adultery
<b>Qassameh</b>	Sworn oath
<b>Qisas</b>	Retribution-in-kind
<b>Sabol-nabi</b>	Insulting the prophet
<b>Sharia</b>	Islamic law
<b>Ta'zir</b>	Punishment for offences at the discretion of the judge
<b>Tafkhiz</b>	Intercrural sex
<b>Zena</b>	Extramarital sex
<b>Zenaye Mohseneh</b>	Adultery

# FOREWORD BY JAVOID REHMAN



**Professor, Formerly United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran**

I am greatly honoured to have served for a full and maximum term as the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran between July 2018 – July 2024. Throughout my mandate, I expressed grave concerns at the arbitrary deprivation of life and also expressed alarm and shock at the summary, arbitrary, and extra-judicial executions of tens of thousands of political opponents of the regime ever since the inception of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979. In my final detailed findings, I documented the summary, arbitrary and extra-judicial executions of thousands of arbitrarily imprisoned political opponents, amounting to the crimes against humanity of murder and extermination, as well as genocide between 1979–1988.<sup>3</sup> These executions included those of women, some of them reportedly raped before their executions, and a very large number of children. In my findings I highlighted the tragedy of the 1988 Massacre, which resulted in the mass murder, summary, arbitrary and extra-judicial executions as well as enforced disappearances of thousands of political prisoners between July–September 1988. In light of the evidence presented to me, I take the view that “atrocities crimes” of crimes against humanity and genocide were committed by the Iranian regime against members of the political opposition in 1988.<sup>4</sup> The targeting of political prisoners and their arbitrary deprivation of life has continued: six men are at a serious risk of execution after extremely unfair trials. As reported by Amnesty International “In October 2024, Branch 26 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran convicted them of ‘armed rebellion against the state’ (*baghy*) and sentenced them to

3 UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Javid Rehman, “*Atrocities Crimes*” and grave violations of human rights committed by the Islamic Republic of Iran (1981–1982 and 1988): Detailed findings, 17 July 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/iran/20240717-SR-Iran-Findings.pdf>

4 *Ibid.*



death following a grossly unfair trial marred by allegations of torture and other ill-treatment to extract forced 'confessions'.<sup>5</sup>

The practice of executions goes beyond those convicted of political and national security crimes. In fact, there are at least 80 offences which carry the death penalty in the Islamic Republic of Iran ranging from *qisas* (retribution in kind) to "offences" such as adultery, homosexuality, apostasy and blasphemy, drug related offences as well as the various national security offences. By not restricting death penalty to the "most serious crimes", Iranian authorities violate the right to life as provided in Article 6(2) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)<sup>6</sup> to which the Islamic Republic of Iran is a state party. According to the Human Rights Committee – which oversees the implementation of the ICCPR – "the term 'the most serious crimes' must be read restrictively and appertain only to crimes of extreme gravity, involving intentional killing. Crimes not resulting directly and intentionally in death, such as attempted murder, corruption and other economic and political crimes, armed robbery, piracy, abduction, drug and sexual offences, although serious in nature, can never serve as the basis, within the framework of Article 6, for the imposition of the death penalty".<sup>7</sup>

As one of the highest executioners in the world, the Islamic Republic of Iran executes individuals in violation of international human rights law, including by violating the right of the accused to a fair trial; through the implementation of the sentence in a manner that constitutes torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, and by expressly targeting arbitrarily and disproportionately Iran's ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities. During my mandate as the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran, I took the view that almost all of the executions in Iran represented arbitrary deprivation of the right to life and in complete violation of international law.

The available figures for the executions that took place in 2024 are extremely shocking and alarming: it is reported that last year, at least 975 persons were executed, compared to 834 executions in 2023.<sup>8</sup> It is also enormously worrying to note that in 2024, over 50%

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5 Amnesty International, Iran: Six Men at Risk of Execution After Grossly Unfair Trial, 23 January 2025, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/8965/2025/en/>

6 New York, 16 December 1966 United Nations, 999 U.N.T.S. 171; 6 I.L.M. (1967) 368.

7 UN Human Rights Committee, General Comment No.36, Article 6: right to life, 3 September 2019, CCPR/C/GC/36, para. 35.

8 IHRNGO and ECPM, Annual Report on the Death Penalty in Iran, 2024, <https://iranhr.net/en/reports/42/>; UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Javaid Rehman, Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, 9 February 2024, A/HRC/55/62, <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g24/O12/59/pdf/g24O1259.pdf>, para. 8.

of those executed were reportedly for drug-related offences.<sup>9</sup> The Iranian regime is reportedly the highest executioner of women in the world and – completely contrary to the Country’s own obligations within international law – child offenders are executed every year. At least one child was executed in 2024.<sup>10</sup> The discriminatory and disproportionate nature of executions was tragically reflected in the executions of Baluch and Kurdish minorities.

The death penalty is weaponised and instrumentalised against people who are vulnerable and weak, typically from marginalised communities. For pragmatists and human rights defenders, the dangers of arbitrariness, the unfairness of implementation in the criminal justice system and the overall ineffectiveness of the death penalty far outweigh any suggested justifications in support of this punishment. The imposition of the death penalty neither serves justice, nor – as overwhelming evidence establishes – does it make societies safer.

The death penalty equates to violence perpetrated by the State: retaining the death penalty is a violation of human rights and human dignity. This sentiment is also echoed by the Human Rights Committee in its General Comment 36, where the Committee notes that “the death penalty cannot be reconciled with full respect for the right to life, and abolition of the death penalty is both desirable and necessary for the enhancement of human dignity and progressive development of human rights”.<sup>11</sup>

In the context of the Islamic Republic of Iran, I greatly value and salute the bravery and courage of political prisoners who in January 2024 staged a protest which transformed into a weekly hunger strike known as “Black Tuesdays” and “No Death Penalty Tuesdays”. These mass hunger strikes and statements condemning the death penalty and executions have now spread to 35 prisons across Iran.

In my capacity as the Special Rapporteur (2018–2024), I provided at least 35 recommendations to the Iranian authorities calling for the death penalty to be abolished and laws that are incompatible with the right to life repealed.<sup>12</sup> As the former Special Rapporteur, I once again recommend an immediate abolition of the death penalty for all offences and in all circumstances.

**Javaid Rehman**  
February 2025

9 IHRNGO and ECPM, Annual Report on the Death Penalty in Iran, 2024, <https://iranhr.net/en/reports/42/>

10 *Ibid.*

11 UN Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 36, *op. cit.*, para. 50.

12 UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, 2024, *op. cit.*, para. 59.

# PREFACE

The 17<sup>th</sup> *Annual Report on the Death Penalty in Iran*, by Iran Human Rights (IHRNGO) and ECPM (Together Against the Death Penalty), provides an assessment and analysis of death penalty trends in 2024 in the Islamic Republic of Iran. It sets out the number of executions in 2024, the trend compared to previous years, the legislative framework and procedures, charges, geographic distribution and a monthly breakdown of executions. Lists of women and child offenders executed in 2024 are included in tables in the categories section.

The report also documents the abolitionist movement within Iran, including “No Death Penalty Tuesdays”, the forgiveness movement and its contribution to reducing the use of the death penalty, and provides analysis on how the international community can contribute to limiting the scope of the death penalty in Iran.

The 2024 report is the result of hard work from IHRNGO members and supporters who took part in reporting, documenting, collecting, analysing and drafting its contents. We are especially grateful to IHRNGO sources inside Iran who incur a significant risk by reporting on unannounced and secret executions in prisons of 30 different provinces. Due to the very difficult context, the lack of transparency and the obvious risks and limitations that human rights defenders face in the Islamic Republic of Iran, this report does not give a complete picture of the use of the death penalty in Iran. There are 39 reported executions which are not included in this report due to a lack of sufficient details or an inability to confirm cases through two different sources. However, the report aims to provide the most complete and realistic figures possible in the present circumstances.<sup>13</sup> It does not include suspicious deaths in custody, death row prisoners who died in prison before their executions or those killed under torture.

ECPM supports the elaboration, editing, publication and distribution of this report in the framework of its international advocacy work against the death penalty. To overcome the transparency issues surrounding data and information on the death penalty in Iran, a comprehensive strategy for distribution and dissemination is required. The overall objectives of IHRNGO and ECPM in publishing this report are to call attention to and publicise the facts, with the aim of changing national and international views on the situation of the death penalty in Iran, the top executioner in the world per capita.

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13 See below, “Sources”.

# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT AT A GLANCE

- At least 975 people were executed in 2024, a 17% increase compared to 834 in 2023.
- Only 95 executions (less than 10%) were announced by official sources compared to 15% in 2023, 12% in 2022, 16.5% in 2021 and an average of 33% in 2018-2020.
- 90% of all executions included in the 2024 report, i.e. 880 executions, were not announced by the authorities.
- At least 503 people (51.6%) were executed for drug-related charges compared to 471 in 2023, 256 in 2022, 126 in 2021 and an average of 24 per year in 2018-2020.
- Only 15 (3%) of the 503 drug-related executions were announced by official sources.
- At least 419 executions (43% of all executions) were for murder charges.
- 2 protesters were among those executed for murder charges.
- At least 31 people, amongst them 9 Kurdish political prisoners, and a political dissident abducted from a neighbouring country, were executed for security-related charges (*moharebeh* and *efsad-fil-arz*).
- At least 22 people were executed for rape charges.
- 4 people were hanged in public spaces.
- At least 1 child offender was among those executed and cases of 3 possible others were still being investigated at the time of writing.
- At least 31 women were executed, the highest number over at least 17 years.
- At least 5 of those executed suffered from psychosocial and intellectual disabilities.
- At least 80 Afghan nationals were executed in 2024, compared to 25 in 2023 and 16 in 2022.
- At least 534 executions in 2024 and more than 5,075 executions since 2010 have been based on death sentences issued by the Revolutionary Courts.
- At least 649 prisoners sentenced to death for murder charges were forgiven by the families of the murder victims as per *qisas* laws.

# INTRODUCTION

The 17<sup>th</sup> *Annual Report on the Death Penalty in Iran*, published by Iran Human Rights (IHRNGO) and Together Against the Death Penalty (ECPM), reveals a horrifying escalation in the use of the death penalty by the Islamic Republic in 2024. The year witnessed at least 975 executions, marking a 17% increase from the 834 recorded in 2023. This surge represents the highest number of recorded executions in Iran in more than two decades, with a particularly sharp rise observed after the presidential election and the appointment of Masoud Pezeshkian in the latter half of the year amidst escalating tensions between Iran and Israel.

Commenting on the report, IHRNGO Director, Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam said: “While the world’s attention was focused on escalating tensions between Iran and Israel, the Islamic Republic exploited the lack of international scrutiny to terrorise its own people, carrying out 5 to 6 executions every single day. Iranian people demanding their fundamental rights pose the greatest threat to the regime, and the death penalty remains its most powerful tool of political suppression. These executions are part of the Islamic Republic’s war against its own people to maintain its grip on power.” Only 95 executions (less than 10%) were officially announced, a significant decline from the 15% disclosed in 2023. Despite repeated calls from the international community, this deliberate lack of transparency not only undermines accountability but also conceals the true scale of the state’s use of the death penalty.

A significant portion of these executions were for drug-related offences, with at least 503 individuals put to death—a stark increase from previous years. These executions disproportionately affected marginalised communities, including ethnic minorities such as the Baluch. Despite this alarming trend, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) remained conspicuously silent, and continued its law enforcement cooperation with the Islamic Republic. This is despite the fact that in April, 84 human rights organisations, including IHRNGO and ECPM, issued a global call urging the UNODC to suspend its law enforcement projects in Iran unless these executions are halted.

Commenting on the UNODC’s continued cooperation with Iran, amid record numbers of drug-related executions, Raphaël Chenuil-Hazan, Executive Director of ECPM said: “The UNODC and the countries funding its law enforcement projects in Iran must understand their

responsibility in the execution of hundreds of people every year for drug offences. By continuing this cooperation while the Islamic Republic carries out mass executions, they risk complicity in these crimes. The UNODC must immediately suspend its projects in Iran until all drug-related executions are halted. The implementation of a moratorium on the use of the death penalty for offences that are not among the most serious crimes under international law should be a precondition to any cooperation.”

The year also saw the highest number of recorded *qisas* (retribution-in-kind) executions in more than two decades, with at least 419 individuals executed for murder charges. The brutal and inhumane *qisas* laws not only place the responsibility to choose execution on the shoulders of the murder victim’s family, but as there is no legal cap on *diya* (blood money), more and more defendants are being executed because they cannot afford the increasing sums. This is exemplified by cases such as Abbas Karimi, a father of two who was hanged because his family could not afford the *diya* of over one million euros. In another harrowing instance, Ahmad Alizadeh was hanged for 28 seconds, brought down and resuscitated upon the plaintiff’s request, only to be executed again weeks later.

Iranian authorities continued their crackdown on political dissent, executing at least 10 individuals affiliated with banned opposition groups, including nine Kurdish political prisoners and a political prisoner and dual national abducted from a neighbouring country. All of them were sentenced to death after sham trials by the Revolutionary Courts. Mohammad Ghobadlu and Reza Rasayi, two “Woman, Life, Freedom” protesters were executed for murder charges. Reza Rasayi, a Kurdish protester of Yarsan faith, was sentenced to death based on his torture-tainted confessions and *elm-e-qazi* (knowledge of the judge). More than a dozen “Woman, Life, Freedom” protesters remain at risk of the death penalty.

The execution of women reached a troubling milestone, with at least 31 women put to death—the highest number since IHRNGO began monitoring executions in 2007. Discriminatory laws and societal factors contribute to the vulnerability of women in the framework of the use of the death penalty.

Three women activists Sharifeh Mohammadi, Pakhshan Azizi and Varisheh Moradi, the latter two Kurdish minorities, were sentenced to death for their civil and humanitarian activism and are at risk of execution.

In 2024, as the only country in the world and in absolute violation of its international obligations, the Islamic Republic continued the execution of child offenders. At least one child offender was

executed, with investigations ongoing into the cases of three others. Iran was also one of the few countries worldwide to carry out public executions (four cases).

The Islamic Republic intensified its targeting of Afghan nationals, along with discriminatory policies, executing at least 80 men, triple the number recorded the previous year. IHRNGO also documented executions of people with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities. In 2024, at least five people including protester Mohammad Ghobadlu were executed, again in total contradiction with Iran's international obligations.

In the face of this escalating brutality, both domestic and international opposition to the death penalty have grown. Inside Iran, prisoners initiated the "No Death Penalty Tuesdays" campaign, a protest movement that has garnered global support and lasted over a year.

Commenting on the "No Death Penalty Tuesdays" campaign, IHRNGO Director Mahmood Amiriy-Moghaddam stated, "The 'No Death Penalty Tuesdays' campaign is a turning point in Iran's abolitionist movement. For the first time, a grassroots movement led by prisoners is protesting weekly against all executions, not just those of political prisoners. It marks the beginning of a broader social movement challenging the death penalty in its entirety. The people of Iran, human rights organisations, and the international community must support this movement."

The sharp rise in executions in 2024 highlights the Islamic Republic's deepening dependence on the death penalty to silence dissent and maintain control. With over 8,800 executions since 2010, the authorities persist in using the death penalty as a key instrument of oppression to preserve their grip on power.

In March 2025, at the 58<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission (FFMI) will present its final report on the atrocities committed by the Islamic Republic since the start of the "Woman, Life, Freedom" nationwide protests. The establishment of the FFMI by the UN Human Rights Council was a significant step by the international community to hold Iranian authorities accountable for the grave human rights violations, including the execution of protesters. Impunity and the lack of accountability are amongst the most significant obstacles to improving the human rights situation in Iran. Given the scale of human rights violations in Iran, including the systematic use of the death penalty as a tool of repression, a more permanent international accountability mechanism will be essential in the coming years to hold the Islamic Republic responsible for its crimes. In 2024, the

situation of human rights in Iran was reviewed under the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in the framework of the UN Human Rights Council. Iran received 51 recommendations in relation to the death penalty. The Iranian authorities are required to indicate whether they support these recommendations or only take note by July 2025.

With the publication of this report, IHRNGO and ECPM call on the international community - including the UN Human Rights Council, the UNODC, and governments with diplomatic relations with Iran - to put the death penalty at the top of their agenda in their engagements with Iranian authorities. Consistent international pressure is essential to increase the political cost of executions and curb the Islamic Republic's killing machine.



# SOURCES

There is an increasing lack of transparency on case law and the numbers of sentences and executions in Iran. The number of executions presented in this report is based on official information and documented cases from unofficial sources. It is a minimum and the actual numbers are certainly higher as the Iranian authorities do not announce all the executions implemented. We therefore distinguish between “official” and “unofficial” or “unannounced” executions. Official or announced executions are those announced by the official websites of the Iranian judiciary, the Iranian police, the National Iranian Broadcasting Network, official or state-run news agencies and national or local newspapers. Unofficial or unannounced executions include cases that have not been announced by official sources but have been confirmed by IHRNGO through unofficial channels and communications. These include other human rights NGOs or IHRNGO sources within Iran. The sources of unofficial reports are often eyewitnesses, family members, lawyers, sources within prisons and within the Iranian judiciary (through unofficial communication). Only unofficial reports that have been confirmed by two independent sources have been included.

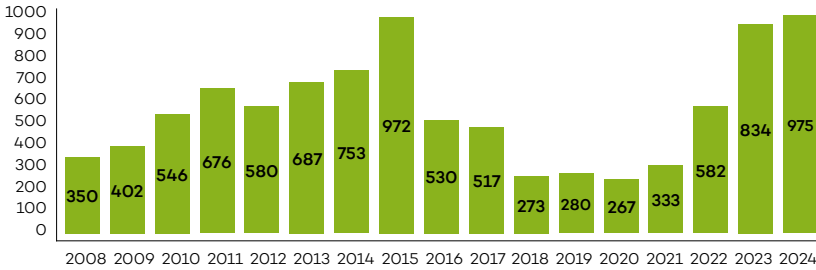
Between 2016 and 2021, an average of 25% of all executions were announced by official Iranian media. This number dropped to 12% in 2022, and 15% in 2023. In 2024, less than 10% of the recorded executions were announced by official sources; the remaining 90% were confirmed by IHRNGO.

Due to the lack of transparency in the Iranian judicial system and the pressure put on families, 39 of the execution reports received by IHRNGO could not be confirmed by two independent sources and have not been included in this report. It is important to note that the charges cited in this report are those issued by the Iranian judiciary. Most of the trials leading to death sentences are unfair according to international standards. The use of torture to force confessions is widespread in Iran. Due to the lack of transparency in the Iranian judiciary, the charges mentioned in this report have not been confirmed by independent sources.

The figures presented in the report do not include extra-judicial killings inside or outside prisons.

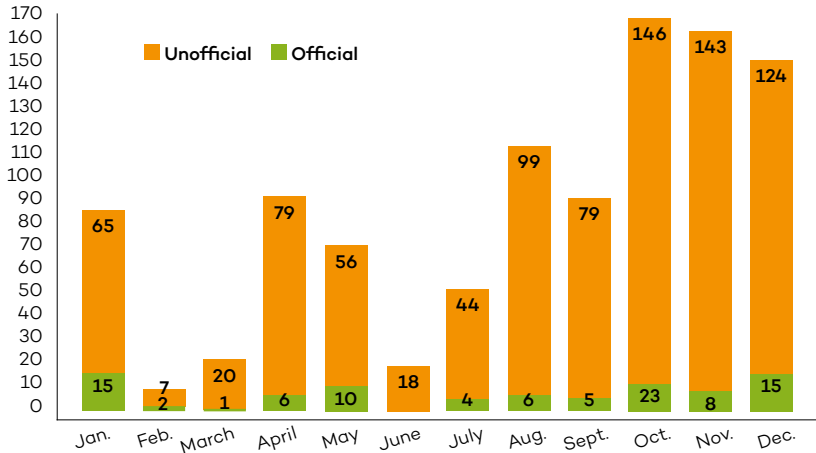
# FACTS AND FIGURES

## EXECUTION TRENDS IN THE LAST 17 YEARS



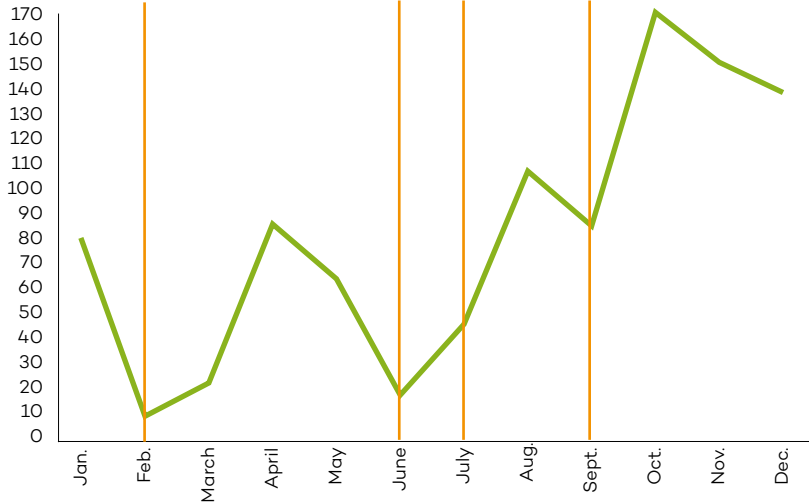
From IHRNGO's first annual report in 2008 to 2024, Iranian authorities have executed at least 9557 people, an average of more than 562 executions per year. The number of executions in 2024 is the highest annual execution number recorded by IHRNGO and is significantly higher than the average in the last 17 years.

## MONTHLY BREAKDOWN OF EXECUTIONS IN 2024



The monthly execution breakdown illustrates a high disparity between the number of officially announced and unannounced executions throughout the year. With 9 and 18 executions respectively, February and June when the Parliamentary and Presidential elections took place, had the lowest number of executions. With 169 executions, October was the bloodiest month in 2024, followed by November and December, with 151 and 139 executions, respectively. 71% of the executions took place in the second half of the year.

## CORRELATION BETWEEN THE NUMBER OF EXECUTIONS AND POLITICAL EVENTS



Although most of those executed are sentenced to death for ordinary crimes, data from IHRNGO's records indicate a meaningful correlation between the timing of the executions and political events. A noticeable decline in executions is observed in February, the weeks ahead of parliamentary elections (1 March 2024), in June before the presidential elections (28 June and 5 July in 2024), as well as cultural and religious days like the Nowruz holidays (21 March–3 April 2024) and the month of Ramadan (11 March–9 April in 2024). In contrast, an execution surge began in August, following the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh on 31 July 2024, and reached its peak in the months after the killing of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah on 27 September. This increase took place as global attention was focused on the growing tension between Iran and Israel and concerns about a possible full-scale war. Both the elections and assassination of Haniyeh and Nasrallah are indicated with vertical lines in the line diagram above.

# THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC'S POWER STRUCTURE AND THE DEATH PENALTY

According to Article 57 of the Iranian Constitution, “the powers of government are vested in the legislative, executive and judicial powers which function under the supervision of the absolute velayate-ol-amr (Supreme Leader) and leadership of the Ummah”. While the article stipulates that these powers, or branches, are independent of each other, this is contradicted in the Constitution and law. In addition, Article 156 of the Iranian Constitution states: “The Judiciary shall be an independent power that protects individual and social rights.” However, Article 157 of the Constitution undermines the impartiality and independence of the judiciary by stating that: “The Head of the Judiciary is directly appointed and supervised by the Supreme Leader,” who under the Constitution is the Head of State and holds the State’s highest political position, exerting significant influence over all branches of government. The Guardian Council, a pivotal body within the Islamic Republic’s political framework, comprises twelve members: six Islamic jurists (*fuqaha*) appointed by the Supreme Leader and six jurists specialising in various areas of law, nominated by the Head of the Judiciary and approved by the Islamic Consultative Assembly (Parliament). This council wields considerable power, including the authority to veto legislation passed by the Parliament and to supervise elections. Notably, the Guardian Council is responsible for approving and disqualifying candidates seeking to run in local, parliamentary, presidential, and Assembly of Experts elections. Consequently, the Supreme Leader maintains ultimate control over the nation’s primary policies and practices, with the Guardian Council serving as a mechanism to ensure that legislation and electoral processes conform to his vision for the Islamic Republic.

This section provides an overview of the authorities and the positions of each in relation to the use of the death penalty.

## THE SUPREME LEADER



As mentioned above, the Supreme Leader of Iran exerts significant **indirect influence** over the implementation of the death penalty through his control over key judicial and governmental institutions. By appointing the Head of the Judiciary and influencing the Guardian Council, he shapes the legal framework

and ensures alignment with his policies. His oversight of security and intelligence forces further strengthens his role in enforcing capital punishment. However, the Supreme Leader also has **direct involvement** in death penalty cases in the following ways:

**Issuing pardons, commuting sentences:** The Supreme Leader has the authority to grant clemency or commute death sentences, often on religious or national occasions, based on recommendations from the Head of the Judiciary.

**Issuing direct fatwas (religious decrees):** As the Islamic Republic's highest religious authority, the Supreme Leader can issue fatwas that justify or mandate executions, particularly in cases of apostasy, blasphemy, or national security threats. These fatwas carry binding legal weight. An example is the mass execution of several thousand political prisoners in the summer of 1988, based on a fatwa issued by then Supreme Leader Ruhollah Khomeini.

**Intervening in high-profile or sensitive cases:** The Supreme Leader can also intervene in politically sensitive cases, either to enforce or halt executions, especially if they have significant domestic or international implications. The sentence of Babak Zanjani, a billionaire convicted of embezzlement and sentenced to death in 2016, was commuted to a 20-year prison term in 2024. The judiciary stated that a clemency request was approved by both the judiciary chief and the Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei.<sup>14</sup>

Ali Khamenei has been the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic since the death of Ruhollah Khomeini in 1989.

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<sup>14</sup> BBC News, Iran commutes billionaire Babak Zanjani's death sentence, 30 April 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-68884549>

## THE JUDICIARY

The Judiciary of the Islamic Republic of Iran plays a central role in issuing and implementing death sentences, operating under the direct influence of the Supreme Leader. Its responsibilities encompass legal proceedings, sentencing, and execution enforcement.

According to the Constitution, the Head of the Judiciary is responsible for “employment of just and worthy judges, their dismissal, appointment, transfer, assignment to particular duties, promotions, and carrying out similar administrative duties, in accordance with the law.”<sup>15</sup>



On 1 July 2021, Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei promoted Gholamhossein Mohseni-Ejei (known as Ejei) to serve as the new Head of Judiciary. Ejei has held several key positions in the Islamic Republic’s security apparatus, including Minister of Intelligence (2005–2009), Attorney

General of Iran (2009–2014), and Deputy Chief of Judiciary (2014–2021). In 2014, he was granted the power to make the final decision in death penalty cases concerning drug-related charges. The following year, in 2015, at least 642 people were executed on drug-related charges, including the Ghezelhesar Prison mass executions<sup>16</sup> on the direct orders of Ejei, setting the record for the highest annual drug executions since the early 1990s. Ejei is also one of the Islamic Republic officials sanctioned in 2010 by both the United States<sup>17</sup> and the European Union<sup>18</sup> for their role in the suppression of the 2009 post-election protests. There has been a dramatic rise in the number of drug-related executions since Ejei’s appointment as the Head of Judiciary. More information on Courts and trials, can be read on page 42.

15 Constitution, Article 158.

16 IHRNGO, Ghezelhesar Mass-Executions Continue: 11 Executions on Wednesday 10 June, 13 June 2015, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/1217/>

17 U.S. Department of the Treasury, New Executive Order Targeting Iranian Officials Responsible For Or Complicit In Serious Human Rights Abuses, 29 September 2010, <https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/pages/tg877.aspx>

18 Parliamentary question, EU sanctions against Iranian officials, E-8192/2010, 1 October 2010, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-7-2010-8192\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-7-2010-8192_EN.html)

## THE LEGISLATURE



The Legislature consists of the Islamic Consultative Assembly (Parliament, composed of 290 representatives, 14 of whom are women), with Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf as its Speaker, and the Council of Guardians, with Ahmad Jannati as its Chairman.

Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf is a former senior commander

in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), Chief of Police (2000–2005), Tehran Mayor (2005–2017) and presidential candidate. He was appointed to the role of Speaker in parliament in 2020.

In November 2024, Iran's parliament enacted the "Hijab and Chastity Bill", officially titled the "Bill to Support the Family by Promoting the Culture of Chastity and Hijab". This legislation imposes stringent penalties, including fines, imprisonment, and, in some cases as stipulated in Article 37 of the Bill, individuals whose actions amount to *efsad-fil-arz* (corruption on earth) could face the death penalty under Article 286 of Iran's Islamic Penal Code. The law has faced significant domestic and international criticism for its restrictive impact on women's rights and personal freedoms.<sup>19</sup> In response to the backlash, on 14 December 2024, Iranian authorities announced a temporary pause in the promulgation of the law to allow for further review and potential amendments.<sup>20</sup> Under international law, State parties to the ICCPR may not transform into a capital offence any offence that, upon ratification of the Covenant or at any time thereafter, did not entail the death penalty.

19 See, for example, Iran: UN experts call for Hijab and Chastity law to be repealed, 13 December 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/12/iran-un-experts-call-hijab-and-chastity-law-be-repealed>; See also, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Dr Mai Sato, Report to the 79th Session of the UNGA, 26 September 2024, A/79/371, <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n24/275/85/pdf/n2427585.pdf>, pp. 9–11, para. 24.

20 IRNA, <https://www.irna.ir/news/85690020>

## THE EXECUTIVE

The government (led by the president) does not have the authority to issue and implement death sentences according to the Iranian Constitution. However, public executions seem to be the exception to this rule. At the local level, the governor representing the government has the power to decide whether an execution should be carried out in public.<sup>21</sup>

Furthermore, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is involved in justifying executions at the international level and engages in bilateral and multilateral dialogue on the situation of the death penalty and the follow-up of individual cases.



Ebrahim Raisi was president of Iran from August 2021 until 19 May 2024, when he died in a helicopter crash. Raisi was previously the Head of Judiciary from 2019 until taking office as president. Raisi also served on a four-person commission, known as the “death commissions”, during the 1988 prison

massacre of political prisoners. Based on an order by the founder and then Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, commissions were formed across the country and were responsible for the execution of several thousand political prisoners in the summer of 1988. The prisoners, many of whom had been tried and were serving their prison terms, went through very short interviews (often just one question) with the death commission, who ruled whether they should be executed or not. In his final report before the end of his mandate as UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Dr Javaid Rehman said that the “atrocious crimes” of summary, arbitrary and extra-judicial executions during 1981-1982 and in 1988 amounted to crimes against humanity of murder and extermination, as well as genocide.<sup>22</sup>

21 <https://www.asrehamoon.ir/news/51511>

22 UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Javaid Rehman, “Atrocious Crimes” and grave violations of human rights committed by the Islamic Republic of Iran (1981-1982 and 1988): Detailed findings, *op. cit.*



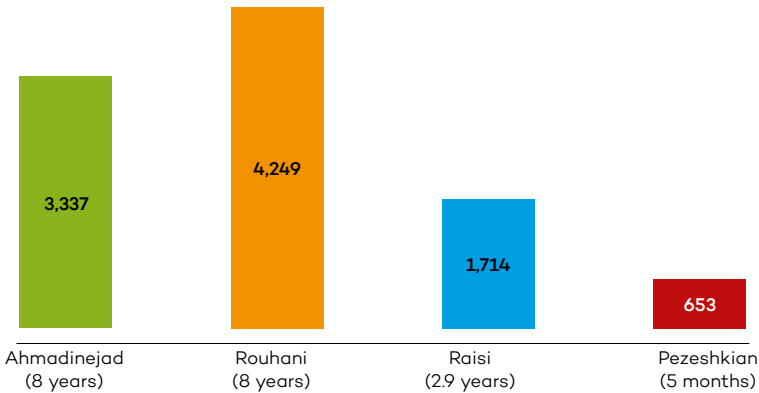


Following the death of President Ebrahim Raisi on 19 May 2024, Iran held a presidential election marked by the lowest voter turnout in the history of the Islamic Republic. Masoud Pezeshkian, a former member of parliament and one of the very few candidates approved by the Guardian

Council, was appointed as the new president.

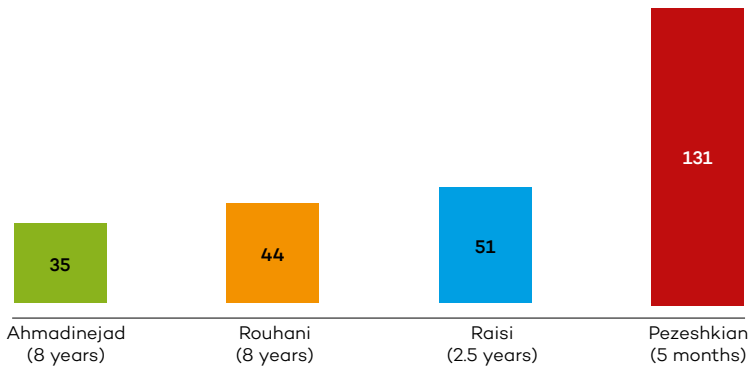
Despite an unprecedented surge in executions during the first six months of Pezeshkian's tenure, he has refrained from publicly criticising or addressing the sharp increase.

## NUMBER OF EXECUTIONS PER PRESIDENTIAL TERM



At least 653 people have been executed since Masoud Pezeshkian took office in July 2024. For comparison, during the less than three years of Ebrahim Raisi's presidency (2021–2024), and the two terms (8 years each) of Presidents Hassan Rouhani (2013–2021) and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (2005–2013), at least 1,714, 4,249, and 3,337 people were executed, respectively.

## AVERAGE MONTHLY EXECUTIONS PER PRESIDENT



A comparison of executions during Pezeshkian's five months in office with those under the previous three presidents – Ahmadinejad, Rouhani, and Raisi – reveals a consistent upward trend in the Islamic Republic's use of the death penalty, regardless of the president in power. However, the increase during the first five months of Pezeshkian's presidency has been particularly dramatic. The average number of monthly executions under Pezeshkian has reached 130 (more than four executions per day), compared to 51 per month during Raisi's tenure, 44 under Rouhani, and 35 under Ahmadinejad. Over the course of all these presidential terms, Iran has maintained a daily execution rate of at least one person.

# LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

## INTERNATIONAL TREATIES

The Islamic Republic of Iran has ratified three international human rights treaties that apply to the death penalty: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in 1975, the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1994, and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2009.

Other applicable treaties which the Islamic Republic of Iran has neither signed nor ratified include: the International Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aimed at the abolition of the death penalty and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Since 2007, a resolution for a universal moratorium on the use of the death penalty has been put to a vote at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) every two years. Through this text, always adopted by a large majority of States, the UN reaffirms that the application of the death penalty violates human dignity and “calls upon all States that still maintain it to establish a moratorium on executions”. As the resolution is not legally binding, it cannot prevent a State from performing an execution or sanction that State. However, a firm call from the UN’s most senior political body carries considerable moral weight and is a precious asset in creating a world without the death penalty.

Since the introduction of the resolution in 2007, the number of voters supporting the resolution has steadily increased to a new record high of 130 in 2024.<sup>23</sup> However, Iran has been voting against the Resolution since 2007. In December 2024, Iran voted against the Resolution once again.

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23 ECPM, Resolution for a universal moratorium on the use of the death penalty, Analysis of the Vote in UNGA Plenary Meeting, December 2024, <https://www.ecpm.org/app/uploads/2024/12/Vote-pleniere-ENG.pdf>

## STATUS OF RATIFICATION BY IRAN OF RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL TREATIES

TREATY DESCRIPTION	TREATY NAME	SIGNATURE DATE	RATIFICATION DATE, ACCESSION [a], SUCCESSION [d] DATE
International Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment	CAT		
Optional Protocol to the International Convention against Torture	OP - CAT		
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights	CCPR	4 Apr 1968	24 Jun 1975
Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty	CCPR-OP2-DP		
International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance	CED		
Interstate communication procedure under the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance	CED, Art.32		
International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	CEDAW		
International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination	CERD	8 Mar 1967	29 Aug 1968
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	CESCR	4 Apr 1968	24 Jun 1975
International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families	CMW		
International Convention on the Rights of the Child	CRC	5 Sep 1991	13 Jul 1994
Optional Protocol to the International Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict	CRC-OP-AC	21 Sep 2010	
Optional Protocol to the International Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography	CRC-OP-SC		26 Sep 2007 (a)
International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	CRPD		23 Oct 2009 (a)

## LIMITATION OF THE DEATH PENALTY TO THE MOST SERIOUS CRIMES

Article 6 of the ICCPR sets out the inherent right to life and emphasises that the death penalty may only be applied for “the most serious crimes.” Article 6(2) of the ICCPR states: “In countries which have not abolished the death penalty, sentence of death may be imposed only for the most serious crimes in accordance with the law in force at the time of the commission of the crime and not contrary to the provisions of the present Covenant and to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. This penalty can only be carried out pursuant to a final judgement rendered by a competent court.”

In its General Comment on Article 6 of the ICCPR, the United Nations Human Rights Committee stated that “The term ‘the most serious crimes’ must be read restrictively and appertain only to crimes of extreme gravity, involving intentional killing. Crimes not resulting directly and intentionally in death, such as attempted murder, corruption and other economic and political crimes, armed robbery, piracy, abduction, drug and sexual offences, although serious in nature, can never serve as the basis, within the framework of Article 6, for the imposition of the death penalty. In the same vein, a limited degree of involvement or of complicity in the commission of even the most serious crimes, such as providing the physical means for the commission of murder, cannot justify the imposition of the death penalty. States parties are under an obligation to review their criminal laws so as to ensure that the death penalty is not imposed for crimes which do not qualify as the most serious crimes. They should also revoke death sentences issued for crimes not qualifying as the most serious crimes and pursue the necessary legal procedures to resentence those convicted for such crimes.”<sup>24</sup>

In a yearly supplement to his quinquennial report on capital punishment, the UN Secretary General reaffirmed this position: “States parties to the Covenant that have not yet abolished the death penalty may only impose it for the ‘most serious crimes’. The Human Rights Committee has expressed the view that this means crimes of particular gravity involving intentional killing. States should remove from national laws any application of the death penalty to crimes not involving intentional killing, such as drug-related offences or terrorism-related crimes not involving intentional killing. The death penalty should especially not be imposed as a sanction for forms of non-violent conduct such

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24 UN Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 36, *op. cit.*, para. 35.

as apostasy, blasphemy, adultery and consensual same-sex relations.”<sup>25</sup>

Although Iran did not formulate any reservation upon ratification of the ICCPR, the death penalty is still imposed for crimes that do not meet the threshold of “the most serious crimes”, in contradiction to the Addendum submitted by Iran following the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in 2020: “It should be noted that the deprivation of life has been considered as a punishment only for the most serious crimes in accordance with Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.”<sup>26</sup>

While it is fundamental to hold perpetrators of crimes such as rape accountable, the death penalty cannot be the answer. This was underlined by former UN High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet: “The main argument being made for the death penalty is for it to deter rape – but in fact there is no evidence that the death penalty deters crime more than other forms of punishment. Evidence shows that the certainty of punishment, rather than its severity, deters crime. In most countries around the world, the key problem is that victims of sexual violence do not have access to justice in the first place – whether due to stigma, fear of reprisals, entrenched gender stereotypes and power imbalances, lack of police and judicial training, laws that condone or excuse certain types of sexual violence or the lack of protection for victims.”<sup>27</sup> This is the case in Iran, where victims of sexual violence do not have access to justice.

## PROHIBITION ON THE DEATH PENALTY APPLIED AS A SANCTION AGAINST A CONDUCT THE VERY CRIMINALISATION OF WHICH VIOLATES THE ICCPR

The UN Human Rights Committee (Committee) also stated that “Under no circumstances can the death penalty ever be applied as a sanction against conduct whose very criminalization violates the Covenant, including adultery, homosexuality, apostasy, establishing

25 Human Rights Council, Capital punishment and the implementation of the safeguards guaranteeing protection of the rights of those facing the death penalty, Yearly supplement of the Secretary-General to his quinquennial report on capital punishment, 28 August 2019, A/HRC/42/28, <https://docs.un.org/A/HRC/42/28>, para. 46.

26 Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, Islamic Republic of Iran, Addendum, Views on conclusions and/or recommendations, voluntary commitments and replies presented by the State under review, 20 February 2020, A/HRC/43/12/Add., <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/43/12/Add.1>

27 UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Press Statement, Rape is a monstrous crime, perpetrators must be held accountable – but death penalty and torture are not the answers – Bachelet, 15 October 2020, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2020/10/rape-monstrous-crime-perpetrators-must-be-held-accountable-death-penalty-and>

political opposition groups, or offending a head of state. States parties that retain the death penalty for such offences commit a violation of their obligations under Article 6 read alone and in conjunction with Article 2, paragraph 2 of the Covenant, as well as of other provisions of the Covenant.”<sup>28</sup>

In Iran, several provisions of national law are clearly in contradiction with Iran’s international obligation under international human rights law (see below).

## PROHIBITION OF TORTURE INCLUDING SEVERAL METHODS OF EXECUTION

Article 7 of the ICCPR bans “[t]orture and cruel, degrading and inhumane punishments.”

The Committee has underlined that State parties that have not abolished the death penalty must respect Article 7 of the ICCPR, which prohibits certain methods of execution, including public executions. The Committee recalled that “criminal convictions resulting in the death penalty that are based on information procured by torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of interrogated persons would violate articles 7 and 14(3)(g) of the Covenant, as well as article 6.”<sup>29</sup> Article 14 provides fair trial and due process and specifically mentions the importance of an impartial judicial system, access to a lawyer and a fair trial, and not compelling individuals to testify against themselves or to confess guilt.

In Iran, in 2024, people were tortured and forced to confess. Criminal convictions are very regularly based on information extracted under torture. Methods of execution include hanging in public.

## PROHIBITION ON THE DEATH PENALTY FOR CHILDREN AND PREGNANT WOMEN<sup>30</sup>

Article 6(5) of ICCPR states: “Sentence of death shall not be imposed for crimes committed by persons below eighteen years of age and shall not be carried out on pregnant women.”

Article 37(a) of the CRC states: “No child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Neither capital punishment nor life imprisonment without possibility

28 UN Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 36, *op. cit.*, para. 36.

29 *Ibid.*, para. 54.

30 Safeguards guaranteeing protection of the rights of those facing the death penalty, Approved by Economic and Social Council resolution 1984/50 of 25 May 1984, [https://www.unodc.org/pdf/criminal\\_justice/Safeguards\\_Guaranteeing\\_Protection\\_of\\_the\\_Rights\\_of\\_those\\_Facing\\_the\\_Death\\_Penalty.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/pdf/criminal_justice/Safeguards_Guaranteeing_Protection_of_the_Rights_of_those_Facing_the_Death_Penalty.pdf)

of release shall be imposed for offences committed by persons below eighteen years of age.”

However, upon ratification, Iran formulated the following reservation: “If the text of the Convention is or becomes incompatible with the domestic laws and Islamic standards at any time or in any case, the Government of the Islamic Republic shall not abide by it.”

In 2024, at least one child offender was executed. Iran also executed at least 31 women, the highest number of women since 2008.

## PROHIBITION ON THE DEATH PENALTY AGAINST PERSONS WITH MENTAL DISABILITIES

In a Resolution adopted by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (the predecessor of the Human Rights Council), States were urged “not to impose the death penalty on a person suffering from any form of mental disorder or to execute any such person.”<sup>31</sup>

## IRANIAN LAW

Chapter III of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran contains provisions related to the rights of the people. Article 22 states: “The dignity, life, property, rights, domicile, and occupations of people may not be violated, unless sanctioned by law.”

Codified laws relating to the death penalty can be found in the 2013 Islamic Penal Code (IPC), as well as the Anti-Narcotics Law and its 2017 Amendment.<sup>32</sup> While murder, drug possession and trafficking, rape/sexual assault, and *baghy* are the most common charges resulting in the death penalty in Iran, the IPC sanctions the death penalty for a wide range of offences, the number of which is amongst the highest in the world.

In addition, there are uncoded laws relating to the death penalty. Article 220 of the IPC states that Article 167 of the Constitution can be invoked by the judge to pronounce *hudud* punishments that the law has not addressed: “The judge is bound to endeavour to judge each case on the basis of the codified law.” In the absence of such laws, the judge must deliver his judgement on the basis of authoritative Islamic sources and authentic *fatwa* that can carry the mandatory death penalty. The judge cannot refrain from admitting and examining cases and delivering his judgement based

31 UN Commission on Human Rights, The Question of the Death Penalty, 25 April 2003, E/CN.4/RES/2003/67, 4(g).

32 ECPM, IHRNGO, The death penalty in law and in practice in Iran (2024), <https://www.ecpm.org/app/uploads/2024/10/Country-factsheet-Iran-2024.pdf&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1737993520374474&usg=AOvVaw16o9zESne1wLKWBrd2pKKS>



on the lack or deficiency of the law in the matter, or its brevity or contradictory nature.

It is important to note that the majority of charges punishable by death in the Islamic Republic cannot be considered “the most serious crimes” and do not meet the aforementioned ICCPR standards.

## ISLAMIC PENAL CODE AND CAPITAL OFFENCES

The current Islamic Penal Code (IPC) came into force in 2013. Section Two sets out four types of punishments, three of which relate to the death penalty: *hadd*, *qisas* and *ta'zir*.

**Hadd (pl. hudud):** fixed punishments for which *Sharia* or Islamic law has fixed the measure, degree and method. They can be divided into three subcategories:

- **Sexual offences:** incest, rape, *zina* (adultery), *lavat* (sodomy or consensual homosexual penetrative sex), *tafkhez* (intercrural sex) where the “active party” is non-Muslim and the “passive party” is Muslim.
- **Offences against the State and religion:** *efsad-fil-arz* (corruption on earth), *moharebeh* (enmity against God), *baghy* (armed rebellion), *sabot-nabi* (insulting the prophet) and *ertedad* (apostasy).
- **Repeat offences on the fourth occasion:** theft, adultery, sodomy, *mosahegheh* (lesbian sex), intercrural sex, pimping, insulting the prophet, alcohol consumption, *qadf* (false accusation of sodomy or adultery), *moharebeh*, *efsad-fil-arz* and *baghy*.

**Qisas:** retribution-in-kind for “intentional murder”, which due to a lack of grading and disregard for intent or circumstances, includes both intentional and unintentional killings.

**Ta'zir:** punishment for offences at the discretion of the judge.

## HADD

### SEXUAL OFFENCES

#### INCEST, SEX BETWEEN A NON-MUSLIM MAN AND A MUSLIM WOMAN AND RAPE

According to Article 224 of the IPC: “A death sentence shall be imposed on the male party in cases of incest, fornication with their stepmother, fornication of a non-Muslim man with a Muslim woman and fornication by force or reluctance. The punishment for the female party shall be decided by other provisions concerning fornication.”

## ADULTERY AND EXTRAMARITAL SEX

Article 221 of the IPC defines *Zena* as extramarital sex (defined as vaginal and anal sex between a man and a woman in Note 1 to the Article). *zena* is punishable by death in the following cases: *zena* with a *mahram* blood relative, *zena* with the wife of a father (stepmother), *zena* between a non-Muslim man and a Muslim woman, rape or force (Article 224). Article 225 sets the punishment for *zenaye mohseneh* (adultery) for both men and women as stoning but provides the courts with the option to impose the death sentence by alternative means “if it is not possible to perform stoning” upon approval from the Head of Judiciary.

## SAME-SEX RELATIONS

### LAVAT

Article 233 of the IPC defines *lavat* (sodomy) as male sexual intercourse and Article 234 sets out its punishments. In male homosexual relations, the law distinguishes between what it describes as the “active party” and “passive party.” The death penalty is imposed on the “active party” if he is married or it is rape, but the “passive party” receives the death penalty regardless of their marital status. According to Note 1 to Article 234, a non-Muslim “active party” in a sexual act with a Muslim party shall also receive the death penalty.

### TAFKHIZ

*Tafkhiz* (intercrural/thigh sex) is defined in Article 235 and according to Article 236, the punishment for both parties is 100 lashes. However, the Note to the Article stipulates that the “active party” shall receive the death penalty if he is non-Muslim and the “passive party” is Muslim.

### MOSAHEGHEH

Defined in Article 238, in cases of *mosahegheh* (lesbian sex), no distinction is made in punishments set for the “active” or “passive” parties, their religion, marital status or consent (Article 240). Article 239 sets out the punishment for *mosahegheh* as 100 lashes. However, as it is a *hadd* crime, it is punishable by death on the fourth occasion if “offenders” are sentenced and receive the lashing punishment on the first three occasions. This has not been specifically stated in law but can be inferred from the provisions of Article 136 of the IPC on “Repeat Offences” (see below).

In June 2019, when asked by a journalist why homosexuals are executed based on their sexual orientation, then Iranian Foreign

Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif responded: “Our society has moral principles. And we live according to these principles. These are moral principles concerning the behaviour of people in general. And that means that the law is respected, and the law is obeyed.” According to some human rights activists, many people have been executed based on charges of homosexuality since the 1979 revolution.<sup>33</sup>

## REPEAT OFFENCES

Article 136 stipulates that repeat offenders who commit an offence punishable by *hadd*, and who are punished on the first three occasions, shall be sentenced to death on the fourth occasion without providing a complete list of *hudud* offences. Article 278 sanctions the death penalty for theft on the fourth occasion and Articles 220-288 define *hudud* offences as: incest and adultery, *lavat*, *tafkhez*, *mosahegheh*, pimping, *sabol-nabi*, theft, alcohol consumption, *qadf* (false accusations of *lavat* or adultery), *moharebeh*, *efsad-fil-arz* and *baghy*.

## OFFENCES AGAINST THE STATE AND RELIGION

### MOHAREBEH

Article 279 of the IPC defines *moharebeh* (enmity against God) as: “drawing a weapon on the life, property or honour of the public or causing them terror, in a way that creates an environment of insecurity.” When a person draws a weapon on one or several specific individuals with personal motives, but their action does not have a public element, and also a person who draws a weapon on the public but does not create an atmosphere of insecurity due to their incompetence, they shall not be considered a *mohareb* (person who commits *moharebeh*). Article 281 of the IPC stipulates that “bandits, robbers and smugglers who resort to arms and disrupt the security of the public and roads, shall be considered *mohareb*.”

Article 282 of the IPC sanctions the death penalty in cases of *moharebeh*. However, power is granted to judges to impose the alternative punishments of crucifixion, amputation of the right hand and left foot, or domestic exile away from the defendant’s hometown.

Under the previous IPC, which was in force until 2013, the charge of *moharebeh* was frequently used against political dissidents and

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33 See, for example, Monash University, State-Sanctioned Killing of Sexual Minorities: Looking Beyond the Death Penalty, 4 March 2021, [https://bridges.monash.edu/articles/report/State-Sanctioned\\_Killing\\_of\\_Sexual\\_Minorities\\_Looking\\_Beyond\\_the\\_Death\\_Penalty/14069318](https://bridges.monash.edu/articles/report/State-Sanctioned_Killing_of_Sexual_Minorities_Looking_Beyond_the_Death_Penalty/14069318)

people with connections to opposition groups abroad, regardless of whether they had personally used violence. The current IPC provides for their punishment under *efsad-fil-arz* and *baghy*.

### *EFSAD-FIL-ARZ*

Article 286 of the IPC defines *efsad-fil-arz* (corruption on earth) as a crime committed by a person who, “on an extensive level against the physical integrity of others, domestic or external security, spreads lies, disrupts the national economic system, undertakes arson and destruction, disseminates poisonous, microbiological and dangerous substances, establishes corruption and prostitution centres or assists in establishing them.”

However, this article does not provide concrete definitions for the term “*crime*” and the scope of “*extensive*” for its purpose, giving judges more power to interpret the law at their own discretion.

### *BAGHY*

Article 287 of the IPC defines members of any group that stage armed rebellion against the Islamic Republic of Iran as “*baghy*” (one who carries out *baghy* or armed rebellion), and that its members shall be sentenced to death on charges of *baghy* should they have used weapons. Due to its definition, *baghy* charges are predominantly used against members of dissident groups.

### *OTHER RELIGIOUS “OFFENCES”*

Article 262 of the IPC sanctions the death penalty for cursing the Prophet of Islam or any of the other great prophets (blasphemy), and for accusing the infallible imams and the Prophet Mohammad’s daughter, Fatima Zahra, of sodomy or adultery. Apostasy, sorcery, witchcraft and other such issues have not been explicitly addressed in the current IPC, although there is a reference to apostasy in Article 26. Under *Sharia* law, the punishment for apostasy is death, which a judge can impose by invoking Article 167 of the Constitution.

### *QISAS*

*Qisas* means retribution-in-kind for a physical harm caused, which includes both injuries and death (the concept of “an eye for an eye”).<sup>34</sup> A *qisas* death sentence takes away the offender’s life in retribution

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<sup>34</sup> For example, protester Mehdi Mousavian was sentenced to be blinded for allegedly throwing a stone that blinded a police officer. See IHRNGO, IHRNGO Calls for International Action to Stop Eye for an Eye Sentence of Protester Mehdi Mousavian, 22 January 2024, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/6519/>

for having committed murder. However, the law provides immunity from *qisas* for the following individuals:

- The father and paternal grandfather of the victim (Article 301).
- A man who kills his wife and/or her lover in the act of adultery (Article 302).
- Muslims, followers of recognised religions, and “*protected persons*” who kill followers of unrecognised religions or “*unprotected persons*” (Article 310).
- Killing a person who has committed a *hadd* offence punishable by death (Article 302).
- Killing a rapist (Article 302).

The law indirectly encourages arbitrary killings by private individuals. Experts believe, for instance, that Articles 301 and 302 might be contributing to the increased number of honour killings in Iran. In practice, men who murder their wives are exempted from *qisas* more than vice versa. In 2023, a man who had murdered his wife on suspicion of having an affair based on text messages, was granted immunity from *qisas* after presenting the evidence to a court in Tehran.<sup>35</sup> The law also discriminates against followers of “unrecognised” religions. Article 301 states: “*Qisas* shall be established [...] if the victim is sane and has the same religion as the culprit. Note: If the victim is Muslim, the non-Muslim status of the culprit shall not prevent *qisas*.” This includes in particular members of the Baha’i faith, which is not recognised as a religion according to Iranian law. If a Baha’i is murdered, the family does not receive *diyya* (blood money), and the offender is exempted from *qisas*. In 2013, there were two reported Baha’i murder cases. On 23 April 2013, Saeedollah Aqdasi was murdered in his house in Miandoab (Northwestern Iran) and Ataollah Rezvani was shot in Bandar Abbas (Southern Iran) on 24 August 2013. In both cases, there was never any investigation and nobody was ever held accountable for their murders.

## TA’ZIR

Punishment for offences at the discretion of the judge.

35 <https://www.hamshahronline.ir/news/797753/>-ز-نم-حلال-بود- /  
مرد-همسر-کش-از-قصاص-ر-هایی-یافت-خون-ز-نم-حلال-بود- /  
ارائه-مستندات

## ANTI-NARCOTICS LAW

Following the 1979 revolution, the “Legal Bill to Intensify Punishments for Perpetrators of Drug Crimes and Preventive and Medical Measures” was passed into law on 9 June 1980. For the first time, the death penalty was introduced for a range of drug-related offences, including being in possession of or carrying as little as 5 grams, growing, producing, selling, attempted-sale and providing the premises for use of narcotics.<sup>36</sup> An Amendment passed on 25 October 1988 provided a more detailed breakdown of offences for each drug type and its Article 9 introduced public execution in the defendant’s place of residence if their offences amounted to *efsad-fil-arz* (corruption on earth).<sup>37</sup> Subsequent Amendments were added in 1997 and 2010 which were aimed at counteracting Iran’s growing drug problem by expanding the scope of the law and introducing harsher sentences. The 2010 Amendment introduced the death penalty for the possession of as little as 30 grams of heroin and included new categories of drugs. Altogether, the Anti-Narcotics Law, including the 1997 and 2010 Amendments, imposed the death penalty for 17 drug-related offences, including: a fourth conviction for offences in several instances; planting opium poppies, coca plants or cannabis seeds with the intent to produce drugs; smuggling more than 5 kilograms of opium or cannabis into Iran; buying, possessing, carrying or hiding more than 5 kilograms of opium and the other aforementioned drugs (punishable upon a third conviction); smuggling into Iran, dealing, producing, distributing and exporting more than 30 grams of heroin, morphine, cocaine or their derivatives.

The 2017 Amendment introduced a mechanism to limit the use of the death penalty and commute the sentences of those on death row to life imprisonment. The Amendment increased the minimum amounts of illegal drugs that would subject convicted producers and distributors to a death sentence, raising the level of synthetic substances, such as heroin, cocaine and amphetamines, from 30 grams to 2 kilograms and that of natural substances, such as opium and cannabis, from 5 kilograms to 50 kilograms (Article 45(d)). The punishment for those already sentenced to death or life imprisonment for drug-related offences would be commuted to a maximum of 30 years’ imprisonment and a fine. It restricted the death penalty for those convicted of carrying (not only using) weapons, acting as the ringleader, providing financial support, or using minors below the age of 18 or the mentally ill

36 <https://qavanin.ir/Law/PrintText/118572>

37 <https://qavanin.ir/Law/TreeText/84416>

in a drug crime; and to those previously sentenced to death, life imprisonment, or imprisonment for more than 15 years for related crimes. A complete analysis of the 2017 Amendment to the Anti-Narcotics Law is available in the *2017 Annual Report on the Death Penalty in Iran*.<sup>38</sup>

**The 2017 Amendment created hope that it would eventually lead to a complete halt in drug-related executions. And while it did lead to a decline in male drug executions and a complete drop in female executions until 2021, the outcome was not guaranteed. Since 2021, the 2017 Amendment has been reversed in practice, with drug-related executions rising from an average of 26 per year between 2018-2020 to at least 503 in 2024.**

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38 IHRNGO and ECPM, *Annual Report on the Death Penalty in Iran*, 2017, <https://iranhr.net/en/reports/19/>

# PROCEDURES

The ICCPR, which Iran has ratified, promotes the rule of law and underlines equal legal rights for all individuals regardless of sex, ethnicity, opinion or belief, and bans many forms of discrimination. Article 14 specifically underlines the importance of an impartial judicial system, access to a lawyer and a fair trial, and not compelling individuals to testify against themselves or to confess guilt. However, the lack of due process in Iran is probably the biggest obstacle to significant improvements in the human rights situation in general, and the situation of the death penalty in particular. The lack of an impartial judiciary and inequality before the law are the most important structural reasons for the lack of due process in Iran. The Head of Judiciary is directly selected by the country's highest political authority, the Supreme Leader, and must report to him. The Chief of the Supreme Court and all judges are selected by the Head of Judiciary based on their ideological affiliation and political background, making the judiciary a political wing that is neither impartial nor independent. Citizens are not equal before the law; men have more rights than women, Muslims have more rights than non-Muslims, and *Shia* Muslims have more rights than *Sunni* Muslims. In this section, we briefly address the typical legal procedures from arrest to a death sentence. Due to the arbitrary nature of the judicial system, not all the procedures are followed in every death penalty case. A broader and deeper discussion on the legal procedures and due process in Iran is beyond the scope of this report and can be found elsewhere.<sup>39</sup>

## FROM ARREST TO PROOF OF GUILT ACCESS TO A LAWYER

Article 35 of the Iranian Constitution grants defendants access to legal representation. The 2013 Code of Criminal Procedure (CCP) and its 2015 amendments provide for a suspect's right to access a lawyer in the pre-trial phase.<sup>40</sup> Article 48 of the CCP states: "When a suspect is arrested, they can request the presence of a lawyer. The lawyer, observing the secret nature of the investigation and the negotiations between the parties, should meet with the suspect. At

39 See, for example, The Foreign Policy Centre, Iran Human Rights Review: Due Process, 2017, <https://fpc.org.uk/publications/ihrdueprocess/>

40 Iran Human Rights Documentation Centre, Amendments to the Islamic Republic of Iran's Code of Criminal Procedure, Part 1, 2015, <https://iranhrdc.org/amendments-to-the-islamic-republic-of-irans-code-of-criminal-procedure-part-1/>



the end of the meeting, which should not last more than one hour, the lawyer may submit their written notes to be included in the case file.” However, a Note added in the final draft places limitations on the suspect’s right to choose a lawyer. The amended Note states: “In cases of crimes against internal or external security, and in cases involving organised crime, where Article 302 of this code is applicable, during the investigation phase, the parties to the dispute are to select their attorneys from a list approved by the Head of Judiciary. The names of the approved attorneys will be announced by the Head of Judiciary.” The Note effectively states that in serious criminal cases and those involving security charges, during the pre-trial investigation phase, defendants may only select lawyers from a list approved by the Head of Judiciary. In June 2018, the judiciary announced a list of 20 lawyers approved to defend citizens facing security charges.<sup>41</sup> Following objections from lawyers,<sup>42</sup> the Iranian Parliament’s Judiciary Committee put forward a proposal to change the law. The proposed bill removes the phrase “to select their lawyers from a list approved by the Head of Judiciary.” However, it imposes new limitations, including the possibility of limiting the right to access legal counsel for 20 days (which can be extended by order of the judge for an indefinite period) for defendants subject to Article 302 of the CCP. Several lawyers expressed their concern regarding this limitation. Some of these concerns were published in interviews with the IHRNGO bi-weekly Farsi law journal, *Hoghooghe ma* (“Our Rights”).<sup>43</sup> In practice, regardless of the charges, none of the people sentenced to death about whom IHRNGO has acquired information had access to a lawyer in the initial (pre-trial) phase following their arrest. All death penalty protesters IHRNGO has obtained information about were also deprived of access to their lawyers during legal proceedings until public and international pressure was exerted on the case. In January 2023, a resolution adopted in the European Parliament expressed “grave concerns about detainees” inability to access legal representation during interrogations.”<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, there has been a systematic judicial crackdown on lawyers representing clients with political charges. Lawyers continue to face arrests, summons, charges or convictions for carrying out their professional duties. Worryingly, lawyers are being banned from

41 Radio Free Europe, Lowering The Bar: Tehran “White List” Excludes Most Lawyers From Politically Charged Cases, 6 June 2018, <https://www.rferl.org/a/lowering-the-bar-tehran-white-list-excludes-most-lawyers-from-politically-charged-cases/29276192.html>

42 <https://iranhr.net/media/files/HoghoheMa-No79.pdf>

43 <https://iranhr.net/media/files/101.pdf> and <https://iranhr.net/media/files/160.pdf>

44 European Parliament resolution of 19 January 2023 on the EU response to the protests and executions in Iran, 2023/2511(RSP), [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2023-0016\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2023-0016_EN.html)

speaking about their cases as additional punishment even where custodial sentences are overturned.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, in June 2023, Iranian Parliament approved the “Request to Investigate the Operations of Bar Associations and their Union Bill” which grants authority to “review the legal qualification” of lawyers who are already members of the bar. This effectively gives authorities the power to disbar lawyers for political purposes. In August 2023, lawyers protested against the Bill in several provinces, with an appeal filed with the Guardians Council by the Iranian Bar Association.<sup>46</sup>

In his February 2024 report, Javaid Rehman, former UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, called on the government to “ensure that all persons accused of any crime have the right to a fair trial and due process, fully in accordance with article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, including access to a lawyer of their choosing during all stages of the judicial process.”<sup>47</sup>

## TORTURE IN DETENTION

Article 38 of the Iranian Constitution bans all forms of torture and forced confessions. However, reports gathered by IHRNGO and other human rights organisations throughout the years indicate that torture is widely used against suspects after their arrest and in the pre-trial phase in order to extract a confession. In the nationwide protests following the state killing of Jina (Mahsa) Amini, IHRNGO concluded that physical torture, sexual assault and rape were not merely isolated incidents but were systematically used against protesters to force false self-incriminating confessions.<sup>48</sup>

Furthermore, all death row prisoners IHRNGO has been in contact with have testified that they were subjected to torture in order to confess to the crime they were charged with. This is not limited only to those facing political or security-related charges. Almost all prisoners who were arrested for drug-related offences were kept in solitary confinement and subjected to physical and psychological torture in the investigation phase following their arrest, while being

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45 See IHRNGO, Iran Human Rights Defenders 2023, [https://iranhr.net/media/files/HRD\\_2023\\_Eng\\_Final.pdf](https://iranhr.net/media/files/HRD_2023_Eng_Final.pdf)

46 Radio Free Europe, Iranian Bar Associations Protest Government Moves They Say Will Erode Their Power, <https://www.rferl.org/a/iran-lawyers-bar-associations-protest/32565060.html>

47 UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Javaid Rehman, Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, 9 February 2024, A/HRC/55/62, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/country-reports/ahrc5562-situation-human-rights-islamic-republic-iran-report-special>

48 IHRNGO, List of 109 Protesters at Risk of Execution, Death Penalty Charges or Sentences; At Least 481 Protesters Killed, 9 January 2023, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/5687/>

denied access to a lawyer. In many cases, confessions extracted in detention are the only evidence available for the judges to base their verdict on. Torture is also used in other criminal cases involving rape or murder where there is insufficient evidence against the suspect. Death row prisoners who have received lashing sentences also face torture prior to being executed. IHRNGO dedicated an issue of its legal bi-weekly magazine, *Hoghooghe ma*, to the subject of torture.<sup>49</sup>

In a resolution adopted on 19 January 2023, the EU Parliament condemned “in the strongest terms the systematic use of torture, including sexual violence as a weapon, in Iranian prisons” and called “for the immediate cessation of all forms of torture and ill-treatment of all detainees.” It called on the Iranian regime “to treat prisoners with the respect due to their inherent dignity and value as human beings; reiterates its call on Iran to ratify without delay the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and to act in full accordance with the provisions contained therein.”<sup>50</sup>

In his report to the 55<sup>th</sup> UN Human Rights Council session in February 2024, Javid Rehman, former UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, called on Iran authorities to “[e]nsure that prisoners and detainees are protected from all forms of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, ensure that confessions obtained through torture or ill-treatment are never admitted as evidence in court, establish mechanisms for investigating claims of torture and deaths in detention, consistent with international standards, and ratify the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.”<sup>51</sup>

## COURTS AND TRIALS

Of the death penalty charges most commonly leading to execution, the security-related charges of *moharebeh*, *efsad-fil-arz*, *baghy* and drug-related offences fall under the jurisdiction of the Revolutionary Courts,<sup>52</sup> while other criminal charges, such as murder and rape, are tried by the Criminal Courts. Appeals of judgements delivered by

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49 <https://iranhr.net/media/files/140.pdf>

50 European Parliament resolution of 19 January 2023 on the EU response to the protests and executions in Iran, op. cit.

51 UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Javid Rehman, Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, 2024, <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/55/62>, op. cit.

52 Article 297 and Article 303 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

the Revolutionary Courts and the Criminal Courts are heard before the Supreme Court. It should be noted that military courts also have jurisdiction over death penalty charges which are restricted to times of war according to the Code of Criminal Procedure for Armed Forces Offences and Electronic Proceedings.<sup>53</sup> However, the death penalty cases related to military and IRGC forces recorded by IHRNGO, were all heard before the Criminal and Revolutionary Courts.

## REVOLUTIONARY COURTS

Established in 1979 on the orders of Ayatollah Khomeini, without any constitutional basis, to try former officials of the Pahlavi government, Iran's Revolutionary Courts have continued to operate ever since. They are responsible for issuing heavy sentences to human rights defenders, journalists, dissidents, protesters and all those criticising the authorities. Additionally, they are responsible for the vast majority of all death sentences issued in the last 46 years.<sup>54</sup> The Revolutionary Courts are not transparent, and its judges are known for greater abuse of their legal powers than any other judges.<sup>55</sup>

Revolutionary Court judges routinely deny lawyers access to individuals who are subjected to extensive interrogations under severe conditions. Former UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ahmed Shaheed, interviewed 133 people facing trial in the country for a 2014 report focused on Iran's judicial system.<sup>56</sup> According to the report:

- 45% of those interviewed reported that they were not permitted to present a defence.
- In 43% of cases, trials lasted only a few minutes.
- 70% of interviewees reported that coerced information or confessions had been reportedly used by the judge or made up at least part of the evidence presented by the prosecution; some 65% of interviewees reported that the judge displayed signs of bias, such as by reproaching or interrogating defendants and limiting their ability to speak and present a defence.<sup>57</sup>

53 <https://rc.majlis.ir/fa/law/show/913396>

54 The Globe Post, Iran's Revolutionary Courts: 38 Years of Unfair Trials and Arbitrary Executions, 23 February 2018, <https://www.theglobepost.com/2018/02/22/iran-revolutionary-courts/>

55 The Guardian, Six judges accused of leading role in Iranian crackdown on free speech, 31 July 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jul/31/six-judges-iran-crackdown-journalists-activists>

56 Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, 18 March 2014, A/HRC/25/61, <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/25/61>. This was the only research of this kind by the Special Rapporteur on the revolutionary courts.

57 *Ibid.*

A resolution presented to the European Parliament in 2019 states that Iranian courts regularly fail to ensure fair trials, with denial of access to legal counsel and denial of visits by representatives from consulates, the UN or humanitarian organisations, and allow the use of confessions obtained under torture as evidence; whereas there are no independent mechanisms for ensuring accountability within the judiciary, and serious concerns remain over the politicisation of judges, particularly those presiding over Revolutionary Courts.<sup>58</sup>

In a series of interviews with *Hoghooghe ma*,<sup>59</sup> several prominent Iranian lawyers and jurists in the country questioned the constitutionality of Iran's Revolutionary Courts and called for their dissolution.<sup>60</sup> The Courts have also faced strong criticism<sup>61</sup> for the group show-trials of protesters.<sup>62</sup>

All cases regarded as security-related, such as cases involving protesters and political prisoners and those allegedly involved in corruption, armed robbery and drug offences, are processed by the Revolutionary Courts.

In his 2024 report, Javaid Rehman, former Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, expressed extreme concern at the “continuing operation of the revolutionary courts”, and called on the Iranian authorities to “undertake reforms to ensure the complete independence of the judiciary, including through the dissolution of the revolutionary courts”.<sup>63</sup>

## METHODS OF PROVING GUILT

Confessions are the most common way of proving guilt in death penalty cases. As above-mentioned, confessions are often extracted under torture. In cases involving security-related charges, predominantly used against political dissidents, confessions are televised prior to any legal proceedings taking place. As well as being tortured to make self-incriminating confessions, defendants are also forced to testify against each other. This has been particularly prevalent in the current death row protester cases. Eyewitness

58 European Parliament resolution of 19 December 2019 on the violent crackdown on the recent protests in Iran, 2019/2993(RSP), [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2019-0112\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2019-0112_EN.pdf)

59 <https://iranhr.net/media/files/93.pdf>

60 <https://iranhr.net/fa/journals/57/>

61 <https://iranhr.net/fa/journals/191/>

62 IHRNGO, Iran Protests: at Least 342 People Including 43 Children Killed/5 Protesters Sentenced to Death, 16 November 2022, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/5589/>

63 UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Javaid Rehman, Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, 2024, *op. cit.*

testimony is another way of proving guilt, but the witnesses may only be two men, as a woman's testimony is valued as half that of a man. Witness testimonies are also used to prove guilt in the absence of a confession. In addition, according to the IPC, when there is no confession or witness testimony in a case, the judge can make a decision based on his exclusive opinion, without any reference to laws and codes.<sup>64</sup> This is known as *elm-e-qazi* or “knowledge of the judge.”<sup>65</sup> The law requires that rulings based on a judge’s “knowledge” derive from evidence, including circumstantial evidence, and not merely personal belief that the defendant is guilty of the offence.<sup>66</sup> However, there have been cases where *elm-e-qazi* has been arbitrarily applied. For instance, in December 2007, Makwan Moloudzadeh was executed for sodomy charges based on the “knowledge of the judge”.<sup>67</sup> “Woman, Life, Freedom” protester Reza Rasayi, who was executed in 2024, was sentenced to *qisas* for murder based on *elm-e-qazi* by the Criminal Court.<sup>68</sup>

*Qassameh*, or a sworn oath is another way to prove guilt of a crime (murder or injury) in Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) which is practised in Iran.<sup>69</sup> Where there is insufficient evidence in cases of *qisas*, but the judge still has doubt, either because he believes the victim to be guilty or due to circumstantial evidence, he can declare *los*. In such an event, the victim or victim’s next of kin have the right to *qassameh*. *Qassameh* is based on swearing an oath on the Quran by a certain number of the victim’s family. In murder cases, 50 male members of the victim’s family are required to make a *qassameh*. It is important to note that the people who swear in *qassameh* ceremonies are not required to be, and are not usually direct witnesses to the crime. Younes Akhtar who was executed in 2024, was sentenced to death based on both *qassameh* and *elm-e-qazi*.<sup>70</sup>

In 2018 and 2021, IHRNGO dedicated two issues of its legal magazine, *Hoghooghe ma*, to *qassameh*, interviewing lawyers and religious scholars on the issue.<sup>71</sup> Since then, there has been increasing debate

64 The Foreign Policy Centre, *Iran Human Rights Review: Due Process*, 2017, *op. cit.*

65 A. Asghari, S.A. Ashgar Mosavi Rokni, “Changes in Personal Knowledge of the Judge with Emphasis on Islamic Punishment Law”, *International Journal of Social Sciences and Education*, Volume 5, Issue 2, 2015 <https://docs.google.com/viewer?url=http%3A%2F%2Fijss.com%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2Fissues%2F2015%2Fv5i2%2FPaper-22.pdf>

66 New Islamic Penal Code, Article 211.

67 IHRNGO, Makwan Moloudzadeh, was executed yesterday for a “crime” he allegedly committed when he was 13 years old, 6 December 2007, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/57/>

68 IHRNGO, Protester Reza Rasayi at Imminent Risk of Execution; 23 Executions Recorded in 5 Days, 26 April 2024, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/6663/>

69 New Islamic Penal Code, Articles 313 and 336.

70 IHRNGO, Younes Akhtar Hanged Based on Qassameh and Elme-qazi Sentence and Inability to Pay Blood Money, 16 October 2024 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7011/>

71 IHRNGO, *Hoghooghe ma*, Issue 75, 15 March 2018, [https://iranhr.net/media/files/No\\_75.pdf](https://iranhr.net/media/files/No_75.pdf); and Issue 155, 15 September 2021, <https://iranhr.net/media/files/155.pdf>

around the issue of *qassameh* inside Iran<sup>72</sup> and in the Farsi media outside the country.<sup>73</sup>

In November 2023, in its concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the UN Human Rights Committee expressed concern about “the low standards of evidence required for conviction (*Qassameh* – sworn oath)” in death penalty cases.<sup>74</sup>

## FORCED TELEVISED CONFESSIONS



Forced televised confessions of some of those executed in 2024. Top left to right: Jamshid Sharmahd and Reza Rasayi. Middle left to right: Mohammad Faramarzi and Vafa Azarbar. Bottom left to right: Mohsen Mazloum and Pejman Fatehi.

72 Tabnak, 15 September 2018, <https://www.tabnak.ir/fa/news/833747/-قاسمه-چيست-و-شر-ايضان-چگونه-است>

73 BBC News, <http://www.bbc.com/persian/iran-43185108>

74 UN Human Rights Committee, Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 23 November 2023, CCPR/C/IRN/CO/4, <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g23/232/11/pdf/g2323211.pdf>

The Islamic Republic has used televised confessions as a propaganda tool aimed at creating fear and justifying the heavy sentences handed down to its political opponents and activists since its inception in 1979. Such confessions are extracted after physical and/or psychological torture, lengthy solitary confinement, threats or promises of reduction in the gravity of sentences and threats against family members. The confessions are often aired after arrest, following public protests to a sentence, or immediately prior to or after the execution as a means of reducing backlash. Airing the forced confessions before trial is a clear violation of the defendants' right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty and fair trial rights.

Of the political prisoners executed in 2024, the torture-tainted confessions of dual-national Jamshid Sharmahd and Kurdish political prisoners Mohsen Mazloun, Pejman Fatehi, Vafa Azarbar, and Hajir Faramarzi were aired on state media prior to the commencement of legal proceedings.

At trial, not only are forced confessions used as evidence of guilt, but under threats and coercion, the defendants are often forced to repeat the false accounts in court. Once the defendant has been found guilty, their forced confessions are again used as a propaganda tool to justify their death sentences. Forced confessions are also aired post-execution to justify the inhumane punishment of death. This was the case for protester Reza Rasayi. On 19 January 2023, the EU Parliament adopted a resolution in which it strongly condemned “the Islamic Republic’s policy of forcing confessions using torture, intimidation, threats against family members or other forms of duress, and the use of these forced confessions to convict and sentence protesters.”<sup>75</sup>

## DEATH PENALTY IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

Those who receive a death sentence are held on death row in prison. It might take years, months or sometimes weeks from receiving the final verdict to the implementation of the death sentence. All death sentences must be approved by the Supreme Court, whose Chief is appointed by the Head of Judiciary. In addition, the Head of Judiciary must *estizan* (authorise) all *qisas* executions prior to implementation.

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<sup>75</sup> European Parliament resolution of 19 January 2023 on the EU response to the protests and executions in Iran, *op. cit.*



According to Iranian law, the defendant's lawyer must be informed of the scheduled execution 48 hours prior to its implementation.<sup>76</sup> However, this is not always the case in practice, especially in political and security-related cases. Prisoners are transferred to solitary confinement several days prior to their execution, where their hands are cuffed. Prisoners are normally granted a last visit with their family the day before the scheduled execution. In 2018, IHRNGO published a short report based on witness interviews about death-row conditions and the prisoners' last hours.<sup>77</sup> Child offender Arman Abdolali, who was taken to the gallows seven times prior to his execution on 24 November 2021, also provided an account of the torture of being transferred to solitary confinement in preparation for the gallows.<sup>78</sup>

## METHODS OF EXECUTION

The Iranian Penal Code prescribes several execution methods including hanging, firing squads, crucifixion and stoning. Hanging has been the main method of execution and the only method used from 2008 until 2020, when Hedayat Abdullahpour, a Kurdish political prisoner, was executed by firing squad in Oshnavieh Prison.<sup>79</sup> Furthermore, a directive issued by the Head of Judiciary in June 2019 gives a detailed description of how death sentences by hanging, stoning and crucifixion should be implemented.<sup>80</sup>

The majority of executions are carried out within prisons. In some facilities, there are dedicated rooms for executions, while in others, they take place in the prison yard.

In murder cases where the defendant is sentenced to *qisas*, the plaintiff (victim's family or next of kin) not only bears the responsibility of choosing execution but a representative of the next of kin (either the next of kin themselves, their lawyer or a nominated representative) must be present at the scene of the execution. Since Iranian law considers *qisas* to be the right of the victim's family, they are also encouraged to carry out the execution themselves. IHRNGO

76 Article 43 of the Regulatory Code on Sentences of *Qisas*, Stoning, Crucifixion, Execution, and Flogging.

77 IHRNGO, World Day 2018: Death penalty; an inhumane punishment for death row prisoners, their families and society as a whole, 10 October 2018, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/3512/>

78 IHRNGO, Iran Human Rights Calls for Fact-Finding Mission into Arman Abdolali's Case Amid Statements of Witnesses Being Ignored, 24 November 2021, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/4987/>

79 IHRNGO, Urgent: Political Prisoner Hedayat Abdullahpour Executed "by Firing Squad", 24 June 2020, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/4294/>

80 <https://www.jamاران.news/> بخش-باز نشر - 59/1653870 - اداره محقوقي قوه قضائيه مي-حسن-کردن-سياق-محاربه-برای-مجازات-قطع-عضو-مجاز-است

has received several reports where the victim's family members have physically carried out the execution.

In death penalty cases, the presiding judge in the case, and in *qisas* cases, the judge as well as the plaintiff (the victim's family) are required to be present at the execution.

Cranes are used in public executions. The prisoners are either pulled up or the object they are standing on is removed from beneath their feet. In this case, the prisoners die of suffocation and strangulation and it often takes several minutes until death occurs. As discussed above, the Human Rights Committee observed that public executions are contrary to the provisions of the ICCPR and that failure to respect Article 7 (prohibition on torture and cruel, degrading and inhumane punishments) inevitably renders the execution arbitrary in nature and thus also in violation of Article 6 of the ICCPR.

The number of public executions dropped dramatically due to enforced restrictions after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, with no public executions recorded in 2021. In 2022, two public executions, including that of a protester, were carried out.<sup>81</sup> In 2024, four executions were carried out in public spaces across the country. There have not been any reports of implementation of stoning punishments since 2010. This is mainly due to the increasing international pressure in the preceding decade, reaching its peak following the campaign to save Sakineh Ashtiani in 2010.<sup>82</sup>

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81 IHRNGO, Iran Resumes Public Executions After Two Years; Iran Human Rights Calls for International Condemnations, 23 July 2022, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/5366/>; and IHRNGO, Public Executions in Iran in 2022, 15 April 2023, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/5818/>

82 *The Guardian*, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/sakineh-mohammadi-ashtiani>

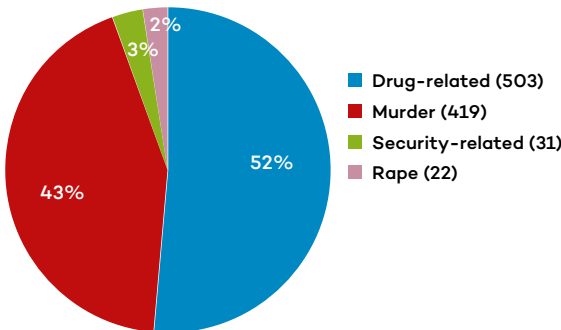
# EXECUTIONS IN PRACTICE

This section provides an overview and analysis of the use of the death penalty in 2024, including its distribution according to charges, courts, geography and implementation. It also provides a small sample of the 2024 execution cases for each charge.

## CHARGES

While multiple offences are punishable by death, the charges leading to the most executions in recent years have been murder, drug-related offences, *moharebeh*, *efsad-fil-arz*, *baghy* and rape/sexual assault. The important point to note is the systematic denial of legal due process, unfair trials, use of torture and duress, forced confessions and lack of a transparent and independent judiciary in Iran. The charges in each case are therefore those alleged by Iranian authorities, and have not been confirmed by independent sources.

## EXECUTIONS IN 2024 BASED ON CHARGES



The chart above shows the distribution of executions according to charges in 2024. As in 2023, drug-related charges accounted for the majority of executions by a significant margin.

Drug-related (52%) and murder (43%) charges accounted for 95% of the 975 executions in 2024. The security-related charges of *moharebeh*, *baghy* and *efsad-fil-arz* accounted for 3% of all executions. 2% of executions were for rape and sexual assault. Of the charges leading to execution in 2024, murder and rape/sexual assault were heard before the Criminal Courts, while drug-related

and the security charges of *moharebeh*, *baghy* and *efsad-fil-arz* were tried by the Revolutionary Courts.

In the following section, we provide a more detailed description of executions according to charges, with a selection of cases related to each charge.

## EXECUTIONS FOR *MOHAREBEH*, *BAGHY* AND *EF SAD-FIL-ARZ* IN 2024

The security-related charges of *moharebeh* (enmity against god), *efsad-fil-arz* (corruption on earth) and *baghy* (armed rebellion)<sup>83</sup> have been used to execute countless political and ordinary crime prisoners in the last 46 years. From the bloody decade of the 1980s to present day, Revolutionary Courts around the country have handed down death sentences based on torture-tainted confessions after trials that have been described as kangaroo courts. From protesters to dissidents, armed robbers to spies, human traffickers to terrorists, security-related charges have been used for a wide range of so-called offences to intimidate and create societal fear for decades. In 2024, at least 31 people were executed for security-related charges compared to 39 in 2023, 16 in 2022, 13 in 2021, 15 in 2020 and 9 in 2019.

### FACTS AND FIGURES ABOUT THE *MOHAREBEH*, *BAGHY* AND *EF SAD-FIL-ARZ* EXECUTIONS IN 2024

- At least 31 men were executed on charges of *moharebeh*, *baghy* and *efsad-fil-arz*.
- 21 of the executions were announced by official sources.
- 9 Kurdish political prisoners were among those executed.
- 10 of those executed were convicted for armed robbery.
- 5 people were executed for alleged espionage for Israel.
- 2 Baluch men with double jeopardy cases were executed for *moharebeh* charges after the families of the victims (both policemen) had forgone their right to retribution in the murder cases.
- An Afghan national who suffered from mental disorder was amongst those executed.
- A dual-national and unidentified man were executed after being kidnapped from neighbouring countries.
- 2 of the executions were carried out in public spaces.

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83 See page 34.

## EXECUTED ON CHARGES OF *MOHAREBEH*, *BAGHY* AND *EF SAD-FIL-ARZ*

DAVOUD ABDOLLAHI, FARHAD SALIMI, ANWAR KHEZRI, KHOSRO BESHARAT  
AND KAMRAN SHEIKHEH



Davoud Abdollahi, Farhad Salimi, Anwar Khezri, Khosro Besharat and Kamran Sheikheh<sup>84</sup> were Kurdish-Sunni political prisoners arrested in January 2010 along with Ghasem Abasteh and Ayoub Karimi. The seven men were subjected to physical and psychological torture to extract false self-incriminating confessions which were used as evidence by Branch 28 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court presided over by Judge Moghiseh. They were sentenced to death for charges of *moharebeh* and *efsad-fil-arz* through *baghy* and membership in a Salafi jihadi group in the spring of 2016. After the ruling was overturned by the Supreme Court, they were resentenced to death by Branch 15 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court. After spending 14 years on death row, Ghasem Abasteh and Ayoub Karimi were executed in 2023. Davoud Abdollahi was executed in Ghezelhesar Prison on 2 January 2024;<sup>85</sup> Farhad Salimi was executed on 23 January 2024;<sup>86</sup> Anwar Khezri was executed on 1 May 2024;<sup>87</sup> Khosro Besharat was executed on 15 May 2024;<sup>88</sup> and Kamran Sheikheh was executed on 25 July 2024.<sup>89</sup>

84 Pictured left to right: Davoud Abdollahi, Farhad Salimi, Anwar Khezri, Khosro Besharat and Kamran Sheikheh

85 IHRNGO, Kurdish Political Prisoner Davoud Abdollahi Executed After 14 Years on Death Row, 2 January 2024, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/6452/>

86 IHRNGO, Kurdish Political Prisoner Farhad Salimi Executed After 14 Years; Co-Defendants at Grave Risk, 23 January 2024, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/6523/>

87 IHRNGO, Kurdish Political Prisoner Anwar Khezri Executed After 14+ Years on Death Row, 1 May 2024, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/6680/>

88 IHRNGO, Kurdish-Sunni Political Prisoner Khosro Besharat Executed; 103+ Executed in 28 Days, 15 May 2024, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/6709/>

89 IHRNGO, Kurdish-Sunni Kamran Sheikheh Executed; One Execution Every 8 Hours in Past 6 Days, 25 July 2024, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/6809/>

## MOHSEN MAZLOUM, PEYMAN FATEHI, VAFA AZARBAR AND HAJIR FARAMARZI



Kurdish political prisoners Mohsen Mazloum, Pejman Fatehi, Vafa Azarbar and Hajir Faramarzi were arrested in Urmia, West Azerbaijan province, on 22 June 2022 and held incommunicado without access to their lawyers. Their torture-tainted forced confessions were aired by state media prior to the commencement of any legal proceedings (see page 46). They were sentenced to death for charges of *moharebeh* and *efsad-fil-arz* through espionage for Israel by Branch 26 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court. Their death sentences were upheld by Branch 9 of the Supreme Court within 24 hours. The four political prisoners' first family visit was also their last. They were executed in Ghezelhesar Prison, Alborz province, on 29 January 2024. A year after their executions, their bodies still have not been returned to the families, nor have the burial locations been disclosed.<sup>90</sup>

## EXECUTIONS RELATED TO PROTESTS IN 2024

While the Islamic Republic has a bloody history of executing protesters, the execution of protesters in recent years began in 2020 after a series of nationwide protests in 2016–2019. Protesters Mostafa Salehi and Navid Afkari were both sentenced to death for fabricated charges of *moharebeh* and murder, but were executed for the latter as the Islamic Republic considers *qisas* or retribution-in-kind to be the right of the victim's family and places the responsibility to choose retribution execution on them, making it easier to justify to the international community.<sup>91</sup> Following mass public backlash and international pressure, other known protesters on death row were released. At least two November 2019 protesters, Abbas Deris and Mohammad Javad Vafayi Sani, remain at risk (see Annex 5).

90 X, Joana Taimasi, [https://x.com/Joana\\_Taimasi/status/1883858498313961972](https://x.com/Joana_Taimasi/status/1883858498313961972)

91 See IHRNGO and ECPM, *Annual Report on the Death Penalty in Iran, 2020*: [https://iranhr.net/media/files/Rapport\\_iran\\_2021-gb-290321-BD.pdf](https://iranhr.net/media/files/Rapport_iran_2021-gb-290321-BD.pdf), p. 41.

The execution of “Woman, Life, Freedom” protesters began in December 2022, with two protesters hastily executed, and continued into 2023 when eight more protesters were executed for security-related and murder charges.<sup>92</sup> As predicted last year, authorities used *qisas* charges for the execution of protesters in 2024 to evade accountability and shift responsibility to the families of the alleged victims. At least 13 “Woman, Life, Freedom” protesters remain on death row (see Annex 5).

## PROTESTERS EXECUTED IN 2024

### MOHAMMAD GHOBADLU



Mohammad Ghobadlu was a 23-year-old protester arrested on 22 September 2022 during the nationwide “Woman, Life, Freedom” protests in Tehran. He faced death penalty charges for the same alleged offence in both the Revolutionary and Criminal Courts. Mohammad was tried in a group trial at the Revolutionary Court on

29 October 2022. Without his lawyer and in breach of basic fair trial rights, Mohammad was sentenced to death for “*efsad-fil-arz* (corruption on earth) through large-scale action against police by crashing into police with a car that caused the death of Farid Karampour Hasanvand and the injury of 5 police officers.” His sentence was upheld by the Supreme Court on 24 December 2022. Four subsequent appeals against his death sentence were rejected but a stay of execution was granted to prioritise the murder charges at the Criminal Court. On 10 December 2022, Mohammad was tried for murder by Branch 1 of the Tehran Criminal Court where the fact that he suffered from bipolar disorder was raised by his lawyers. The court reconvened after conducting further investigations but ultimately relied on the original Forensic Medical Organisation opinion to sentence him to death. On 23 January 2023, the Supreme Court accepted his appeal which was subsequently upheld on 23 May 2023. On 26 July 2023, Mohammad’s sentence was overturned by Branch 1 of the Supreme Court and sent for retrial at a court of equal standing. Despite months passing, Branch

<sup>92</sup> IHRNGO, Executions Related to Protests in 2023, 11 March 2024, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/6614/>

5 of the First Criminal Court in Tehran did not receive his case file and sought guidance from the Supreme Court. The last notification received by his lawyers on 2 January 2024 stated that the retrial was “currently cancelled subject to the outcome of the investigation by Branch 39 of the Supreme Court.” His lawyers were notified at 5 pm on 22 January 2024, after office hours, that his execution would be carried out the next day. Mohammad was hanged in Ghezelhesar Prison in Alborz province on 23 January 2024.<sup>93</sup>

## REZA RASAYI



(Gholam) Reza Rasayi was a 36-year-old Kurdish protester of the Yarsan faith who was arrested on 24 November 2021 in relation to the death of IRGC member Nader Beirami at a ceremony held for Yarsan leader, Seyed Khalil Alinejad, on 18 November 2021, which people used as an opportunity to protest, holding “Woman,

Life, Freedom” signs. Authorities falsely claimed the gathering, which they violently crushed, was unrelated to protests. Reza was the first defendant in a group trial of 11 defendants for charges of “participating in the murder of Nader Beirami with a cold weapon, participating in intentional bodily harm to the aforementioned with a knife and participating in disruption of public order by creating conflict, controversy and uproar” at Branch 2 of the Kermanshah province Criminal Court. In court documents obtained by IHRNGO, Reza denied the charges but after “investigations” he was forced to confess to stabbing the officer. His co-defendants in the case were compelled to testify against Reza and were subsequently released or faced lighter sentences. One defendant later stated that he never saw Reza stab the victim and his testimony was made “out of fear.” Reza did not testify against anyone else and denied the charges in later investigations and in court, stating clearly that his confessions had been extracted under torture. All other defendants also later retracted their testimonies which had been made “under torture”. The court also dismissed two expert testimonies in Reza’s favour, including that of the Kermanshah Forensic Medical

93 IHRNGO, Protester Mohammad Ghobadlu Executed in Karaj, 23 January 2024, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/6521/>



Examiner whose testimony showed that the fatal blow could not have been committed by Reza. In the judgement, the testimonies of torture were dismissed and despite a lack of evidence, the judge relied on *elm-e-qazi* (knowledge of the judge) to sentence him to *qisas* (retribution-in-kind) for murder on 7 October 2023. The IRGC officer's family, the plaintiffs in this case, requested *qisas*, Reza's execution.

Reza's family were informed that his sentence had been upheld by Branch 17 of the Supreme Court on 24 December 2023. His appeal was rejected by Branch 1 of the Supreme Court without addressing the legal flaws and contradictions and an appeal filed for judicial review, under Article 477 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, was ignored.<sup>94</sup> His case was previously sent to the Kermanshah Sentence Implementation by Branch 2 of the Kermanshah Criminal Court. Reza was secretly executed in Kermanshah Central Prison, Kermanshah province, on 6 August 2024.<sup>95</sup>

## EXECUTIONS FOR RAPE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT IN 2024

Rape and sexual assault are among charges which, according to the IPC, are punishable by the death penalty, in violation of international human rights law.<sup>96</sup> In 2024, at least 22 men were executed for rape charges, compared to 20 in 2023, 23 in 2022 and 10 in 2021. As with other charges, there are reports of torture and forced confessions being used against defendants. Due to the lack of transparency and social taboos, only official information is often available about rape death penalty cases.

## FACTS AND FIGURES ABOUT RAPE EXECUTIONS IN 2024

- At least 22 people were executed on rape charges.
- 9 of the executions were announced by official sources.
- 9 of those executed on charges of rape were Afghan nationals.
- Executions were carried out in 10 different prisons.

94 IHRNGO, Protester Reza Rasayi at Imminent Risk of Execution; 23 Executions Recorded in 5 Days, 26 April 2024, op. cit.

95 IHRNGO, Protester Reza Rasayi Secretly Executed in Kermanshah, 6 August 2024, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/6834/>

96 See page 28.

## EXECUTED FOR RAPE CHARGES

### MEHDI ATAYI

Mehdi Atayi was 21 years old when he let a friend use his house to be alone with his girlfriend. Upon returning home, “he was confronted with the 14-year-old girl’s body who was unconscious and quickly transferred her to a medical facility.” In court, Mehdi “swore that he was innocent and [that] he had called the police himself. But he had no evidence and his culprit friends were on the run without any information about their whereabouts.” Mehdi was sentenced to death for rape and executed in Qazvin Central Prison, Qazvin province, on 21 May 2024, aged 23.<sup>97</sup>

## EXECUTIONS FOR DRUG-RELATED CHARGES IN 2024

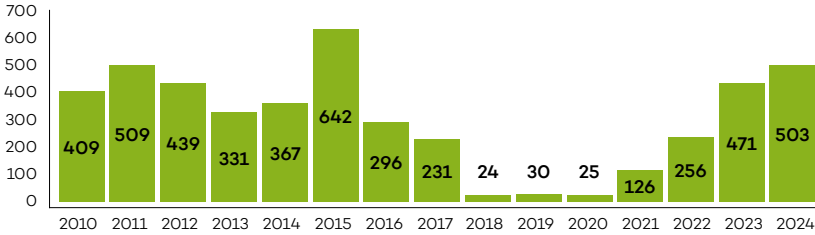
Drug-related executions have been steadily rising since 2021. Those executed for drug-related charges are from marginalised and deprived communities and amongst the most voiceless victims of the death penalty in Iran. Along with security charges, drug-related charges fall under the jurisdiction of the Revolutionary Courts which systematically deny defendants their rights to due process and a fair trial. According to reports gathered by IHRNGO, at least 503 people were executed for drug-related offences in 2024.

## FACTS AND FIGURES ABOUT DRUG-RELATED EXECUTIONS IN 2024

- At least 503 people were executed, representing a 6.6% rise compared to 2023 (471) and about 20 times the number of the drug-related executions recorded in 2020.
- Only 15 drug-related executions were announced by official sources.
- Executions took place in 27 different provinces.
- Baluch minorities, who make up 2-6% of Iran’s population, are overrepresented with 85 executions (17%) compared to 31% (138) in 2023, 47% (121) in 2022 and 43% (55) in 2021.
- 12 women were executed for drug-related offences.

<sup>97</sup> IHRNGO, Mehdi Atayi Executed for Rape in Qazvin, 21 May 2024, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/6729/>

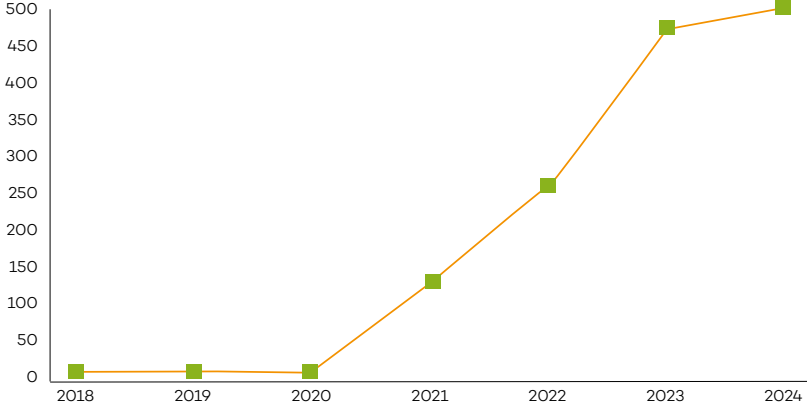
## DRUG-RELATED EXECUTIONS 2010-2024



According to IHRNGO reports, an annual average of at least 403 people were executed for drug-related offences between 2010 and 2017. The diagram above shows the reduction in the number of drug-related executions observed in the three years following the Amendment to the Anti-Narcotics Law at the end of 2017.

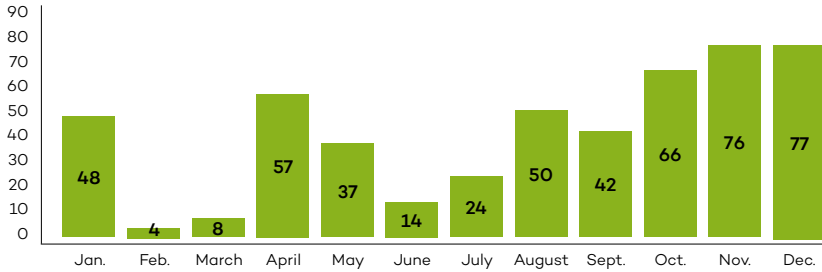
In 2024, drug-related executions were 19 times higher than the annual average of 2018-2020 (the three years following the Amendment) and 25% higher than the annual average of the drug-related executions in the 8 years prior to the Amendment.

## DRUG-RELATED EXECUTIONS 2018-2024



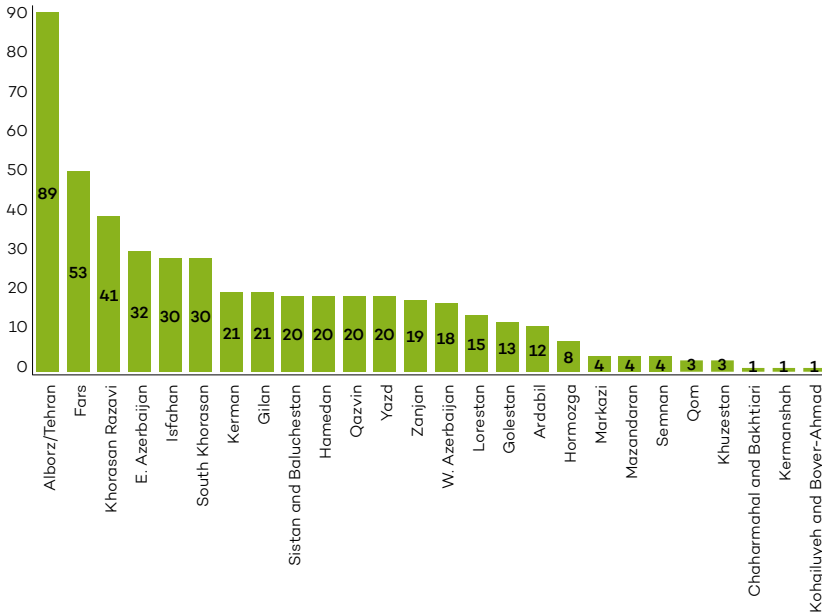
Drug-related executions increased dramatically after 2020, and the number of drug-related executions in 2023 and 2024 were respectively 18 and 19 times higher than the annual average between 2018 and 2020.

## MONTHLY DRUG-RELATED EXECUTIONS IN 2024



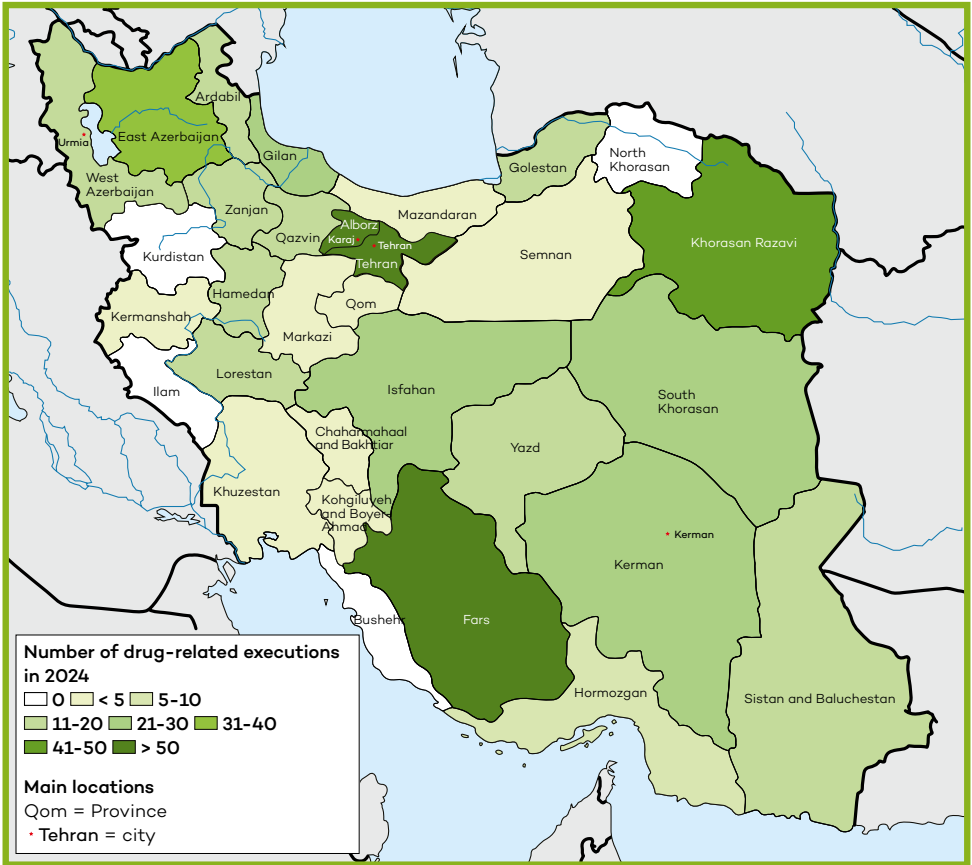
Executions for drug-related offences were carried out every month of the year in 2024. The peak was reached in the last three months of the year, following the increased threat of war between Iran and Israel. 67% of the executions were carried out in the second half of the year.

## GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF DRUG-RELATED EXECUTIONS IN 2024



In 2024, drug-related executions were carried out in 27 different provinces, an increase from 26 in 2023, 21 in 2022 and 15 in 2021. The highest number of drug-related executions were carried out in Alborz/Tehran provinces.

# MAP 1: GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF DRUG-RELATED EXECUTIONS IN 2024



In 2024, IHRNGO reported drug-related executions in 27 provinces, compared to 26 in 2023, 21 in 2022, 15 in 2021, 12 in 2019 and 2020 and 7 provinces in 2018.

## EXECUTED FOR DRUG-RELATED CHARGES

The following are a very small sample of the people executed for drug-related charges in 2024.

### ASEF AND AREF ESHAGHZEHI

Undocumented Baluch brothers, Asef Eshaghzehi, 30, and Aref Eshaghzehi, 24, were arrested in Birjand in 2022 and sentenced to death for drug-related offences. They were executed in Birjand Central Prison, South Khorasan province, on 28 January 2024 without their families being notified and the right to last visits.<sup>98</sup>

### FARIBORZ DADGAR



Fariborz Dadgar was a 36-year-old tiler and father of one from Mahshahr arrested for carrying 1.8 kilograms of methamphetamine (shisheh). He was executed in Ahvaz Sepidar Prison, Khuzestan province, on 18 April 2024, 16 years after his father was executed for the same charges at the prison.<sup>99</sup>

### PARVIZ NAROUI



Parviz Narouyi (Mir Baluchzehi), a 46-year-old Baluch man, was arrested for drug-related offences in 2021 and sentenced to death. His execution was postponed after he “suffered a stroke and paralysis”. After recovery, he was executed in Kahnuj Prison, Kerman province, on 1 September 2024.<sup>100</sup>

98 IHRNGO, Undocumented Baluch Brothers Asef and Aref Eshaghzehi Secretly Executed, 28 January 2024, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/6539/>

99 IHRNGO, Fariborz Dadgar Hanged 16 Years After Father's Execution, 20 April 2024, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/6647/>

100 IHRNGO, Baluch Parviz Narouyi Executed in Kahnuj, 1 September 2024, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/6893/>

## BAHMAN SHEIKH HOSSEINI



Bahman Sheikh Hosseini was a 32-year-old Baluch father of three children. He was arrested for drug-related charges in 2020 and sentenced to death. Bahman attempted to commit suicide prior to his execution. Yet, they still hanged him in that state in Birjand Central Prison, South Khorasan province, on 20 October 2024.<sup>101</sup>

## DRAMATIC INCREASE IN DRUG-RELATED EXECUTIONS: THE UNODC MAINTAINS SILENCE ON EXECUTIONS AND CONTINUES ITS COOPERATION

The last Amendment to Iran's Anti-Narcotics Law came into force on 14 November 2017, leading to a significant drop in the number of drug-related executions, from an annual average of 403 to an average of 26 executions in the following three years. The number of commuted death sentences as a result of this Amendment could be as high as 6,000, according to Islamic Republic lawmaker Hassan Norouzi.<sup>102</sup> However, this trend was reversed in 2021, and the number of drug-related executions have dramatically increased since (see diagram on page 58). The number of drug-related executions in 2023 and 2024 were respectively more than 19 and 20 times higher than the number in 2020. Iranian authorities introduced the 2017 Amendment to the Anti-Narcotics Law mainly due to international pressure. Crucially, European states funding UNODC projects to combat illegal drugs in Iran were unwilling to fund any further projects due to the high number of drug-related executions.<sup>103</sup>

In the last three editions of the *Annual Report on the Death Penalty in Iran*, IHRNGO and ECPM have expressed grave concern about the alarming rise in the number of drug-related executions and called on the UNODC to react.<sup>104</sup> However, not only has the UNODC failed to acknowledge this dramatic rise, in March 2023, the organisation

101 IHRNGO, Bahman Sheikh Hosseini Executed in Birjand Despite Suicide Attempt, 21 October 2024, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7031/>

102 <https://www.rokna.net/بخش-اخبار-سیاسی-74/957563-نوروزی-رئیس-با-محافظ-به-پرت-رفت-نوری-قز-لجه-> از اعدام-هزار-حوان-به-جرم-مواد-مخدر-جلوگیری-کردیم

103 RTE, Government ceased anti-drug programme funding over Iran death penalty fears, 8 November 2013, <https://www.rte.ie/news/2013/1108/485366-ireland-anti-drug-iran/>

104 See, for example, IHRNGO and ECPM, *Annual Report on the Death Penalty in Iran, 2022*, [https://iranhr.net/media/files/Rapport\\_iran\\_2022\\_PirQr2V.pdf](https://iranhr.net/media/files/Rapport_iran_2022_PirQr2V.pdf)





nationwide protests, officials publicly threatened protesters with the death penalty. However, the strong international backlash made the execution of protesters politically costly for the Islamic Republic. Since then, IHRNGO has observed a great increase in the number of drug-related executions, despite the Islamic Republic's own repeated admission that the death penalty does not deter drug crimes.<sup>111</sup>

Thus, the authorities' need to instil fear in society in order to prevent further protests is the most likely reason for the sharp increase in the number of drug-related executions. Drug offenders are predominantly from the most marginalised groups in society, and ethnic minorities – the Baluch in particular – are grossly overrepresented among those executed. This, together with the international community's silence, and in part UNODC's continued cooperation, makes the political cost of their execution very low. All drug-related offences are processed by the Revolutionary Courts. Reports collected by IHRNGO demonstrate that those arrested for drug-related offences are systematically subjected to torture in the weeks following their arrest. They often do not have access to a lawyer while in detention, and by the time a lawyer gains access to their case, they have already “confessed” to the crime.<sup>112</sup> Revolutionary Court trials are also typically very short, with lawyers often not even given a chance to present a defence for their clients. As such, the authorities can accuse anyone of drug-related offences and sentence them to death anytime they desire to do so.

## EXECUTIONS FOR MURDER CHARGES (*QISAS*) IN 2024

As murder is specifically punished under *qisas* laws, the IPC does not explicitly state that convicted murderers are subject to the death penalty but rather to *qisas*, or “retribution-in-kind”. In cases of murder, the law effectively puts the responsibility for executions in the hands of the victim's family or next of kin. *Qisas* death sentences are also imposed on child offenders as, according to *Sharia*, the age of criminal responsibility for girls is 9 and for boys 15 lunar years. Furthermore, the death penalty is generally subject to discriminatory application based on gender, ethnicity and religion.<sup>113</sup>

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111 IHRNGO, Mohammad Javad Larijani: Death Penalty Does Not Deter Drug Crimes, 31 December 2015, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/2408/>

112 See also, Human Rights Watch, Iran: Bid to End Drug-Offense Executions, 16 December 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/12/16/iran-bid-end-drug-offense-executions>

113 IHRNGO and ECPM, *Annual Report on the Death Penalty in Iran*, 2013, <https://www.ecpm.org/app/uploads/2022/08/Rapport-Iran-2013.pdf>, p.11. See further in “Execution categories” section of this report, from page 83.

In addition to the inequality of citizens before the law, there are countless reports of violations of due process in *qisas* cases. Examples include the use of torture to extract confessions, summary trials without sufficient time to conduct independent investigation of the evidence and ineffective counsel.

## FACTS AND FIGURES ABOUT *QISAS* EXECUTIONS IN 2024

- At least 419 executions were carried out for murder charges based on *qisas* laws compared to 282 in 2023, 288 in 2022 and 183 in 2021.
- This is the highest number of annual *qisas* executions since 2010
- 50 *qisas* executions were announced by official sources (12%).
- At least one child offender (under 18 years of age at the time of offence) was executed.
- 19 of those executed for murder charges were women (61% of all women executions).
- 87 *qisas* executions were carried out in Alborz prisons.

## EXECUTED FOR MURDER CHARGES IN 2024

The 419 *qisas* executions in 2024 include a variety of cases, including two protesters (page 54). In all cases, defendants were denied their rights to due process and a fair trial. More information on the execution of child offenders and women can be found in “Execution Categories” (page 83).

### MOEIN SALAHVARZI



Moein Salahvarzi was a 63-year-old farmer who spent more than half his life, 32 years, on death row. According to his son, his father’s brother had demanded a year’s harvest of wheat and straw from him. “My dad refused to be extorted and when my uncle came and used vulgar language against my mother in front of the village,

my father shot him, intending to shoot at his leg but my uncle moved forward. My dad didn’t intend to kill his brother, but he passed away on the way to the hospital,” his son told IHRNGO. His family, who followed up on his case throughout the years, were told that his case

had been lost at the Supreme Court. Moein was executed in Ilam Central Prison, Ilam province, on 11 March 2024.<sup>114</sup>

## RAMIN SAADAT



Ramin Saadat was 18 when he was arrested and sentenced to *qisas*. His family tried everything to save him in the four years and five months he spent on death row. The night prior to his execution, family, friends and activists gathered outside Miandoab Prison in an effort to save his life. The next morning, on 18 May 2024,

the rope used to hang Ramin in Miandoab Prison, West Azerbaijan province, was too loose so they had to pull him down. The alleged victim's family requested for him to be hanged again. Ramin was 23 years old at the time of his execution.<sup>115</sup>

## YOUNES AKHTAR SAMAR



Younes Akhtar Samar was a father of five children arrested for murder. The court relied on *qassameh* and *elm-e-qazi* to sentence him to death due to the lack of evidence against him. The alleged victim's family had demanded 20 billion tomans as *diya*, which Younes's family were unable to afford. He was executed in Jiroft

Prison, Kerman province, on 14 October 2024.<sup>116</sup>

114 IHRNGO, Moein Salahvarzi Executed After 32 Years on Death Row, 11 March 2024, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/6539/https://iranhr.net/en/articles/6609/>

115 IHRNGO, Ramin Saadat Hanged Twice After Noose Failure, 22 May 2024, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/6730/>

116 IHRNGO, Younes Akhtar Hanged Based on Qassameh and Elme-qazi Sentence and Inability to Pay Blood Money, 16 October 2024, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7011/>

## AHMAD ALIZADEH



Ahmad Alizadeh was a 26-year-old elite student arrested on 12 October 2018 for murder. According to his relatives, he never accepted the charges and had confessed under torture. On 27 April 2024, he was hanged in Ghezelhesar Prison, Alborz province, but was pulled down after 28 seconds at the request of the alleged victim's

family. He was returned to his cell after being resuscitated. Ahmad was ultimately executed at the same prison on 13 November 2024.<sup>117</sup>

## ARVIN GHahremani



Arvin Ghahremani was a 20-year-old Jewish man who was arrested for a murder allegedly committed during an attack in Kermanshah on 12 November 2022 when he was 18. According to his family, when the victim attacked Arvin with a cold weapon, he took the weapon and defended himself. Arvin made every effort to save

the victim's life after injuring him, but the victim died after medical assistance was delayed in reaching him. At trial, Arvin's court-appointed lawyer did not effectively defend his client for unknown reasons, and his right to self-defence was not properly presented in the case. His appeal was also rejected twice without serious consideration and many important events leading to the stabbing were ignored.<sup>118</sup> While the victim's family had initially agreed to accept *diya* in lieu of execution, they changed their mind when they discovered that Arvin was Jewish. Arvin was executed in Kermanshah Central Prison, Kermanshah province, on 4 November 2024.<sup>119</sup>

117 IHRNGO, Ahmad Alizadeh Hanged for Second Time in Ghezelhesar Prison, 13 November 2024, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7106/>

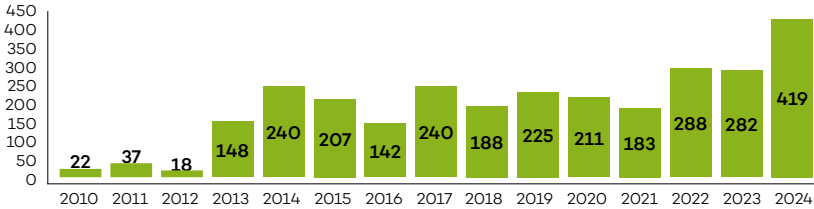
118 IHRNGO, Jewish Arvin Ghahremani at Imminent Risk of Execution Following Appeal Rejection, 24 May 2024 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/6737/>

119 IHRNGO, Jewish-Iranian Arvin Ghahremani Executed in Kermanshah, 4 November 2024, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7077/>

## QISAS EXECUTIONS SINCE 2010

According to data gathered by IHRNGO, at least 2,850 *qisas* executions were carried out between 2010 and 2024. The diagram below shows the trend of *qisas* executions during this period.

### QISAS (RETRIBUTION) EXECUTIONS 2010-2024



The number of *qisas* executions, which was relatively low between 2010 and 2012, increased dramatically in 2013 coinciding with growing international criticism of Iran's drug-related executions. In 2024, at least 419 people were subjected to *qisas* executions, the highest recorded number of annual *qisas* executions in at least 15 years.

### GHEZELHESAR PRISON: THE NEW EXECUTION CAPITAL OF IRAN

Following the closure of Rajai Shahr Prison (formerly Gohardasht Prison) in 2023, Ghezelhesar Prison has emerged as the new epicenter of executions in Iran. With the majority of Rajai Shahr prisoners transferred to Ghezelhesar, it has become the primary site for carrying out *qisas* sentences. In 2024 alone, at least 75 individuals were executed for murder charges in Ghezelhesar Prison, making it the new *qisas* capital of the country.

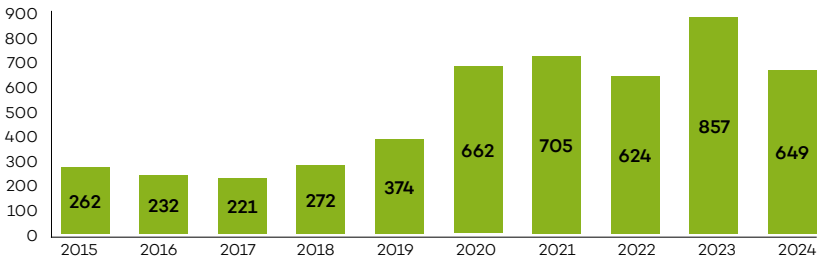
In addition to *qisas* cases, Ghezelhesar Prison was also the site of a significant number of executions for other offences. At least 70 individuals were hanged for drug-related offences, 15 for security-related charges, and 10 for rape convictions. The total number of executions carried out in Ghezelhesar Prison in 2024 stands at 169, accounting for 17% of all executions nationwide, solidifying its position as the execution capital of Iran.

Ghezelhesar Prison has also become the focal point of grassroots resistance against the death penalty. The establishment of the “No Death Penalty Tuesdays” campaign within the prison is a testament to the growing opposition to capital punishment among prisoners and their families. Tuesdays are normally the days when death row prisoners are transferred to solitary confinement in preparation for execution, making it a symbolic day of resistance and protest against the state's execution machine (read more on page 106).

## BLOOD MONEY (*DIYA*) OR FORGIVENESS INSTEAD OF DEATH PENALTY IN *QISAS* CASES

According to the IPC, murder is punished by *qisas*, where the victim's next of kin can demand execution as retribution. But they can also demand *diya* (blood money) instead of retribution or can simply grant forgiveness. The Head of Judiciary sets an annual indicative amount for *diya* based on inflation and other considerations, but the victim's family can choose their own amount. They can demand a lower or higher amount than the judiciary's indicative number but crucially, no upper limit is set. The *diya* indicative amounts, which are determined every March, were set at 1.2 billion tomans (€18,000) for a Muslim man and 600 million tomans (€9,000) for a Muslim woman in March 2024, a 33% increase compared to the previous year.<sup>120</sup> The amount set by families is usually higher than the indicative amount and even the indicative amount is higher than what most families can afford. In 2024, at least eight people were executed because they could not afford blood money: **Hossein Habibi, Alireza Marzban, Iman Rezaeipour, Zahra Feizi, Ahmad Alizadeh, Abbas Karimi, Younes Akhtar Samar and Mohammad Ashouri.** IHRNGO has collected forgiveness reports since 2015. According to the reports gathered in the past ten years, the families of murder victims who chose forgiveness or *diya* for individuals convicted of murder outnumber those who chose the death penalty. For the sake of simplicity, the term forgiveness is used in the following section, regardless of whether there was a demand for *diya*.

### FORGIVENESS 2015-2024



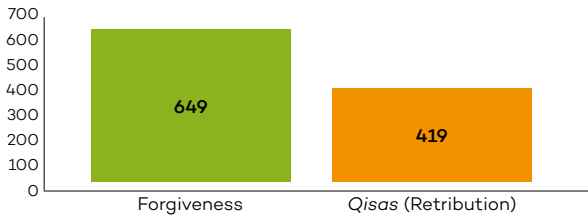
As with executions, not all forgiveness cases are reported by the Iranian media. Based on reports by the Iranian media and, to a lesser extent, through its own network inside Iran, IHRNGO identified 649 forgiveness cases in 2024, compared to 857 cases in 2023, 624 cases in 2022 and 705 cases in 2021.

As in the previous seven years, the forgiveness cases outnumbered those of implemented *qisas* executions in 2024. The actual numbers

120 <https://www.mizanonline.ir/fa/news/4764775/-۱۴%نرخ-خدیجه-سالDB%BO۳-اعلام-شد>

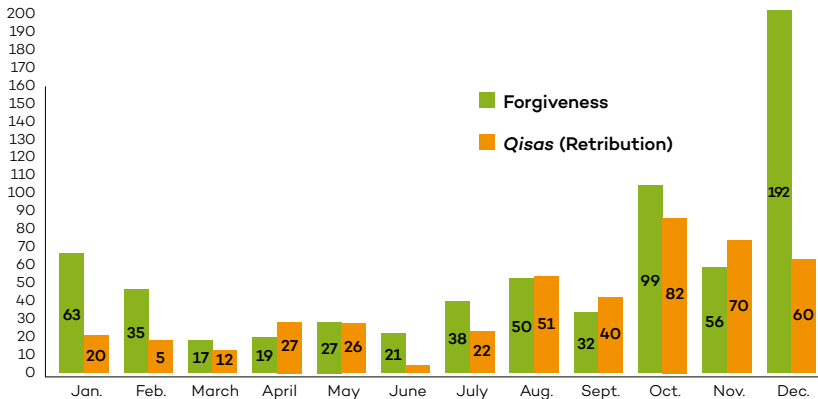
for both forgiveness and *qisas* death sentences are believed to be higher. IHRNGO estimates that the number of forgiveness cases might be several times higher than the numbers presented in this report.

The increasing trend of forgiveness in Iran correlates with a survey conducted for IHRNGO and the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty (WCADP) in September 2020, which found that the majority of people prefer alternative punishments to the *qisas* death penalty for murder victims.<sup>121</sup> Iranian authorities assert that *qisas* is the right of the plaintiff (the victim’s family/next of kin) and that most *qisas* executions take place upon the plaintiff’s request. However, when questioned about their preferred punishment if an immediate family member was murdered, only 21.5% of respondents chose *qisas*, while more than 50% preferred alternative punishments such as imprisonment.



A comparison of the number of implemented *qisas* death sentences and forgiveness cases in 2024.

### QISAS (RETRIBUTION) AND FORGIVENESS: MONTHLY BREAKDOWN

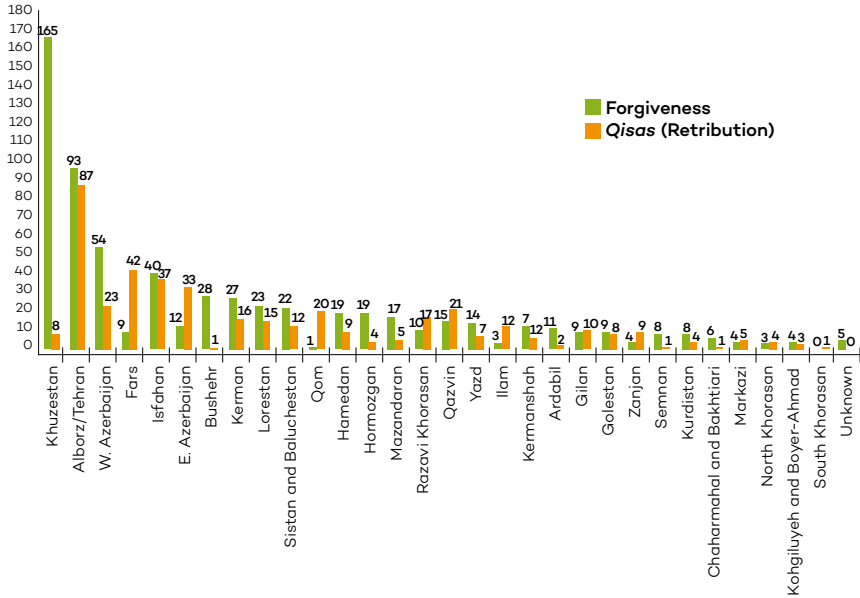


The diagram above shows the monthly breakdown of implemented *qisas* death sentences compared to forgiveness cases. Forgiveness cases outnumber those of *qisas* executions in 7 months of the year.

121 IHRNGO, Groundbreaking Survey Reveals Iranians’ Attitudes Towards the Death Penalty, 12 October 2020, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/4458/>

## QISAS AND FORGIVENESS: GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

In 2024, IHRNGO recorded forgiveness cases in 30 provinces in Iran. In comparison, *qisas* death sentences were reported in all 31 provinces. *Qisas* executions outnumbered forgiveness cases in 11 of the provinces.



The number of *qisas* executions were higher than forgiveness cases in 11 provinces, while the forgiveness numbers were higher than *qisas* executions in the remaining provinces. In Khuzestan, the number of forgiveness cases were around 21 times higher than the number of *qisas* executions.

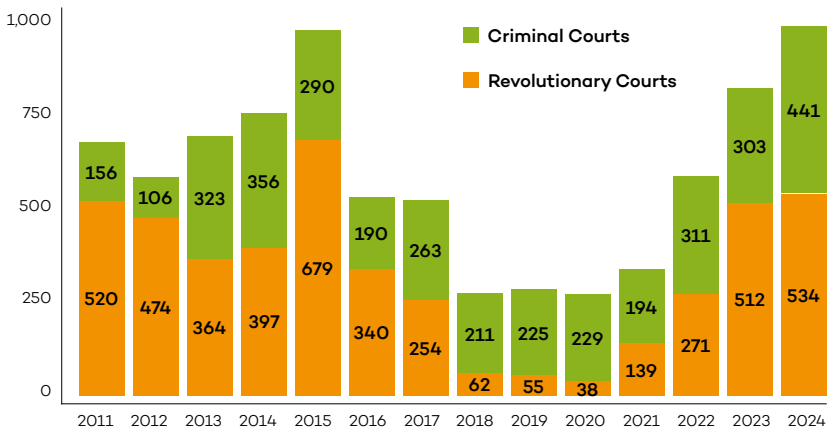


# SHARE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY AND CRIMINAL COURTS IN 2024 EXECUTIONS

As mentioned in the previous section, rape and murder (*qisas*) cases fall within the jurisdiction of the Criminal Courts, while *moharebeh*, *efsad-fil-arz* and *baghy* cases, as well as drug-related cases, fall under the jurisdiction of the Revolutionary Courts.

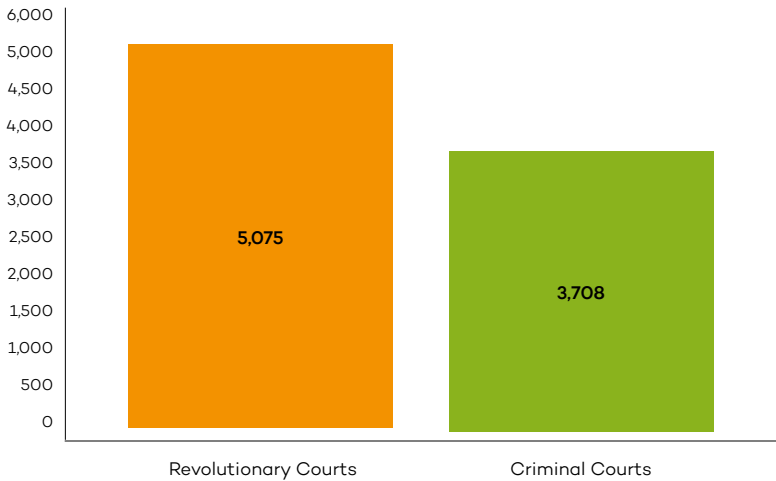
After the enforcement of the 2017 Amendment to the Anti-Narcotics law, the number of implemented death sentences issued by the Revolutionary Courts saw a significant decrease. However, in 2021 these numbers increased due to the rise in drug-related executions and have continued to rise since then. The following diagrams show the share of the Revolutionary Courts and the Criminal Courts in the implemented executions of the last 15 years.

## IMPLEMENTED EXECUTIONS ISSUED BY REVOLUTIONARY COURTS VS CRIMINAL COURTS



In 2024, 534 of the 975 executions (55%) were based on death sentences issued by the Revolutionary Courts. Numbers for the previous 13 years are presented in the diagram above. This is a significant rise compared to 2022, when they represented 42% (271) of executions.

## IMPLEMENTED EXECUTIONS ISSUED BY REVOLUTIONARY VS CRIMINAL COURTS 2010-2024



The diagram above is based on IHRNGO reports since 2010 and shows that 5075 of the 8783 executions (58%) in the last 15 years were based on death sentences issued by the Revolutionary Courts.

The Revolutionary Courts are infamous for the summary execution of the political opposition during the first decade of establishment of the Islamic Republic in the 1980s.<sup>122</sup> However, data collected by IHRNGO shows that the Revolutionary Courts have also been responsible for the majority of death sentences leading to executions throughout the ensuing decades.

122 BBC News, Inside Iran's Revolutionary Courts, 17 October 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-34550377>

# PUBLIC EXECUTIONS

For 46 years, Iran has been one of the few countries in the world to carry out executions in public spaces. Public executions have been repeatedly criticised by the international community and domestic civil society in Iran. Both the UN Secretary General and the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights Situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran have expressed concern about the continued practice of public executions. During Iran's second UPR,<sup>123</sup> the government rejected recommendations aimed at ending public executions.<sup>124</sup> Criticism of the Islamic Republic's practice of public executions has also been emphasised in the reports of the Special Rapporteur.<sup>125</sup> Following massive media attention and international pressure in 2007-2008, then Head of Judiciary, Mahmoud Shahroudi issued an order calling for limitation in the use of public executions. Consequently, the number of public executions in 2008-2010 were relatively lower than in previous years. However, following the post-election protests of 2009, the number of public executions increased dramatically after 2010, reaching an annual average of 50 to 60 between 2011-2015. With increased international focus again, the number of public executions decreased to 33 in 2016, 31 in 2017 and then 13 in 2018 and 2019. Public executions dropped significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic, with one execution reported in 2020 and none in 2021. In 2022, two people were publicly hanged and the number more than tripled in 2023, with seven public executions. In 2024, there was a slight decrease, with four public executions.

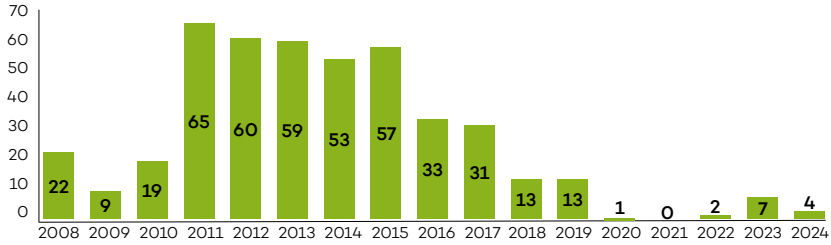
Public executions are also a way to instil fear among the population and have consequences on the mental health of people who attend. Public executions are always officially reported, though defendants are often not named or are only identified by their initials. In cases that are reported by official sources, in addition to their names, photos and videos are also published.

123 UN Human Rights Council, Outcome of the universal periodic review: Islamic Republic of Iran, 28 May 2015, A/HRC/DEC/28/108, [https://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage\\_e.aspx?si=A%2FHRC%2FDEC%2F28%2F108](https://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A%2FHRC%2FDEC%2F28%2F108)

124 OHCHR, UPR of the Islamic Republic of Iran - Second Cycle Thematic list of recommendations, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/lib-docs/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session20/IR/IranMatriceRecommendations.doc>

125 UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Javaid Rehman, Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, 7 February 2023, op. cit.

## PUBLIC EXECUTIONS 2008-2024



The diagram above shows public executions since 2008. In 2020, public executions The diagram above shows public executions since 2008. The number of public executions in 2020 was significantly lower due to COVID-19 pandemics restrictions, and no public executions were recorded in 2021. Since 2022, public executions have started rising, with numbers more than tripling in 2023 compared to 2022. In 2024, 4 people were hanged in public spaces.

## EXECUTED IN PUBLIC IN 2024

In 2024, four men were hanged in public spaces across the country.

### AMIRREZA AJAM AKRAMI



A 21-year-old man named Amirreza Ajam Akrami was publicly hanged in Shahroud, Semnan province on 26 August 2024, for the murder of a lawyer after spending a year on death row.<sup>126</sup> Mohammad Sadegh Akbari, the Semnan province head of judiciary said: “According to the definitive ruling by Branch 49 of the

Supreme Court, the late Mahmoudreza Jafar Aghayi’s murderer was sentenced to public execution for the crime of intentional murder with a hunting weapon.” The official report of his public hanging by ISNA news agency did not name Amirreza, his identity was established by IHRNGO.

Two unnamed men were hanged publicly in Khomein on 20 September 2024 for the security-related charges of *moharebeh* and *efsad-fil-arz* for clashing with and killing a policeman during an armed robbery.<sup>127</sup>

<sup>126</sup> IHRNGO, First Public Hanging in Iran in 2024, 26 August 2024, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/6884/>

<sup>127</sup> IHRNGO, 2 Unnamed Men Publicly Hanged in Khomein, 30 September 2024, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/6953/>

## MOHAMMAD ALI SALAMAT



Mohammad Ali Salamat, a 43-year-old man on death row for rape, was hanged in a Hamedan city park (Hamedan province) on 12 November 2024. He had been on death row for a year. According to Tasnim news agency, “Mohammad Ali Salamat lured his victims under the pretext of marriage, friendship, providing medicine

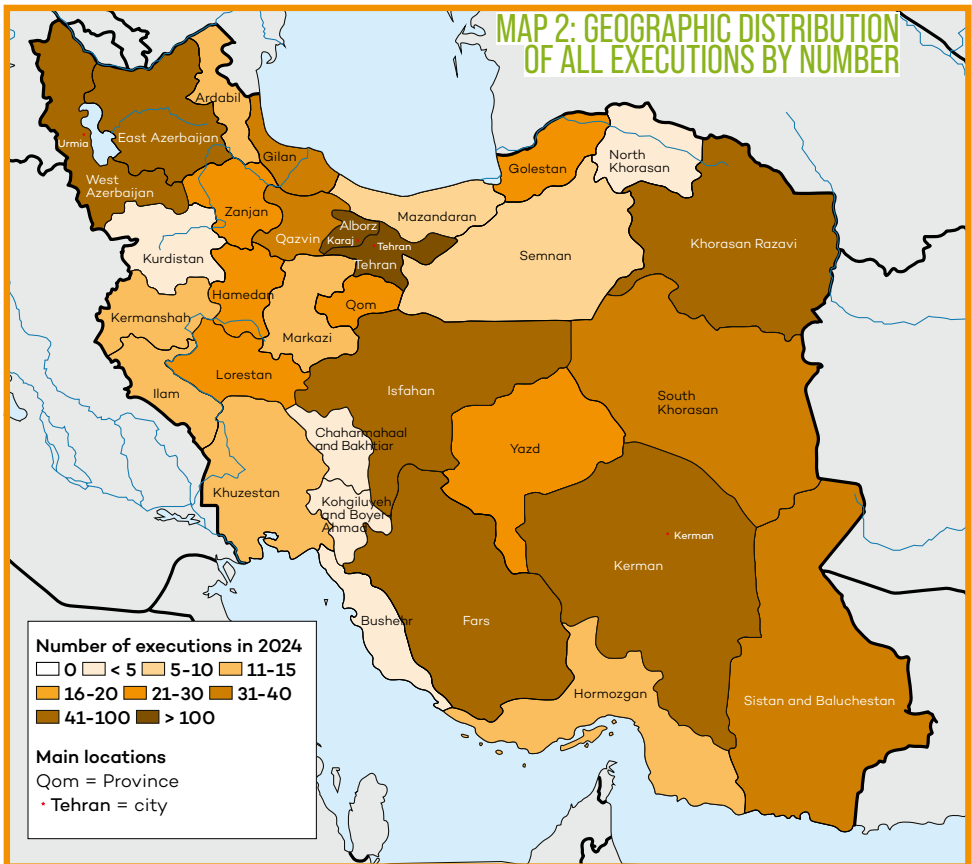
and in some cases, by force. The legal case against him was filed on 21 May 2023 and many plaintiffs presented evidence of his widespread rape.” Informed sources told IHRNGO that Mohammad Ali was forced to confess to many of the rapes under torture.<sup>128</sup>



128 IHRNGO, Mohammad Ali Salamat Publicly Hanged in Hamedan, 12 November 2024, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7104/>

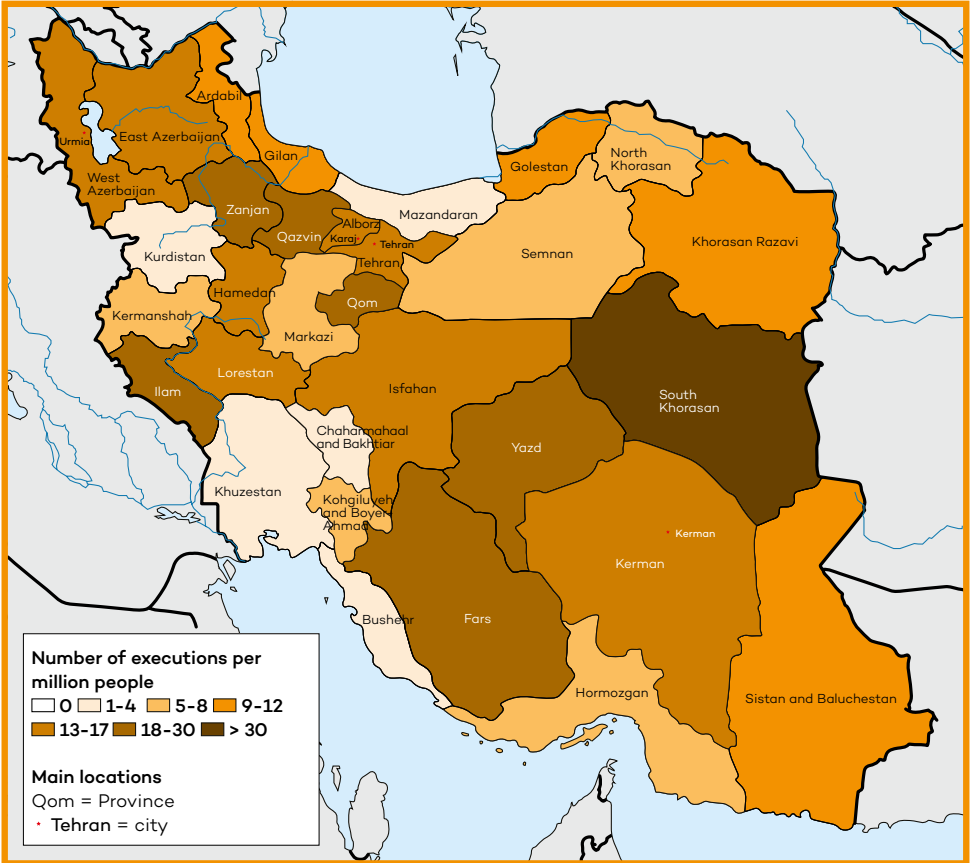
# GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF EXECUTIONS

Executions were carried out in 31 Iranian provinces in 2024. The following maps show the geographic distribution of executions. Map 2 shows the total number of executions while Map 3 shows the number of executions per capita for each province. In 2024, Tehran/Albort provinces had the highest number of executions: 210 (compared to 173 in 2023), followed by Fars province (97), Isfahan (67) and East Azerbaijan (66). More than 90% of the executions included in the 2024 report were not announced by official sources. The next section provides more details about unannounced and secret executions.

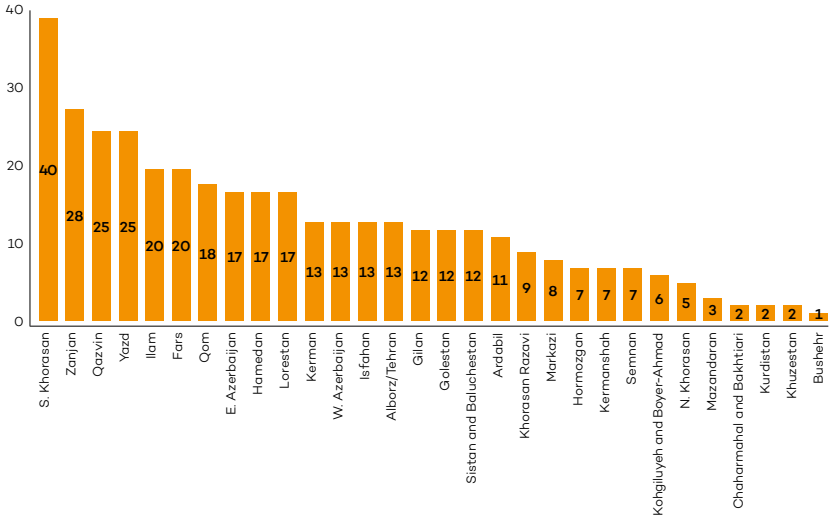


### MAP 3: NUMBER OF EXECUTIONS PER CAPITA

In 2024, Iran carried out 12 executions per million people.<sup>129</sup> South Khorasan province had the highest execution rate, with 40 executions per million inhabitants, followed by Zanjan with 28 executions per million, and Qazvin and Yazd with 25 executions per million inhabitants. Numbers for each province are provided in Annex 1 to this report.



129 Population based on last official count of 2016, amar.org.ir



Executions were carried out in all the 31 provinces in Iran in 2024.

## SECRET AND UNANNOUNCED EXECUTIONS

More than 90% of all executions recorded by IHRNGO in 2024, i.e. 880 executions, were not announced by the authorities. Some of the executions were carried out secretly, without the family or the lawyer being informed, and some were simply not announced by the official media. This is despite the fact that, according to the Islamic Republic's own laws, the defendant's lawyer must be notified of the planned execution. The actual number of executions is believed to be much higher. This lack of transparency has been increasing in recent years. In 2024, 10% of the recorded executions were officially reported, compared to 15% in 2023, 12% in 2022, 16.5% in 2021 and an average of 33% in 2018-2020.

## FACTS AND FIGURES ABOUT SECRET AND UNANNOUNCED EXECUTIONS IN 2024

- At least 880 executions (90% of the total) were not announced by official Iranian sources.
- Only 15 (3%) of the 503 drug-related executions were announced by official sources.
- Drug-related offences accounted for 55% of unannounced executions.
- Murder charges accounted for 42% of unannounced executions.
- Tehran/Alborz province had the highest number (171) of unannounced executions, followed by Fars (96) and Isfahan (63).



## DOCUMENTATION OF UNANNOUNCED EXECUTIONS

Only unofficial reports with sufficient information have been included in this report. IHRNGO's network inside the country receives information about many executions which are not announced by domestic media or officials. Confirming these reports is a challenging task, as the media is either directly controlled or under strong scrutiny by the authorities. Reporting human rights violations to human rights organisations is also regarded as a crime, and those involved face criminal prosecution. Notwithstanding, every year IHRNGO manages to confirm several hundred cases of executions that are not announced by the authorities. In many of these cases, information on executions is verified by two or more independent sources. In some cases, IHRNGO receives photographs that can document the execution. In many cases, photographs with information about the executed person are sent to IHRNGO.



Photographs of some of the people whose executions were not announced by official sources, but were documented by IHRNGO in 2024.

Death or funeral notices are also used as documentation to support reports of unannounced executions received by Iran Human Rights. Death or funeral notices are also used as documentation to support reports of unannounced executions received by IHRNGO.

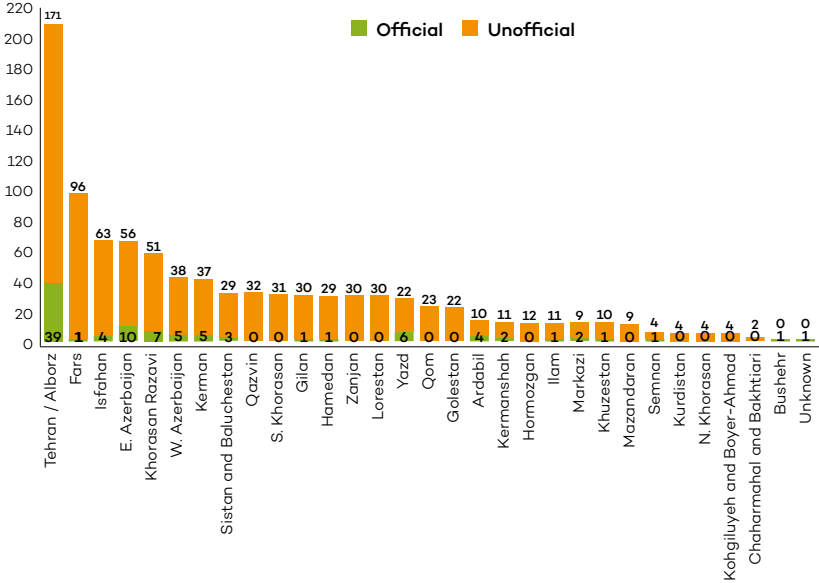
39 executions reported to IHRNGO were not included in the 2024 figures due to lack of sufficient documentation or confirmation by two independent sources.



Death notices showing some of the people whose executions were not announced by official sources but were documented by IHRNGO.

# GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF ANNOUNCED AND UNANNOUNCED/SECRET EXECUTIONS

In 2024, the highest number of unannounced executions took place in the two Alborz province prisons (Ghezelhesar and Karaj Penitentiary) and in Adelabad prison of Shiraz.<sup>130</sup>



The diagram above shows the geographical distribution of the official (green) and unofficial/unannounced (orange) executions in Iran. The prisons in the provinces of Tehran and Alborz, Fars and Isfahan had the highest number of recorded executions. This was followed by East Azerbaijan, Khorasan Razavi and West Azerbaijan. The exact location of one execution, announced officially, was not disclosed.

<sup>130</sup> Further details are provided in the following section.

# EXECUTION CATEGORIES

## CHILD OFFENDERS

### CHILD OFFENDER EXECUTIONS: TRENDS AND LEGISLATIVE REFORMS

The 2013 IPC retained the death penalty for child offenders. Although Articles 89-95 suggest corrective measures and alternative punishments for children, Article 91 is very clear that the offences punishable by *hudud* or *qisas* are exceptions to this rule. It is important to note that almost all child offenders executed in the past 11 years were sentenced to death based on *qisas* and *hudud* laws.

Article 91 states: "For offences punishable by *hadd* or *qisas*, mature persons younger than 18 shall be sentenced to the punishments stipulated in this chapter (Articles 89-95) if they do not understand the nature of the offence committed or its prohibition or if there are doubts about their maturity or development of their reasoning."

The Article grants discretion to the judge to decide whether a child offender understood the nature of the offences, whether they were mature at the time of committing the offence and whether they should be sentenced to death. The Note to Article 91 authorises but does not require the court to seek the opinion of the Forensic Medical Organisation or to use any other means to reach a verdict. Moreover, while Article 146 states that immature persons lack criminal responsibility, Article 147 repeats the provisions of the previous law and the Civil Code regarding maturity and the age of criminal responsibility. Girls are considered mature at the age of 9 lunar years and boys at the age of 15 lunar years. A girl older than 8.7 years and a boy older than 14.6 years can therefore be sentenced to death.

In the framework of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), Iranian authorities wrote in their reply to the recommendations: "Conforming to the recent amendments made in the laws of Iran, the maximum punishment for children shall not exceed five years of detention in correctional facilities. The deprivation of life as a punishment shall be proposed but not enforced in case the culprit with the age of criminal responsibility has not perceived the nature of the crime and therefore lacks mental maturity and perfection, based on the expert assessment and judgement of the competent court."<sup>131</sup>

<sup>131</sup> Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, Islamic Republic of Iran, Addendum, Views on conclusions and/or recommendations, voluntary commitments and replies presented by the State under review, 20 February 2020, op. cit.

**Mehdi Jahanpour, a child offender who was 16 years old at the time of his alleged offence, was kept in prison or correctional facilities until he reached the age of 18 before being executed in 2024.**

Iran is one of the last remaining countries to sentence child offenders to death and executes more child offenders than any other country in the world. In violation of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which Iran has ratified, Iranian authorities executed at least one child offender in 2024. According to IHRNGO reports, at least 71 child offenders were executed between 2010 and 2024 in Iran.<sup>132</sup>

Due to lack of transparency in the Iranian Judiciary, there is no information about the number of child offenders on death row in Iranian prisons. However, according to a 2021 report by UN experts, at least 85 child offenders could be on death row in Iranian prisons.<sup>133</sup> International pressure on Iran on this issue increased during the first decade of the 2000s. As a consequence of the criticism from the international community and domestic civil society, Iran made changes regarding child offenders in the 2013 Islamic Penal Code (IPC). However, these changes have not led to a decrease in the number of child offender executions. The 2013 IPC explicitly defines the “*age of criminal responsibility*” for children as the age of maturity under *Sharia* law, meaning that girls over 9 lunar years of age and boys over 15 lunar years of age are eligible for execution if convicted of “*crimes against god*” (such as apostasy) or “*retribution crimes*” (such as murder). Article 91 of the IPC states that offenders under the age of 18 who commit *hudud* or *qisas* offences may not be sentenced to death if the judge determines the offender lacked “*maturity or development of their reasoning*” based on forensic evidence.<sup>134</sup> The article allows judges to assess a child offender’s mental maturity at the time of the offence and, potentially, to impose an alternative punishment to the death penalty on the basis of the outcome. In 2014, Iran’s Supreme Court confirmed that all child offenders on death row could apply for retrial.

However, Article 91 is vaguely worded and inconsistently and arbitrarily applied. Between 2016 and 2024, IHRNGO identified 22 cases where the death sentences of child offenders were commuted based on Article 91. In the same period, at least 32 child

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132 Iran Human Rights Execution Counter, <https://iranhr.net/en/>

133 Iran: UN experts say executions of child offenders must stop, 25 November 2021, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2021/12/iran-un-experts-say-executions-child-offenders-must-stop>

134 Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Report of the UN Secretary-General, 10 September 2013, A/68/377, <https://undocs.org/A/68/377>. See also Iran Penal Code (2013), Art. 91

offenders were executed according to reports received by IHRNGO and several remain at risk of execution. It seems that Article 91 has not led to a decrease in the number of child offender executions. The Iranian authorities must change the law, unconditionally removing all death sentences for all offences committed under 18 years of age. In his 2024 report, Javaid Rehman, former UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran expressed alarm “by the sentencing of children to death and regret[ted] that no progress has been observed towards the implementation of the recommendations made by him and his predecessors, other special procedure mandate holders and international human rights mechanisms that the death penalty for children be abolished, regardless of the circumstances and nature of the crime committed.” He called on the Islamic Republic to “urgently amend legislation to prohibit the execution of persons who have committed a crime while under the age of 18 and urgently amend legislation to commute all death sentences for child offenders.”<sup>135</sup>

In his June 2024 report to the 56<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council, the UN Secretary-General called on Iran’s government to “prohibit the execution of all offenders who were under the age of 18 at the time of the crime, in all circumstances, and commute their sentences.”<sup>136</sup>

## FACTS AND FIGURES ABOUT CHILD OFFENDER EXECUTIONS IN 2024

- 1 confirmed child offender was executed for murder charges.
- 3 others executed in 2024 are believed to have been child offenders which IHRNGO has been unable to verify at the time of writing.
- Of the 3 unconfirmed cases, 2 were on death row for murder and one for drug-related offences.
- None of the 4 executions were reported by official sources.

135 UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Javaid Rehman, Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, 2024, *op. cit.*

136 Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Report of the Secretary General, 19 June 2024, A/HRC/56/22, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2024/06/presentation-secretary-generals-report-situation-human-rights>

## CHILD OFFENDERS EXECUTED IN 2024

### MEHDI JAHANPOUR (CONFIRMED)



Mehdi Jahanpour was born on 8 December 2002 and was 16 years old at the time of his arrest in Firouz Abad (Fars province) in April 2019. On the day of the alleged offence, he had been stopped in the street by a man who was in love with the same girl as him. In the fight that ensued, Mehdi was accused of killing the other

man with a knife. He was sentenced to *qisas* and held behind bars until 16 September 2024 when he was executed in Shiraz Central Prison in Fars province. Mehdi was just shy of 22 years old at the time of his execution.<sup>137</sup>

### SOLEIMAN ABBASPOUR (UNCONFIRMED)



Soleiman Abbaspour was reportedly 16 years old when he had to defend himself against a drunk man attempting to rape him, a fact that he stated in court. However, the court not only denied his defence but also the fact that he was under 18 years old at the time of the alleged offence. He was sentenced to *qisas* by the

Criminal Court and held in Zanjan's Correctional Central for four years. At the age of 21, he was transferred to Zanjan Central Prison, Zanjan province, and executed on 2 November 2024.<sup>138</sup>

<sup>137</sup> IHRNGO, Executed Mehdi Jahanpour was a Child Offender; 71+ Child Offenders Hanged in Iran since 2010, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/6936/>

<sup>138</sup> IHRNGO, Possible Child Offender Soleiman Abbaspour and Ezat Seyedi Executed in Zanjan, 7 November 2024, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7094/>

**TABLE 1: LIST OF CONFIRMED AND UNCONFIRMED CHILD OFFENDERS EXECUTED IN 2024**

	DATE	NAME	AGE*	CHARGE	LOCATION	SOURCE	DOCUMENT CONFIRMATION OF AGE
1	16 September 2024	Mehdi Jahanpour	16	Murder	Fars-Shiraz	IHRNGO	Confirmed
2	24 April 2024	Pejman Azizi	17	Drug-related	Alborz-Ghezelhesar	IHRNGO	Unconfirmed
3	9 October 2024	Mehdi Barahouyi	17	Murder	Sistan and Baluchistan-Zahedan	Haalvsh	Unconfirmed
4	2 November 2024	Soleiman Abbaspour	17	Murder	Zanjan-Zanjan	IHRNGO	Unconfirmed

\* Age at the time of committing the alleged offence



## WOMEN

Iran is the world's top executioner of women, with at least 31 executed in Iran in 2024, the highest number of women executions since 2010. As previously mentioned, there was a sharp drop in the execution of women on drug-related charges after the 2017 Amendment to the Anti-Narcotics Laws, which was reversed in practice in 2021, consistent with the rise in overall drug-related executions.

In December 2024, IHRNGO published a gendered perspective of women executions in Iran which provides a thorough analysis of the discriminatory laws and societal factors that impact women on death row in Iran.<sup>139</sup> According to the report, between 2010 and November 2024, at least 241 women were executed, with the majority convicted of murder and drug-related offences. Many of the women were victims of domestic violence, child brides, or from marginalised socio-economic backgrounds. The report underscores key challenges such as lack of fair trial rights, gender biases in legal processes, and the absence of support structures for women on death row. IHRNGO also published a report on the inhumane conditions of Qarchak (Gharchak) Prison, where many death row women prisoners are held.<sup>140</sup>

## FACTS AND FIGURES ABOUT WOMEN EXECUTED IN 2024

- At least 31 women were executed in 2024.
- 19 were sentenced to *qisas* for murder.
- 12 women were executed for drug-related charges.
- The identities of 10 of the women are unknown and 4 were only partially identified.
- 2 of the women were Baluch and 2 were Kurdish minorities.
- 9 women were executed for the murder of their husbands.
- At least 2 women were child brides.
- Only 4 of the executions were announced by official sources.
- At least 241 women were executed between 2010 and 2024.

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139 IHRNGO, *Women and the Death Penalty in Iran: a Gendered Perspective*, 2024, <https://iranhr.net/en/reports/41/>

140 IHRNGO, *Qarchak Prison: Hell for Women and Children*, 2024: <https://iranhr.net/en/reports/39/>

## WOMEN EXECUTED IN 2024

### PARVIN MOUSAVI



Parvin Mousavi, was from a deprived background, and her family's breadwinner while her husband and eldest son were behind bars. She was paid 1 million tomans (approx €15) to transport with two others what she was told was medicine, which turned out to be 5 kilograms of morphine. She was the third defendant in the

case, with the first already executed but the second released. After her first transfer for execution, Ejei (IR Head of Judiciary) "himself told her in front of all prisoners that she would be released."<sup>141</sup> Yet, she was executed in Urmia Central Prison on 18 May 2024 at the age of 57.<sup>142</sup>

TABLE 2: LIST OF WOMEN EXECUTED IN 2024

	DATE (2024)	NAME	AGE*	CHARGE	PLACE	SOURCE	OFFICIAL/ UNOFFICIAL
1	20 January	Hajar Atabaki	41	Drug-related	Qazvin Central Prison, Qazvin	IHRNGO	Unofficial
2	31 January	Zahra Nazarian	27	Murder	Sabzevar Prison, Khorasan Razavi	HRANA	Unofficial
3	18 March	Unidentified	Unknown	Drug-related	Tabriz Central Prison, East Azerbaijan	IHRNGO	Unofficial
4	11 April	Marjan Hajizadeh	22	Drug-related	Zanjan Central Prison, Zanjan	IHRNGO	Unofficial
5	25 April	Soraya Mohammadi	Unknown	Murder	Karaj Penitentiary, Alborz	Rokna	Unofficial
6	30 April	Unidentified (Baluch)	Unknown	Drug-related	Birjand Central Prison, South Khorasan	BAC	Unofficial
7	8 May	Fariba Mohammadzehi (Baluch)	33	Drug-related	Kerman Central Prison, Kerman	HRANA	Unofficial
8	15 May	Razieh	37	Murder	Mashhad Central Prison, Khorasan Razavi	Entekhab	Unofficial

141 IHRNGO, Parvin Mousavi to be Hanged in Hours; IHRNGO Calls for Urgent Action to Halt Execution, 16 May 2024, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/6712/>

142 IHRNGO, At Least 6 People Including Parvin Mousavi Executed for Drug Offences in Urmia, 18 May 2024, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/6718/>

9	18 May	Parvin Mousavi	57	Drug-related	Urmia Central Prison, Western Azerbaijan	IHRNGO	Unofficial
10	18 May	Fatemeh Abdollahi	27	Murder	Neishabur Prison, Khorasan Razavi	IHRNGO	Unofficial
11	20 July	Ms Mahmoudinia	Unknown	Murder	Shiraz Central Prison, Fars	IHRNGO	Unofficial
12	23 July	Unidentified	Unknown	Drug-related	Birjand Central Prison, South Khorasan	IHRNGO	Unofficial
13	23 July	Unidentified	Unknown	Drug-related	Birjand Central Prison, South Khorasan	IHRNGO	Unofficial
14	23 July	Unidentified	Unknown	Drug-related	Birjand Central Prison, South Khorasan	IHRNGO	Unofficial
15	27 July	Unidentified	Unknown	Drug-related	Khorramabad Central Prison, Lorestan	IHRNGO	Unofficial
16	1 October	Akhtar Ghorbanlu	Unknown	Murder	Ahar Prison, East Azerbaijan	IHRNGO	Unofficial
17	2 October	Leila Ghaemi	Unknown	Murder	Ghezelhesar Prison, Alborz	Hamshahri	Official
18	2 October	Zahra Feizi	41	Murder	Tabriz Central Prison, Eastern Azerbaijan	IHRNGO	Unofficial
19	9 October	Unidentified	Unknown	Murder	Ghezelhesar Prison, Alborz	IHRNGO	Unofficial
20	14 October	Unidentified	Unknown	Drug-related	Hamedan Central Prison, Hamedan	HRANA	Unofficial
21	20 October	Ms Flrouzi	Unknown	Murder	Tabriz Central Prison, Eastern Azerbaijan	IHRNGO	Unofficial
22	7 November	Unidentified	Unknown	Murder	Rasht Central Prison, Gilan	IHRNGO	Unofficial
23	10 November	Mahrokh Khani	35	Drug-related	Tabriz Central Prison, Eastern Azerbaijan	IHRNGO	Unofficial
24	13 November	Unidentified	Unknown	Murder	Ghezelhesar Prison, Alborz	IHRNGO	Unofficial
25	24 November	Fariba Maleki Shahivand	Unknown	Murder	Khorramabad Central Prison, Lorestan	IHRNGO	Unofficial
26	26 November	Farkhondeh Allahmoradi	50	Murder	Isfahan Central Prison, Isfahan	IHRNGO	Unofficial
27	3 December	Farideh Jafarzadeh	50	Murder	Ilam Central Prison, Ilam	IHRNGO	Unofficial
28	3 December	Alieh Kavari-zadeh	60	Murder	Ilam Central Prison, Ilam	IHRNGO	Unofficial
29	7 December	Ameneh Alipour	37	Murder	Zanjan Central Prison, Zanjan	IHRNGO	Unofficial
30	15 December	Mahboubeh	Unknown	Murder	Yazd Central Prison, Yazd	IHRNGO	Unofficial
31	17 December	Efat Hamedi	35	Murder	Sari Central Prison, Mazandaran	IHRNGO	Unofficial

\* Age at the time of execution

## PSYCHOSOCIAL AND INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

Article 149 of Chapter Two of the Islamic Penal Code (2013) which relates to criminal responsibility states: “If the perpetrator has a mental disorder such that at the time of committing the crime they lack willpower or judgement, they are considered insane and are not criminally responsible.”

While obtaining document evidence of medical diagnosis is difficult due to a lack of transparency, IHRNGO has reported many cases of people suffering from mental disorders being executed throughout the years.

In carrying out such executions, the Islamic Republic of Iran is breaching both its own laws and its international obligations.<sup>143</sup> In 2024, at least five people including protester Mohammad Ghobadlu (see page 54) were executed in contravention of national and international law.

### RASHED BALUCHI



Rashed Baluchi was a 35-year-old Baluch man arrested for murder around six years prior to his execution. According to informed IHRNGO sources, “Rashed got into an argument with a retired IRGC member who worked as a taxi driver on Kish Island. Rashed committed the murder after he insulted him, and they got into a fight.

This is while he had a red card (certificated issued to those deemed mentally unfit to serve mandatory military service) for his mental status and had no prior motive for the murder. However, the court ignored his medical history and sentenced him to death.” Rashed was executed in Bandar Abbas Central Prison in Hormozgan province on 28 April 2024.<sup>144</sup>

<sup>143</sup> See page 31.

<sup>144</sup> IHRNGO, 2 Men Including Baluch with Acute Mental Condition Executed, 29 April 2024, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/6667/>

## ALIREZA RAZAVI KHALEGHABADI



Alireza Razavi Khaleghabadi was a 26-year-old man from Yazd whose orchard had been confiscated by the government and four security men had been assigned to guard it. Despite all efforts to recover his property, he was unsuccessful. In an act of rage, he attacked and killed the four state guards. According to his lawyer, Alireza

“suffered from mental illness and had a history of being sectioned in a psychiatric hospital”. He was arrested on 27 May 2022 and sentenced to death for both murder and *moharebeh* charges but was ultimately hanged for the murder charges in Ghezelhesar Prison on 23 October 2024.<sup>145</sup>

## EZAT SEYEDI



Ezat Seyedi was a 40-year-old man arrested for murder in 2019, five years prior to his execution. According to informed IHRNGO sources, Ezat suffered from intellectual disabilities and had accidentally killed his friend while they were joking around with a rifle. He was executed in Zanjan Central Prison on 2 November 2024.<sup>146</sup>

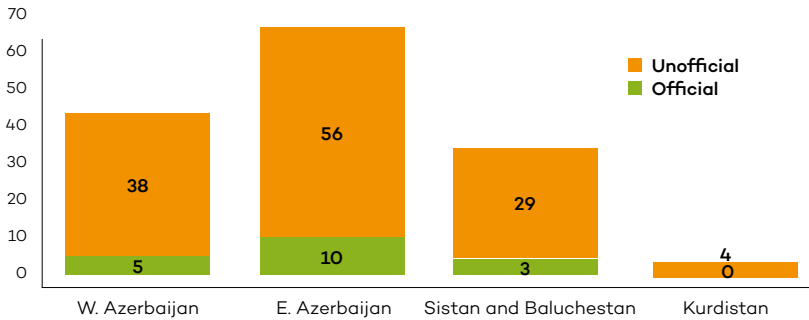
145 IHRNGO, At Least 6 Men Executed in Ghezelhesar Prison, 1 November 2024, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7069/>

146 IHRNGO, Possible Child Offender Soleiman Abbaspour and Ezat Seyedi Executed in Zanjan, 7 November 2024, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7094/>

## ETHNIC MINORITIES

As this report and previous annual reports demonstrate, ethnic minorities in Iran are overrepresented in death penalty statistics. According to the present report, 145 people were executed in the 4 ethnic provinces of West Azerbaijan, East Azerbaijan, Sistan and Baluchistan, and Kurdistan in 2024. This number was 150 in 2023, 130 in 2022, 62 in 2021 and 60 in 2020.

As the execution of ethnic minorities are not implemented exclusively in their home provinces, it is difficult to identify the exact number of executions of each ethnic minority group. In 2024, execution of Baluch and Kurdish prisoners were carried out in 13 and 16 different provinces, respectively. Furthermore, information about those executed does not always include their ethnicity. Executions of Baluch prisoners are in many cases carried out in prisons outside the Baluchistan region.



In 2024, more than 88% of the executions recorded by IHRNGO in East and West Azerbaijan, Kurdistan and Sistan and Baluchistan were not announced by the authorities.

Furthermore, the absolute majority of those executed for their political affiliation belong to ethnic groups, the Kurdish in particular. An overview of IHRNGO reports between 2010-2024 shows that at least 164 people were executed for affiliation to banned political and armed groups. Of those, 85 (52%) were Kurdish, 45 (29%) were Baluch and 24 (16%) were Arab, with a majority of them being Sunni Muslims.

There are several possible reasons for the overrepresentation of ethnic groups in execution figures. One explanation might be that the authorities use more violence to create fear due to higher opposition amongst the population in those regions. During the nationwide protests following Jina (Mahsa) Amini's state killing, Kurdish regions and Baluchistan were the areas with the longest-lasting protests, and almost half of all protesters killed on the streets

were from Baluchistan, Kurdistan and other Kurdish towns in other provinces. The authorities' targeted propaganda labelling its critics in the ethnic regions as separatists, as well as the presence of armed groups in those regions makes it easier for authorities to justify death sentences under the pretext of fighting terrorism and separatism. All this has led to less domestic and international sensitivity to the execution of people from ethnic regions, and thus, a lower political cost for the atrocities. Finally, with these regions already suffering from poor socio-economic conditions, local judicial offices also act more lawlessly and arbitrarily in the four ethnic provinces.

## EXECUTION OF BALUCH MINORITIES

There are no official figures for the population of Baluch minorities in Iran, but different sources estimate the number to be between 1.5<sup>147</sup> and 4.8 million,<sup>148</sup> accounting for 2-6% of Iran's total population. However, research and monitoring by IHRNGO shows that at least 108 Baluch prisoners were executed, accounting for 11% of all recorded executions in Iran in 2024. 81 of the 108 executions took place in prisons of 12 provinces outside Sistan and Baluchistan province. The gross overrepresentation of Baluch people in the execution figures in previous years (20% in 2023 and 30% in 2022) in Iran has elicited reactions from rights groups and the international community.<sup>149</sup> This might have contributed to a relative reduction in Baluch executions in 2024.

## FACTS AND FIGURES ABOUT BALUCH EXECUTIONS IN 2024

- At least 108 individuals from Baluch minorities were executed, accounting for 11% of the total executions in 2024.
- 85 were executed for drug-related offences, accounting for nearly 17% of all drug-related executions in 2024, compared to 138 drug-related executions (30%) in 2023.
- 21 were executed on murder charges (*qisas*), compared to 22 executions for murder charges in 2023.
- 2 were executed for security-related charges, compared to 7 security-related executions in 2023.
- 2 women were amongst those executions (3 women in 2023).
- Only 11 (10%) of the executions were officially announced.

147 The Iran Primer, Iran Minorities 2: Ethnic Diversity, 3 September 2013, <https://iranprimer.usip.org/blog/2013/sep/03/iran-minorities-2-ethnic-diversity>

148 Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation, West Balochistan, <https://unpo.org/members/7922>

149 UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Javaid Rehman, Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, 2024, *op. cit.*

- Executions took place in 21 prisons, compared to 27 in 2023, 22 in 2022 and 10 in 2021.
- Sistan and Baluchestan, Kerman, and South Khorasan were the provinces with the highest number of executed Baluch individuals, with 27, 20, and 19 people, respectively.

## EXECUTION OF KURDISH MINORITIES

As aforementioned, Kurdish prisoners are grossly overrepresented among security-related executions as they account for more than 50% of those executed for affiliation to banned opposition groups in the last 15 years.

According to different NGO sources Kurds account for around 10-13% of Iran's population.<sup>150</sup> Estimating the exact number of Kurdish individuals executed for ordinary crime charges in Iran presents significant challenges due to several factors. Unlike ethnic groups like the Baluch, Kurdish people's surnames do not always clearly reflect their ethnicity, making it difficult to identify and verify cases based solely on their names or official records. Additionally, Kurdish communities are spread across multiple provinces, including Kurdistan, West Azerbaijan, Kermanshah, and Ilam, as well as other regions, further complicating efforts to provide precise figures. Thus, the figures presented here may be grossly underestimated.

## FACTS AND FIGURES ABOUT KURDISH EXECUTIONS IN 2024

- At least 84 Kurdish minorities were executed, accounting for nearly 9% of the total executions in 2024.
- 37 were executed for drug-related offences, accounting for around 7% of all drug-related executions in 2024.
- 38 were executed on murder charges (*qisas*).
- 9 were executed for security-related charges.
- Only 6 (7%) of the executions were officially announced.
- Executions took place in 16 different provinces.
- West Azerbaijan, Alborz/Tehran, and Ilam were the provinces with the highest number of executed Kurdish individuals, with 23, 14, and 9 people, respectively.

<sup>150</sup> See, for example, Minority Rights Group, Kurds in Iran, 2017, <https://minorityrights.org/communities/kurds-4/>; and Institut Kurde, The Kurdish Population, <https://www.institutkurde.org/en/info/the-kurdish-population-1232551004>



## FOREIGN CITIZENS

Afghans constitute the largest group of non-Iranian execution and death row cases in Iranian prisons. In 2021, no execution of Afghan nationals was recorded until September, when five men were executed in the space of 35 days. On 10 October 2021, IHRNGO expressed its concern that the Taliban takeover in August had facilitated the execution of Afghan nationals.<sup>151</sup> That number more than tripled in 2022, with 16 Afghan nationals executed, including a child offender and a woman. In 2023, the number of Afghan nationals executed rose to 25, and this number more than tripled in 2024, with 80 executions recorded.

There is no public information available about the number of Afghan nationals on death row in Iranian prisons, but the numbers are believed to be high, particularly in prisons in the eastern part of the country. It is important to note that executions of Afghan nationals are not normally announced by authorities and they generally do not have a family network or lawyers who can raise awareness about their situation. As such, their number may be higher than those we have been able to verify.

In addition to the 80 Afghans, two Iraqi nationals were executed in 2024.

## FACTS AND FIGURES ABOUT AFGHAN NATIONAL EXECUTIONS IN 2024

- At least 80 Afghan men were executed.
- Only 6 executions of Afghan nationals, or 7.5% of the executions, were reported by official sources.
- 39 were executed for drug-related offences.
- 31 were executed for murder charges.
- 9 Afghans were executed for rape charges.
- One Afghan national who was executed for the security-related charges of *moharebeh* suffered from psychosocial and intellectual disabilities.
- One Afghan national was publicly hanged.
- 24 of those executed were not identified and 5 were only identified by their first names.
- The execution of Afghan nationals took place in 15 provinces, 30 of them in Alborz/Tehran prisons.

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151 IHRNGO, 226 Executions Recorded in 2021: Sharp Rise in Drug Executions, 10 October 2021, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/4917/>

## AFGHAN NATIONALS EXECUTED IN 2024

### ASHRAF AKRAMOLLAH

Ashraf Akramollah moved to Iran from Jalal Abad with his family when he was 11 years old. In 2010, his father was executed in Isfahan Central Prison. Ashraf told his cellmates that his father had worked at a greengrocery, where the owner was also selling drugs without his father's knowledge. When 900 grams of methamphetamine was discovered, it was Ashraf's father who was arrested and executed. Years later, when Ashraf saw a fight taking place, he tried to act as a mediator to end it. According to informed sources, someone had attacked another person with a knife and unlike the others, Ashraf did not run away. He stayed until the police arrived at the scene and was the one arrested and sentenced to death. He was executed at the same prison as his father on 18 February 2024.<sup>152</sup>

### NEZAMODDIN NOURALHAGH



Nezamoddin Nouralghagh was a 27-year-old Afghan national from Mazare Sharif who lived in Shiraz with his mother and younger sister. He was arrested for a murder during a fight in a fruit and vegetable market. According to informed IHRNGO sources, Nezamoddin had tried to break up the fight but he was

blamed for the killing because he was Afghan. A year after arrest, he was executed in Shiraz Central Prison on 25 November 2024.<sup>153</sup>

### ESMAIL BAREKZAEI



Esmail Barezaei was a 33-year-old Afghan man from Farah city who lived in Meybod with his sister and brother. He was around 18 when he was accused of killing someone in a street fight. He was sentenced to death and executed in Yazd Central Prison on 28 November 2024.<sup>154</sup>

152 IHRNGO, Afghan National, Ashraf Akramollah Executed in Isfahan/Father Executed 15 years Ago, 20 February 2024, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/6577/>

153 IHRNGO, Reza Shahbazi Khalari and Nezamoddin Nouralghagh Executed in Shiraz, 27 November 2024, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7144/>

154 IHRNGO, 2 Men Including Afghan National Executed in Yazd, 2 December 2024, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7165/>

## DUAL NATIONALS

Iran does not recognise dual nationality and thus denies consular access to dual citizens. It also uses imprisoned dual nationals and foreign nationals as bargaining chips in political and economic negotiations with the West. In April 2019, then Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif declared that he had the authority to exchange Iranian-Americans imprisoned in Iran with the U.S., an admission that these prisoners were being used as political hostages.<sup>155</sup> As well as arresting foreign and dual-nationals to use as pawns in their hostage diplomacy, three dissidents were kidnapped from neighbouring countries with assistance from an international drug-cartel and transferred to Iran: Ruhollah Zam from Iraq in October 2019, Jamshid Sharmahd from the United Arab Emirates in July 2020 and Habib Asyoud from Turkey in October 2020. Ruhollah Zam was executed in December 2020,<sup>156</sup> Habib Asyoud was executed in 2023,<sup>157</sup> and Jamshid Sharmahd was executed in 2024. At the time of writing, only one dual-national, Ahmadreza Djalali, remains on death row in Iran.

### DUAL-NATIONALS EXECUTED IN 2024 JAMSHID SHARMAHD



Jamshid Sharmahd was an Iranian-German dissident and father of two kidnapped on a layover in Dubai when flying to the United States, his country of residence, in 2020. His torture-tainted confessions were aired shortly after his arrest. Jamshid was held in solitary confinement and denied legal representation, due process

and the right to a fair trial. After being held in pre-trial detention for over a year and a half, his first hearing took place on 6 February 2022. Presided by Judge Salavati, a “hanging judge” on the USA sanctions list, Branch 15 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court held multiple

155 The New York Times, Iran’s Foreign Minister Proposes Prisoner Exchange with U.S., 24 April 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/24/world/middleeast/iran-zarif-prisoner-exchange.html>

156 IHRNGO, Execution of Dissident Journalist Ruhollah Zam is a Crime and Iran Authorities Must be Held Accountable, 12 December 2020, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/4527/>

157 IHRNGO, Iran Human Rights Calls for Strong International Response To Execution of Swedish-Iranian Habib Asyoud, 6 May 2023, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/5874/>

hearings for charges of “efsad-fil-arz through planning and directing terrorist acts”, including the 2010 bombing. Jamshid was sentenced to death on 21 February 2023<sup>158</sup> and his sentence was upheld by the Supreme Court on 26 April 2023.<sup>159</sup> Despite all efforts, particularly by his daughter Ghazaleh, the Judiciary’s Mizan news agency reported that his sentence was carried out at an undisclosed location on 28 October 2024.<sup>160</sup>

They later claimed that Jamshid had died prior to his execution and changed the wording of their report.<sup>161</sup> The screenshots below retrieved by IHRNGO show the changing in the words of the report below the photo.

**جمشید شارمهد به سزای اعمالش رسید**  
۷ آبان ۱۴۰۳ - کد خبر: ۴۸۰۱۱۴۳  
دسته بندی: قضایی، حقوقی

**جمشید شارمهد به سزای اعمالش رسید**  
۱۳ دیدگاه دسته بندی: قضایی، حقوقی، تعداد نظرات: ۱۳

**حکم جمشید شارمهد سرکرده گروهک تروریستی تندر اجرا شد.**

**THE SENTENCE OF JAMSHID SHARMAHD LEADER OF THE TERRORIST TONDAR GROUP WAS CARRIED OUT.**

خبرگزاری میزبان - به گزارش مرکز رسانه قوه قضائیه پس از طی روال قانونی و تایید نهایی رای دادگاه در دیوان عالی کشور، حکم جمشید شارمهد سرکرده گروهک تروریستی تندر صبح امروز به اجرا درآمد.

**JAMSHID SHARMAHD LEADER OF THE TERRORIST TONDAR GROUP MET THE CONSEQUENCES OF HIS ACTIONS.**  
خبرگزاری میزبان - خبرگزاری میزبان - جمشید شارمهد سرکرده گروهک مزدور انجمن پادشاهی معروف به تندر،

158 IHRNGO, Iran Human Rights Calls for Strong EU Reaction to Dual-national Jamshid Sharmahd’s Death Sentence, 21 February 2023, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/5738/>

159 IHRNGO, German-Iranian Jamshid Sharmahd at Imminent Risk of Execution, 26 April 2023, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/5830/>

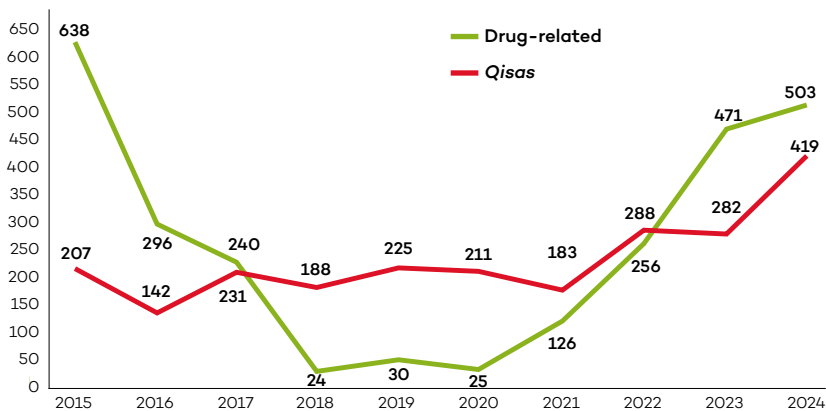
160 IHRNGO, Kidnapped Iranian-German dissident Jamshid Sharmahd Executed; IHRNGO Calls for Strong International Reaction, 28 October 2024, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7055/>

161 <https://www.mizanonline.ir/fa/news/4801143/جمشید-شارمهد-به-سزای-اعمالش-رسید-%C2%A0>

# WAYS TO RESTRICT THE USE OF THE DEATH PENALTY IN IRAN

## SUSTAINED DOMESTIC CAMPAIGNING AND INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE

The 2017 Amendments to the Anti-Narcotics Law, which was impelled by international pressure on the Islamic Republic to decrease drug-related executions, led to the most significant reduction in the number of implemented death sentences in the Islamic Republic's history. From an average of about 403 annual executions between 2010-2017, the numbers dropped to fewer than 30 drug-related executions per year. At the time of the 2017 Amendment, IHRNGO warned that the Amendment would not lead to sustained reduction in the use of the death penalty as it did not address the issue of lack of due process and unfair trials. As feared, the impact of the Amendment only lasted for three years. In 2021, the number of drug-related executions increased fivefold, a ten-fold increase in 2022, an eighteen-fold increase in 2023, and a nineteen-fold increase in 2024, compared to the annual average in the three years following enforcement of the new Amendment (2018-2020). This trend is likely to continue, as this hike has not been met with adequate international condemnation. Between 2018 and 2020, when the number of drug-related executions were relatively low, *qisas* executions (death penalty as retribution-in-kind) accounted for the majority of all executions. These two charges together have accounted for more than 90% of all executions in the last 10 years. Reducing the use of the death penalty in Iran is therefore dependent on a change in *qisas* laws and practices, in addition to an abolition of the death penalty for drug-related offences.



While the number of drug-related executions decreased significantly after its peak in 2015, the number of *qisas* executions fluctuated slightly in both directions. In 2024, we observed the highest number of *qisas* executions since 2008. The increase in drug-related executions that began in 2021, continued in 2024 and reached 503 recorded executions, which is 19 times higher than the annual average in 2018-2020.

Experience over the past two decades has shown that the international community and Iranian civil society are the main driving forces behind any reform aimed at limiting the use of the death penalty in Iran. Halting the implementation of stoning punishments, which were carried out for adultery, and reducing the use of the death penalty for drug-related offences from 2018 to 2020 were two significant steps taken by the Iranian authorities to restrict the death penalty's scope.

Both changes occurred as a result of simultaneous domestic campaigns and international pressure. The EU made the ban on stoning a condition for improved economic relations with Iran.<sup>162</sup> While the reduction in the number of drug-related executions was the result of a change of law and anticipated to be long-lasting, the recent rise in drug-related executions has demonstrated that the 2017 Amendment was not sustainable in restricting the use of the death penalty. Death sentences for drug offences can be issued by authorities through the Revolutionary Courts as long as capital punishment is sanctioned for drug offences and as long as the right to due process and fair trial are not guaranteed.

162 BBC News, Improve human rights, EU urges Iran, 4 February 2003, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/2726009.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/2726009.stm)

Likewise, the halt in implementing stoning punishments should be regarded as temporary, as it too is still provided for in law. A directive from the Head of the Judiciary on the implementation of punishments published in June 2019 describes in detail how stoning sentences should be carried out. Stoning punishments can therefore be implemented again if international human rights mechanisms reduce scrutiny on the human rights situation in Iran.

Thus, sustained international pressure and domestic campaigns must call for a total abolition of these sentences in the law. A more detailed description of the events leading to changes in law and practice in the case of drug-related executions and stoning punishments can be found in the 2018 *Annual Report on the Death Penalty in Iran*.<sup>163</sup>

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163 IHRNGO and ECPM, *Annual Report on the Death Penalty in Iran*, 2018, <https://iranhr.net/en/reports/21/>

# CATEGORIES OF THE DEATH PENALTY WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF IMPROVEMENT

## CHILD OFFENDER EXECUTIONS

Iran has amassed the highest number of child offender executions in the last 20 years. According to reports by IHRNGO and Amnesty International, between 1999 and 2022, Iranian authorities implemented 105 (77%) of at least 136 child offender executions worldwide. Iran is also the only country to carry out the execution of child offenders every single year for the last 10 years. Both Iranian civil society and the international community are highly sensitive to this issue. Due to sustained international pressure between 2007 and 2013, Iranian authorities introduced some changes to the the IPC regarding the death penalty for child offenders. However, these changes did not lead to a decrease in the number of executions. Stronger, co-ordinated pressure by the international community can lead to the end of child offender executions in Iran. Islamic Republic authorities refer to Islamic jurisprudence, which states that the age of “maturity” and thus the age of criminal responsibility to be 9 lunar years for girls and 15 lunar years for boys. This is despite the fact that 18 is already used as the age for a person to be considered to have reached “maturity” in other circumstances. For instance, passports are issued to citizens above 18 upon presentation of their birth certificate and national ID card. But children below 18 and unmarried women above 18 must obtain the permission of their father or closest male relative, and married women must present their husband’s permission in order to be issued with a passport. Changing the age of criminal responsibility to 18 would therefore not represent a complex deviation from Islamic law.

## PUBLIC EXECUTIONS

Iran is one of the very few countries that still carries out public executions. The issue has been raised repeatedly by the international community. There has also been debate amongst Iranian civil society



and even in the Iranian Parliament on the topic.<sup>164</sup> Several senior Iranian clerics (ayatollahs) have even stated that implementing punishments in public is not a religious necessity and should not be carried out if the negative side effects outweigh the benefits.<sup>165</sup> One of the biggest negative side effects is international condemnation. Although the government (led by the president) does not have the authority to issue and implement death sentences according to the Iranian Constitution, public executions seem to be the exception to this rule. At the local level, the governor representing the government has the power to decide whether an execution should be carried out in public or not.<sup>166</sup> As the government is the counterpart of Iran's dialogue partners, it is easier to exert pressure on them to stop the practice of public executions. Hence, stopping this practice demands focused and sustained pressure from the international community. Moreover, the pause in the implementation of public executions caused by COVID-19 restrictions lowered the public's tolerance of public executions. Since 2022, the authorities have gradually resumed public executions, with two in 2022, seven in 2023 and four in 2024. International pressure, especially from countries with closer diplomatic dialogue with the Islamic Republic, can raise the political cost of public executions.

## QISAS

Unlike public executions, *qisas* for murder is specified by *Sharia* law, and as long as the Penal Code is based on *Sharia*, Iranian authorities consider its removal a red line that cannot be crossed. They claim *qisas* to be a private right of the victim's family which they cannot deny or control. According to the IPC, murder is punishable by *qisas*, allowing the victim's family to demand death as retribution. However, they can also demand blood money (*diya*) instead, or can simply grant forgiveness. Although opposing *qisas* is considered a serious crime according to Iranian law, promoting forgiveness is regarded as a good deed according to Islam. This offers several possibilities in reducing the number of *qisas* executions, which is the second highest execution category. A brief description of actions which might contribute to reducing the number of such executions are presented below.

164 <https://www.radiofarda.com/a/iran-execution-whipping-law/29314017.html>

165 <https://www.tabnak.ir/fa/news/380428/قنوی-برخی-مراجع-درباره-اجرای-حدود-در-مأ-عام/380428>

166 [https://www.parliran.ir/majles/fa/Content/\\_/5004-قانون-راجع-به-وظایف-و-اختیارات-استانداران-5004](https://www.parliran.ir/majles/fa/Content/_/5004-قانون-راجع-به-وظایف-و-اختیارات-استانداران-5004)

- **Distinction between murder and manslaughter:** Those charged with the umbrella term of “intentional murder” are sentenced to *qisas* regardless of intent (*mens rea*) or circumstances, due to a lack of grading in law. Many are executed each year for murders committed unintentionally or in self-defence. Making this distinction would reduce the number of executions.
- **Long prison terms for murder convicts forgiven by the plaintiff:** One of the arguments used by those defending *qisas* death sentences is that once forgiven (by paying *diya* for instance), someone who has committed a serious crime and who could be dangerous will be released into society after a short prison term. This notion makes the plaintiff hesitate in choosing *diya* or forgiveness instead of *qisas*. This issue can be resolved by the introduction of a compulsory minimum prison term for all murder convicts who have been forgiven by the plaintiff. The prison term should be long enough so that the plaintiff feels a sense of justice that the convict is being punished.
- **One rate for *diya* and state support to cover if necessary:** The minimum rate of *diya* is set by the authorities. However, because there are no caps on *diya* amounts, the victim's family can demand a sum much higher than the minimum rate. Besides adding to the discriminatory nature of *qisas* (the poor are executed while the rich can afford to pay their way out), it also makes it difficult for the state to at least partially subsidise *diya*.
- **Promoting forgiveness through civil society:** In the past few years, an increasing number of civil society groups have been working to promote forgiveness instead of *qisas*. Disturbingly, the Imam Ali Popular Student Relief Society (IAPSRs) which was at the forefront of the forgiveness movement,<sup>167</sup> particularly for child offenders, was disbanded as a result of a motion by the Ministry of Interior. Both the Iranian authorities and the international community must support, not hinder, efforts and groups advocating for forgiveness instead of *qisas*.

167 IHRNGO, Iran: Joint Statement on Court-Ordered Dissolution of Prominent Charity Group, 11 March 2021, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/4663/>

# MOVEMENTS PROMOTING ABOLITION AND MOBILISING CIVIL SOCIETY INSIDE IRAN

Over the last four years, there has been a growing trend of Iranians expressing their opposition to the death penalty. This trend reached its 44-year peak to save “Woman, Life, Freedom” protesters with protests held inside and outside prisons, hunger strikes, acts of protest, including wall writing, and online activism.

The 2020 #اعدام\_نکنید (don't execute) online campaign, which successfully saved the lives of seven protesters from death row, expanded to #نه\_به\_اعدام (no death penalty) and in 2024, the #NoDeathPenaltyTuesdays abolitionist movement was born in Iranian prisons.

As in 2023, families and activists gathered outside prisons in an attempt to save death row prisoners' lives. On 8 and 22 January 2024, ordinary citizens and activists joined protester Mohammad Ghabadlu's family outside Ghezelhesar Prison to save his life.



When Hamid Nouryi, one of the perpetrators of the 1988 massacre of political prisoners visited the Humanities College of Tehran University on 6 November 2024, students wrote signs that read: “Against Forgetting, the Khavaran Massacre.” Khavaran is the most famous site of a 1988 massacre mass grave.

## NO DEATH PENALTY TUESDAYS

After bearing witness to months of weekly group executions in Karaj, the execution of several political prisoners in January 2024, and the crackdown of the protest by ordinary crimes prisoners, a group of brave political prisoners<sup>168</sup> in Ghezelhesar Prison staged a protest which was also violently suppressed. The diverse group of political prisoners from different backgrounds and beliefs thus began a weekly hunger strike on 30 January 2024 that became known as “Black Tuesdays”<sup>169</sup> and later as “No Death Penalty Tuesdays.”<sup>170</sup> They chose Tuesdays for that is the day death row inmates are typically transferred to solitary confinement in preparation for the gallows in Ghezelhesar Prison. Despite crackdowns and punitive measures, the “No Death Penalty Tuesdays” movement persevered and soon began spreading to other prisons across the country. At the time of writing, 35 prisons are taking part in the weekly mass hunger strikes. To mark the first anniversary of the movement, IHRNGO issued a statement calling for support. Director Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam said: “The ‘No Death Penalty Tuesdays’ campaign marks a turning point in the movement to abolish the death penalty in Iran.” He further said, “This initiative could be the beginning of a broader social movement against the death penalty in Iran.”<sup>171</sup>

## GLOBAL SOLIDARITY WITH IRAN'S ABOLITIONIST MOVEMENT

On 28 August 2024, IHRNGO, ECPM and 66 other rights organisations from four continents signed a joint statement in support and solidarity with the “No Death Penalty Tuesdays” weekly hunger strikes in Iranian prisons.<sup>172</sup>

By October 2024, when IHRNGO co-hosted a 24-hour livestream in support of the abolitionist campaign for World Day Against the Death Penalty, the number of prisons had risen to 21.<sup>173</sup> The event

168 The “No Death Penalty Tuesdays” hunger strikes were started by Ghezelhesar political prisoners Zartosht Ahmadi Ragheb, Loghman Aminpour, Meisam Dabbanzadeh, Jafar Ebrahimi, Sepehr Emam Jomeh, Ahmadsraza Haeri, Reza Mohammad Hosseini, Saeed Masouri, Reza Salmanzadeh and Hamzeh Savari (listed in alphabetical order).

169 IHRNGO, “Black Tuesdays” Prison Hunger Strikes Against the Death Penalty, 20 March 2024, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/6625/>

170 IHRNGO, 85+ Executions in 20 Days; IHRNGO Urges International Solidarity With “No Death Penalty Tuesdays” Movement, 20 August 2024, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/6870/>

171 IHRNGO, Call for Support of “No Death Penalty Tuesdays” Abolitionist Campaign in Iran on First Year Anniversary, 21 January 2025, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7291/>

172 IHRNGO, 68 Organisations Declare Support for “No Death Penalty Tuesdays” Abolitionist Movement in Iran, 27 August 2024, <https://iranhr.net/en/statement/68/>

173 IHRNGO, 24-Hour Livestream in Support of “No Death Penalty Tuesdays” in Iran, 8 October 2024, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/6986/>

was welcomed by many Iranian and international human rights organisations and personalities. More than 120 people from the four corners of the globe declared their support of the movement by joining the livestream. Simultaneously, seven different cities staged protests in their centres to show solidarity with the abolitionist movement.<sup>174</sup> In addition, human rights defenders Narges Mohammadi (in prison at that time), and Nasrin Sotoudeh sent messages of support and solidarity from inside Iran. In its 39<sup>th</sup> week, families of death row prisoners joined the movement by protesting outside the Iranian Parliament for two weeks.

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174 IHRNGO, Global Solidarity with “No Death Penalty Tuesdays” Abolitionist Movement Ahead of World Day Against the Death Penalty, 15 October 2024, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7006/>

# FORGIVENESS MOVEMENT

As mentioned in the section on *qisas* executions, according to the IPC, murder is punished by *qisas*, where the family of the victim can demand a retribution death sentence. But they can also demand blood money (*diya*) instead of a death sentence or can simply grant forgiveness. This opens an opportunity for citizens to counter the death penalty by promoting forgiveness without being subjected to persecution by the authorities. In the past six years, the movement for forgiveness has grown significantly. Ordinary citizens, celebrities, civil society and other local and national campaigns have been active in promoting forgiveness instead of the death penalty.

There are many inspiring stories like that of Hossein, a young man who was on death row for murder. After the victim's family forgave him, Hossein decided to help save others by acting as a mediator with victim families and saved at least one person from the death penalty.<sup>175</sup>



One of the emblematic cases in 2024 was that of Abbas Karimi, a 36-year-old man on death row for an unintentional killing during a street fight. The victim's family set a deadline to receive 70 billion tomans (€1,060,000) as *diya*. After his two young children, Ali and Aileen appealed for help to save their dad, civil society and

locals began a campaign that saw fundraisers on Instagram live at their home on a nightly basis, meetings with the victim's family to obtain their forgiveness. People from all backgrounds from across the country chipped in and a local singer penned and sang a song for him. While the fundraisers raised a substantial amount, notably the first *diya* instalment, there was ultimately not enough time to raise the full amount within the deadline. After failing to raise the money, Abbas was transferred for execution on 3 October 2024 but was granted a last-minute extension as he was about to be executed. Though the victim's family agreed to accept house deeds plus 40 billion tomans, Abbas Karimi was executed in Isfahan Central Prison on 17 October.

175 <https://www.hamshahrionline.ir/news/867469/قاتل-بخشیده-شده-فرشته-نجات-قاتلی-دیگر-شد>

His children wrote: “We gave them 50 billion tomans in cheques and the deeds to four properties but they still executed my dad.”<sup>176</sup> At his funeral, hundreds turned up to pay their respects and support Ali and Aileen.



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176 IHRNGO, Abbas Karimi and Mohammad Ali Najafi Executed in Isfahan; 92 Executions Recorded in 17 Days, 17 October 2024, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7015/>

# REPRESSION OF ABOLITIONIST ACTIVISTS

The crackdown on abolitionist civil society intensified in 2024 through increased pressure and new trumped-up charges against activists. Below are just three of the many abolitionist activists targeted in 2024.

## GOLROKH EBRAHIMI-IRAAE



Golrokh Ebrahimi-Iraee is a human rights activist and abolitionist who was first arrested in 2014. Behind bars, she received additional punishment for speaking out against the death penalty. She was released in May 2022 and violently rearrested on 26 September 2022 during the “Woman, Life, Freedom”

nationwide protests. Her trial took place at Branch 26 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court on 4 January 2023 and she was subsequently sentenced on 13 April 2023. Golrokh was sentenced to six years’ imprisonment for charges of “assembly and collusion against national security,” one year for “propaganda” and a two-year ban on membership of groups and parties and the confiscation of her phone. In April 2023, she sent a message to the “Dialogue to Save Iran” online conference, for which she was banned from receiving visits. Her family reported that she had refused to attend her appeal hearing or request amnesty on 19 June 2023. On appeal, a five-year prison term and additional punishments were upheld. Golrokh continues to speak out against the death penalty and for the most voiceless prisoners while serving her sentence in Evin Prison.<sup>177</sup>

177 IHRNGO, Golrokh Ebrahimi-Iraee, 1 July 2023, <https://iranhr.net/en/people/6092/>



## NARGES MOHAMMADI



Narges Mohammadi is a prominent human rights defender, 2023 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and member of the anti-death penalty campaign LEGAM. She was first arrested in 1998 and has served multiple sentences since. She was released from prison after five years behind bars on 8 October 2020.<sup>178</sup>

She was re-arrested on 16 November 2022, during the “Woman, Life, Freedom” nationwide protests.<sup>179</sup> On 24 January 2022, Narges was sentenced to eight years’ imprisonment and 70 lashes in a trial that lasted only five minutes.<sup>180</sup> On 4 August 2023, she was sentenced to a further year of imprisonment for the charge of “propaganda against the system” for a statement issued from behind bars about the rape and sexual assault of jailed women and a letter to Javid Rehman, then UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Iran which was published by BBC World News. On 15 January 2024, Narges received an additional 15 months’ imprisonment for charges of “propaganda against the system”, in addition to a two-year ban on using a mobile phone, leaving Iran, residing in Tehran and neighbouring provinces and membership of social and political groups as additional punishment.<sup>181</sup> On 18 June 2024, she was sentenced to another one year prison term by Branch 29 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court on the charge of “propaganda against the system” for her letters to the Norwegian and Swedish parliaments and call for the boycott of the elections.<sup>182</sup> After protesting against the execution of Reza Rasayi (see page 55) with other Evin political prisoners on 6 August 2024, Narges received another six months in prison for “disobeying and resisting orders” on 19 October 2024 by Branch 2 of Qods Criminal Court.

Narges was released from prison on 4 December 2024 after the temporary suspension of her sentence. The decision not to release her on medical furlough was heavily criticised by her family and lawyers who demanded a three-month furlough which would still

178 IHRNGO, Iran: Political Prisoner Narges Mohammadi Released from Prison, 8 October 2020, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/4459/>

179 IHRNGO, Families of Slain Protesters and Activists Arrested Days Prior to Anniversary, 16 November 2021, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/4973/>

180 IHRNGO, Narges Mohammadi Sentenced to 8 Years and 70 Lashes in New Fabricated Case, 23 January 2022, <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/5071/>

181 IHRNGO, Narges Mohamadi, 1 July 2023, <https://iranhr.net/en/people/6086/>

182 <https://x.com/MostafaNili58/status/1803010508565413984>

count towards her sentence. Narges has been a vocal advocate for the abolition of the death penalty and upholding human rights and democratic values while pursuing medical treatment outside prison.

## ARASH SADEGHI



Arash Sadeghi is a human rights activist and abolitionist who was first arrested in 2009 and has spent years behind bars despite suffering from chondrosarcoma, a rare type of bone cancer. He was most recently arrested during the “Woman, Life, Freedom” nationwide protests on

12 October 2022. Arash was released on bail on 21 January 2023. On 25 January, Branch 26 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court sentenced him in absentia to five years of imprisonment for “assembly and collusion against national security” and eight months for “propaganda”, in addition to a two-year ban on leaving the country and presence in Tehran, his city of residence. On appeal, the sentence was reduced to three years and eight months for the first charge and eight months for the charge of propaganda. He also received additional punishments, including a two-year ban from leaving the country, membership of political groups, presence online, and two-year exile. The sentence was upheld by Branch 36 of the Tehran Court of Appeal on 14 September 2023 and sent for implementation. His lawyer has presented evidence to the Forensic Medical Organisation that Arash is not fit to serve his sentence.<sup>183</sup> Arash is currently out of prison awaiting his fate. He continues to speak out against the death penalty and human rights violations.

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183 IHRNGO, Arash Sadeghi, 1 June 2023, <https://iranhr.net/en/people/5554/>

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## Iran Human Rights (IHRNGO) and ECPM (Together Against the Death Penalty) call on:

### The international community to:

- Ensure human rights violations, including the use of the death penalty and Iran's treaty obligations, is the top priority in all future talks, negotiations, and cooperation agreements with the Islamic Republic
- Condition any bilateral and international funding and cooperation of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) with the Islamic Republic to a complete halt to the death penalty for drug offenses and measurable progress in compliance with human rights standards
- Ensure that any investment, funding, trade and cooperation programme in Iran is not used to participate in, facilitate or support the commission of executions, or any other violation of human rights law.
- Support the mandates of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran.
- Ensure a follow up of conclusions of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Iran (FFMI) on holding those responsible accountable for grave human rights violations in Iran.
- Encourage Iran to ratify the International Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR (OP2), to support recommendations from States made in the framework of the UPR in relation with the abolition of the death penalty and to seriously consider abstaining or voting in favour of the UNGA Resolution calling for a universal moratorium on the use of the death penalty in 2026.
- Strongly encourage Iran to respect its international obligations, including the ICCPR and the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) by putting a permanent end to public executions, abolishing the death penalty for offences that do not qualify as "the most serious crimes", removing mandatory death sentences from the Penal Code, putting an end to sentences and executions of persons who were under the age of 18 at the time of the alleged crime for which they were sentenced, and ensuring due process.
- Call on Iran to establish a moratorium on the use of the death penalty and to move towards abolition of the death penalty.

- Advocate major reforms within the country's judicial system, which does not currently meet minimum international standards, including ending the practice of forced confessions, torture and the existence of the Revolutionary Courts.
- Call for the protection, cessation of harassment and immediate release of all human rights defenders and anti-death penalty activists, including Narges Mohammadi and Golrokh Iraee, and drop the charges against Arash Sadeghi and Nasrin Sotoudeh, all of whom have endured long prison terms for peaceful activities against the death penalty.

### The Iranian authorities to:

- Impose a moratorium on the use of the death penalty in order to work progressively towards abolition.
- Set 18 years as the age of majority and harmonise the age of criminal responsibility for boys and girls.
- Pending reforms, set a legal cap on *diya*.
- Remove the mandatory sentencing regimes so that judges may individualize sentencing and courts may properly consider mitigation evidence for every person charged with a capital offence, including evidence of trauma, domestic and gender-based violence, as well as psycho-social and intellectual disabilities.
- Ensure the right of anyone sentenced to death to seek pardon or commutation, in line with Iran's ICCPR obligations.
- Ratify the International Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.
- Cooperate fully, permit access to visit the country, and provide all information necessary for the fulfilment of the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran and implement the recommendations made by the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Iran (FFMI) established by the UN Human Rights Council.
- Provide access to the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary and arbitrary executions, the Special Rapporteur on torture, the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers and to other Special Rapporteurs who have requested a visit to the country, in line with Iran's standing invitation to all Special Procedures extended on 24 July 2002.
- Respond constructively to individual communications by international human rights mechanisms.

- Implement fundamental, structural reforms to ensure the complete independence of the judiciary.
- Dismantle the Revolutionary Courts, and guarantee the right to a lawyer, due process and a fair trial in accordance with international law.
- Implement and fully respect its international human rights obligations.
- Demonstrate complete transparency on implemented death sentences and numbers of executions, including by publishing (or communicating to the UN) the list of all prisoners on death row, including child offenders and women.
- Put an end to public executions.
- Cease the criminalisation of human rights advocacy on the issue of the death penalty and allow and facilitate a public and open debate about the issue of the death penalty in Iran.
- Release all political prisoners, including imprisoned human rights defenders, lawyers and anti-death penalty activists.

# ANNEXES

## ANNEX 1: EXECUTIONS PER CAPITA IN EACH PROVINCE

Province	Executions per million inhabitants
S. Khorasan	40
Zanjan	28
Qazvin	25
Yazd	25
Ilam	20
Fars	20
Qom	18
E. Azerbaijan	17
Hamedan	17
Lorestan	17
Kerman	13
W. Azerbaijan	13
Isfahan	13
Alborz/Tehran	13
Gilan	12
Golestan	12
Sistan and Baluchistan	12
Ardabil	11
Khorasan Razavi	9
Markazi	8
Hormozgan	7
Kermanshah	7
Semnan	7
Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad	6
N. Khorasan	5
Mazandaran	3
Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari	2
Kurdistan	2
Khuzestan	2
Bushehr	1

## ANNEX 2: LIST OF RESOLUTIONS AND REPORTS ADOPTED BY THE UNITED NATIONS AND EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, MENTIONING THE DEATH PENALTY IN IRAN

OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS			
Office of the High Commissioner, Press Release → "I am alarmed by the sharp spike in the use of the death penalty in Iran, including the executions of two men on 23 January. At least 54 people have reportedly been put to death in the country so far this year. The death penalty is not consistent with the most fundamental of rights – the right to life. This practice must be stopped immediately". → "I urge the government of Iran to enact an immediate moratorium on the use of the death penalty, with a view to abolishing the practice altogether. There is growing consensus for universal abolition of capital punishment. Close to three quarters of the countries in the world have already abolished or introduced a moratorium on the death penalty either in law or in practice. I implore the Iranian authorities to follow suit".	United Nations, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, <i>Iran: Sharp spike in use of death penalty</i> , 24 January 2024 <sup>184</sup>	United Nations Organisation	24 January 2024
Office of the High Commissioner, Press Briefing Notes → The High Commissioner urges the Iranian Government to immediately halt the application of the death penalty and establish a moratorium on its use. Until then, the death penalty may only be imposed for the "most serious" crimes, which refers to crimes of extreme gravity that result intentionally and directly in death.	United Nations, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, <i>Iran: Crackdown on hijab law</i> , 26 April 2024 <sup>185</sup>	United Nations Organisation	26 April 2024
Office of the High Commissioner, Press Briefing Notes → Nearly half of the executions since the beginning of 2024 were for drug-related offences. Imposing the death penalty for offences not involving intentional killing is incompatible with international human rights norms and standards, as we have repeatedly emphasized. → It is time for Iran to join the growing consensus worldwide towards universal abolition, by imposing a moratorium on executions, with a view to ultimately abolishing the death penalty.	United Nations, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, <i>Iran: Alarming high number of executions in short period of time</i> , 9 August 2024 <sup>186</sup>	United Nations Organisation	9 August 2024
SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON THE SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN			
A/HRC/55/62	United Nations, Human Rights Council, <i>A/HRC/55/62: Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran - Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran</i> , 9 February 2024 <sup>187</sup>	United Nations Organisation	9 February 2024

184 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/01/iran-sharp-spike-use-death-penalty>

185 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-briefing-notes/2024/04/iran-crackdown-hijab-law>

186 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-briefing-notes/2024/08/iran-alarming-high-number-executions-short-period-time>

187 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/country-reports/ahrc5562-situation-human-rights-islamic-republic-iran-report-special>

A/79/371	United Nations, Human Rights Council, A/79/371: <i>Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mai Sato - Vision and priorities of the mandate, 26 September 2024.</i> <sup>188</sup>	United Nations Organisation	26 September 2024
<b>INDEPENDENT INTERNATIONAL FACT-FINDING MISSION ON THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN</b>			
<p>Independent investigation, Press Release  → <b>“Dozens of individuals, remain at risk of execution or receiving a death sentence in relation to the protests. Women and children have been among the many charged with capital offences since the start of the protests.”</b></p>	United Nations, Human Rights Council, Iran: <i>Institutional discrimination against women and girls enabled human rights violations and crimes against humanity in the context of recent protests, UN Fact-Finding Mission says, 8 March 2024.</i> <sup>189</sup>	United Nations Organisation	8 March 2024
<p>Statement  → <b>“By January this year, Iranian courts had pronounced at least 26 death sentences against persons in relation to the protests.”</b></p>	United Nations, Human Rights Council, <i>Statement by Sara Hossain, Chairperson of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Islamic Republic of Iran, 18 March 2024.</i> <sup>190</sup>	United Nations Organisation	18 March 2024
<p>Independent investigation, Press Release  → <b>“There has been a striking surge in executions since the September 2022 protests, most notably in minority-populated regions, with several death sentences rendered most recently against women of ethnic minority backgrounds, adding to the chilling effect on minority rights activism.”</b></p>	United Nations, Human Rights Council, <i>Minorities in Iran have been disproportionately impacted in ongoing crackdown to repress the “Woman, Life, Freedom” movement, UN Fact-Finding Mission says, 5 August 2024.</i> <sup>191</sup>	United Nations Organisation	5 August 2024
<p>Independent investigation, Press Release  → <b>“The update also expressed deep concern about an apparent new pattern of sentencing to death of women activists, including some belonging to Iran’s ethnic and religious minorities, following their convictions for national security offenses. Over the last two years, the death penalty and other domestic criminal law provisions, in particular those related to national security, have been used as instruments to terrorise and deter Iranians from protesting and expressing themselves freely.”</b>  → <b>“The Mission reiterated its call to the Government of Iran to immediately halt all executions of protesters and put in place a moratorium on the use of the death penalty, with a view of its abolition.”</b></p>	United Nations, Human Rights Council, <i>Iran intensifying efforts to repress women and girls on second anniversary of nationwide protests, UN Fact-Finding Mission says, 13 September 2024.</i> <sup>192</sup>	United Nations Organisation	13 September 2024

188 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/country-reports/a79371-report-special-rapporteur-situation-human-rights-islamic-republic>

189 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/03/iran-institutional-discrimination-against-women-and-girls-enabled-human>

190 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2024/03/statement-sara-hossain-chairperson-independent-international-fact>

191 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/08/minorities-iran-have-been-disproportionally-impacted-ongoing-crackdown>

192 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/09/iran-intensifying-efforts-repress-women-and-girls-second-anniversary-nation>



GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS			
A/79/509	United Nations, General Assembly, <i>Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Report of the Secretary-General, 11 October 2024</i> <sup>193</sup>	United Nations Organisation	11 October 2024
REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL, QUESTION OF THE DEATH PENALTY, UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY			
<p>→ “The Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran expressed alarm at the sharp increase in executions in that country, in particular the exponential surge in the execution of drug offenders and the resumption of public executions.”</p> <p>→ Executions in the Middle East and North Africa accounted for 93 per cent of known global executions in 2022. Of those, 70 per cent were carried out in the Islamic Republic of Iran</p> <p>→ This trend appears to have further sharpened, with Amnesty International reporting a 48 per cent increase in recorded executions in the Islamic Republic of Iran in 2023. It reported that the Islamic Republic of Iran alone accounted for 74 per cent of all recorded executions worldwide in 2023.</p> <p>→ In early May 2023, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed dismay at the “frightening” number of executions that had taken place in the Islamic Republic of Iran since the beginning of the year, with an average of more than 10 people executed each week during that period. Most executions were for drug-related offences and a disproportionately high number of those executed were members of minority groups. Special procedure mandate holders of the Human Rights Council also condemned this spate of executions. On 24 January 2024, the High Commissioner expressed alarm that at least 54 people had reportedly been executed in the Islamic Republic of Iran in January 2024 alone.</p> <p>→ [...] 98 per cent of all confirmed executions for drug-related offences in 2023 took place in the Islamic Republic of Iran.</p> <p>→ Harm Reduction International reported that around 40 per cent of those executed for drug-related offences in the Islamic Republic of Iran in 2022 were of Baluchi ethnicity, despite the fact that the Baluchi minority accounts for roughly 2 per cent of the population</p> <p>→ Several special procedure mandate holders expressed alarm at the death sentences imposed by the Islamic Republic of Iran on people for expressing opinions critical of the Government and religious leaders.</p> <p>→ In 2023, mandatory death sentences were reportedly imposed in (...) Iran (Islamic Republic of).</p> <p>→ The Committee against Torture and several special procedure mandate holders expressed concern and outrage about the lack of due process and fair trial in several death penalty cases in (...) Iran (Islamic Republic of).</p> <p>→ Public executions were reportedly conducted in (...) Iran (Islamic Republic of).</p>	United Nations General Assembly, Human Rights Council, <i>Question of the death penalty, Report of the Secretary-General, 16 July 2024</i> <sup>194</sup>	United Nations Organisation	16 July 2024

193 <https://documents.un.org/api/symbol/access?j=N2429210&t=pdf>

194 <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g24/109/77/pdf/g2410977.pdf>

<p>→ In 2023, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran expressed concern that the Iranian authorities continued to execute persons sentenced as children and that at least 85 child offenders remained on death row.</p> <p>→ Persons with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities were also reportedly executed in the Islamic Republic of Iran.</p> <p>→ During the reporting period, an increase in the execution of women was recorded in (...) the Islamic Republic of Iran, from 12 women executed in 2022 to at least 24 in 2023. In January 2023, the Islamic Republic of Iran reportedly sentenced a pregnant Kurdish woman to death for setting fire to a portrait of a former Iranian supreme leader.</p>			
<b>EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT</b>			
2024/2551(RSP)	European Parliament resolution of 8 February 2024 on the increased number of executions in Iran, in particular the case of Mohammad Ghobadlou, 8 February 2024 <sup>195</sup>	European Parliament	8 February 2024
2024/2704(RSP)	European Parliament resolution of 25 April 2024 on Iran's unprecedented attack against Israel, the need for de-escalation and an EU response, 25 April 2024 <sup>196</sup>	European Parliament	25 April 2024

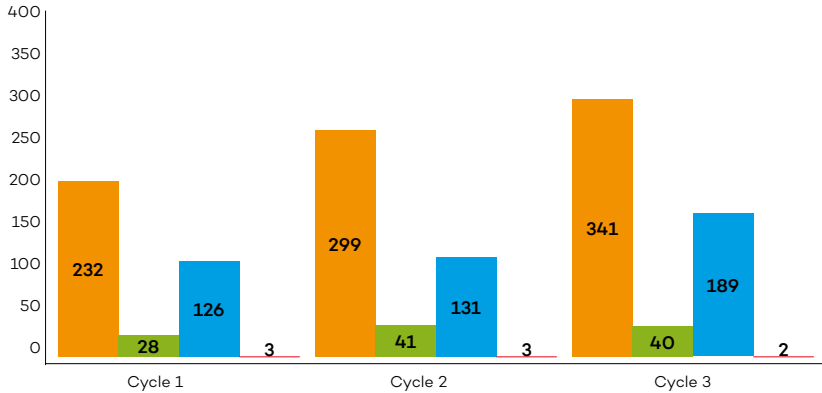
195 [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2024-0071\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2024-0071_EN.html)

196 [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2024-0382\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2024-0382_EN.html)

## ANNEX 3: EXTRACT FROM THE DETAILED FINDINGS OF THE INDEPENDENT INTERNATIONAL FACT-FINDING MISSION ON THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN, A/HRC/55/CRP.1, 2024

969. The Mission finds that by executing individuals for crimes not amounting to “the most serious crimes” and/or following summary proceedings that severely violated international human rights law, authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran unlawfully and arbitrarily deprived at least Mohsen Shekari, Majidreza Rahnavard, Mohammad Mehdi Karami, Seyyed Mohammad Hosseini, Majid Kazemi, Saeed Yaghoubi, Saleh Mir Hashemi, Milad Zohrevand and Mohammad Ghobadlou of their right to life and violated the prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.
970. The Mission established that proceedings leading to the pronouncement and implementation of death sentences were held in an extremely summary and hasty fashion and that judicial and prosecutorial authorities systematically violated the most elementary due process and fair trial guarantees including the right to presumption of innocence and to not be compelled to self-incriminate, the right to access a lawyer of their own choosing, the right to have adequate time and facilities to prepare a defence, and the right to seek pardon, commutation of sentence or clemency. The Mission established that fair trial rights were so grossly violated and the proceedings leading to the issuance and implementation of death sentences were held in such summary and expedited fashion that they did not amount to meaningful judicial processes.
971. The Mission further established that Iran’s domestic laws, in violation of the non-derogable right to life under international human rights law, allow for arbitrary use of the death penalty including by imposing the death penalty for offences not amounting to “the most serious crimes” and for acts protected under international human rights law. They further contravene international law by allowing the use of the death penalty against children and providing for executions in public.
972. The Mission also has reasonable grounds to believe that the authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran committed the crimes of torture in cases leading to the issuance and/or implementation of death sentences in a systematic manner.
973. Based on evidence, including statements by officials, the Mission finds that State authorities used the death penalty and a public execution and proceedings leading to the pronouncement of death sentences as a tool to punish protesters, to intimidate them and to instil fear in the population for purposes of deterring others from taking to the streets.

# ANNEX 4: ANALYSIS OF THE UPR RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE DEATH PENALTY IN THE LAST THREE CYCLES



- Total number of recommendations
- Number of recommendations in relation with the death penalty issue
- Total number of supported or partially supported recommendations
- Number of supported or partially supported recommendations in relation with the death penalty issue

## ANNEX 5: AT RISK OF EXECUTION PROTESTERS



**Name:** Abbas Deris (Arab)  
**Age:** 51  
**City:** Mahshahr  
**Protests:** November 2019  
**Charges:** *Moharebeh*  
**Status:** Death sentence upheld and appeal rejected. His lawyer has filed an Article 477 judicial review application.<sup>197</sup>



**Name:** Mohammad Javad Vafayi Sani  
**Age:** 29  
**City:** Mashhad  
**Protests:** November 2019  
**Charges:** *Efsad-fil-arz*  
**Status:** Sentenced to death for the third time by Branch 3 of the Mashhad Revolutionary Court in September 2024.<sup>198</sup>



**Name:** Manouchehr Mehman Navaz  
**Age:** 46  
**City:** Karaj  
**Protests:** Woman, Life, Freedom 2022  
**Charges:** Arson with *moharebeh*  
**Status:** Sentenced to death.<sup>199</sup> No updates available about his case.



**Name:** Farshid Hassanzehi (Baluch)  
**Age:** 27  
**City:** Zahedan  
**Protests:** Woman, Life, Freedom 2022  
**Charges:** Murder  
**Status:** Sentenced to death in November 2023.<sup>200</sup>



**Name:** Mojahed (Abbas) Kourkour (Bakhtiari)  
**Age:** 41  
**City:** Ahvaz  
**Protests:** Woman, Life, Freedom 2022  
**Charges:** *Efsad-fil-arz*, *baghy*, *moharebeh* and *qisas*  
**Status:** Indicted in murder case.<sup>201</sup> The Revolutionary Court overturned his sentence and referred his sentence to a court of equal standing in December 2024. On 28 December, his sister reported that Mojahed had been resentenced to death.

197 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/6551/>

198 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/6933/>

199 <https://iranhr.net/en/indanger/6565/>

200 <https://iranhr.net/en/indanger/6565/>

201 <https://iranhr.net/en/indanger/6427/>



**Name:** Mehran Bahramian  
**Age:** 30  
**City:** Semirom, Isfahan province  
**Protests:** Woman, Life, Freedom 2022  
**Charges:** *Moharebeh*  
**Status:** Sentenced to death on 27 January 2024, which was upheld two days later.



**Name:** Fazel Bahramian  
**Age:**  
**City:** Semirom, Isfahan province  
**Protests:** Woman, Life, Freedom 2022  
**Charges:** *Moharebeh*  
**Status:** Sentenced to death on 27 January 2024, which was upheld two days later.



**Name:** Milad Armoun  
**Age:** 23  
**City:** Tehran  
**Protests:** Woman, Life, Freedom 2022  
**Charges:** *Qisas*  
**Status:** Sentenced to death by Branch 13 of the Tehran Criminal Court on 13 November 2024.<sup>202</sup>



**Name:** Alireza Kafayi  
**Age:** 34  
**City:** Tehran  
**Protests:** Woman, Life, Freedom 2022  
**Charges:** *Qisas*  
**Status:** Sentenced to death by Branch 13 of the Tehran Criminal Court on 13 November 2024.<sup>203</sup>



**Name:** Amir Mohammad Khosheghbal  
**Age:** 26  
**City:** Tehran  
**Protests:** Woman, Life, Freedom 2022  
**Charges:** *Qisas*  
**Status:** Sentenced to death by Branch 13 of the Tehran Criminal Court on 13 November 2024.<sup>204</sup>

<sup>202</sup> <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7122/>

<sup>203</sup> <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7122/>

<sup>204</sup> <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7122/>



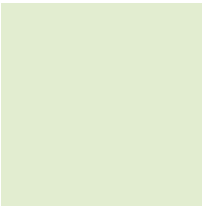
**Name:** Navid Najaran  
**Age:** 31  
**City:** Tehran  
**Protests:** Woman, Life, Freedom 2022  
**Charges:** *Qisas*  
**Status:** Sentenced to death by Branch 13 of the Tehran Criminal Court on 13 November 2024.<sup>205</sup>



**Name:** Hossein Nemati  
**Age:** 25  
**City:** Tehran  
**Protests:** Woman, Life, Freedom 2022  
**Charges:** *Qisas*  
**Status:** Sentenced to death by Branch 13 of the Tehran Criminal Court on 13 November 2024.<sup>206</sup>



**Name:** Alireza Barmazpournak  
**Age:** 26  
**City:** Tehran  
**Protests:** Woman, Life, Freedom 2022  
**Charges:** *Qisas*  
**Status:** Sentenced to death by Branch 13 of the Tehran Criminal Court on 13 November 2024.<sup>207</sup>



**Name:** Mohammad Mehdi Soleimani  
**Age:**  
**City:** Mashhad  
**Protests:** Woman, Life, Freedom 2022  
**Charges:** *Qisas*  
**Status:** Sentenced to death by the Mashhad Criminal Court in November 2024.<sup>208</sup>



**Name:** Mehrab Abdollahzadeh  
**Age:** 27  
**City:** Urmia  
**Protests:** Woman, Life, Freedom 2022  
**Charges:** *Baghy*  
**Status:** Sentenced to death by Branch 1 of the Urmia Revolutionary Court on 1 December 2024.<sup>209</sup>

<sup>205</sup> <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7122/>

<sup>206</sup> <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7122/>

<sup>207</sup> <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7122/>

<sup>208</sup> <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7122/>

<sup>209</sup> <https://kurdpa.net/fa/news/2024/11/69>

## POLITICAL PRISONERS



**Name:** Ali Mojadam (Arab)

**Age:** 41

**City:** Khuzestan

**Charges:** *Baghy* (armed rebellion) in relation to Habib Asyoud case

**Status:** Sentenced to death.<sup>210</sup> Incommunicado since transfer to pre-execution cells in Ahvaz Sepidar Prison on 15 October 2024.<sup>211</sup>



**Name:** Mohammadreza Moghadam (Arab)

**Age:** 30

**City:** Khuzestan

**Charges:** *Baghy* (armed rebellion) in relation to Habib Asyoud case

**Status:** Sentenced to death.<sup>212</sup> Incommunicado since transfer to pre-execution cells in Ahvaz Sepidar Prison on 15 October 2024.<sup>213</sup>



**Name:** Moein Khanfari (Arab)

**Age:** 30

**City:** Khuzestan

**Charges:** *Baghy* (armed rebellion) in relation to Habib Asyoud case

**Status:** Sentenced to death.<sup>214</sup> Incommunicado since transfer to pre-execution cells in Ahvaz Sepidar Prison on 15 October 2024.<sup>215</sup>



**Name:** Adnan Ghabishavi (Arab)

**Age:** 26

**City:** Khuzestan

**Charges:** *Baghy* (armed rebellion) in relation to Habib Asyoud case

**Status:** Sentenced to death.<sup>216</sup> Incommunicado since transfer to pre-execution cells in Ahvaz Sepidar Prison on 15 October 2024.<sup>217</sup>



**Name:** Habib Deris (Arab)

**Age:** 40

**City:** Khuzestan

**Charges:** *Baghy* (armed rebellion) in relation to Habib Asyoud case

**Status:** Sentenced to death.<sup>218</sup>

210 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/5901/>

211 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7012/>

212 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/5901/>

213 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7012/>

214 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/5901/>

215 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7012/>

216 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/5901/>

217 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7012/>

218 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/5901/>





**Name:** Salem Mousavi (Arab)  
**Age:** 39  
**City:** Khuzestan  
**Charges:** *Baghy* (armed rebellion) in relation to Habib Asyoud case  
**Status:** Sentenced to death.<sup>219</sup>



**Name:** Pakhshan Azizi (Kurdish)  
**Age:** 40  
**City:** Tehran  
**Charges:** *Baghy*  
**Status:** Death sentence upheld.<sup>220</sup> Her appeal was rejected by Branch 9 of the Supreme Court on 25 January 2025.<sup>221</sup>



**Name:** Varisheh Moradi (Kurdish)  
**Age:** 39  
**City:** Tehran  
**Charges:** *Baghy*  
**Status:** Sentenced to death.<sup>222</sup>



**Name:** Sharifeh Mohammadi  
**Age:** 45  
**City:** Rasht  
**Charges:** *Baghy*  
**Status:** Sentence overturned by Supreme Court and referred to a court of equal standing in October 2024. Resentenced to death by Branch 2 of the Rasht Revolutionary Court on 13 February 2025.<sup>223</sup>



**Name:** Mehdi Hassani  
**Age:** 48  
**City:** Tehran  
**Charges:** *Moharebeh* and *baghy* and *qisas*  
**Status:** Sentenced to death in September 2024,<sup>224</sup> sentence upheld by the Supreme Court.<sup>225</sup>

219 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/5901/>

220 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7269/>

221 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7321/>

222 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7122/>

223 <https://iranhr.net/en/indanger/7212/>

224 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/6933/>

225 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7303/>



**Name:** Behrouz Ehsani Eslamlu  
**Age:** 70  
**City:** Tehran  
**Charges:** *Baghy, moharebeh and efsad-fil-arz*  
**Status:** Sentenced to death in September 2024,<sup>226</sup> sentence upheld by the Supreme Court.<sup>227</sup>



**Name:** Pouya Ghobadi  
**Age:** 32  
**City:** Tehran  
**Charges:** *Baghy*  
**Status:** Sentenced to death by Branch 26 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court on 25 November 2024.<sup>228</sup>



**Name:** Babak Alipour  
**Age:** 33  
**City:** Tehran  
**Charges:** *Baghy*  
**Status:** Sentenced to death by Branch 26 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court on 25 November 2024.<sup>229</sup>



**Name:** Vahid Baniamerian  
**Age:** 32  
**City:** Tehran  
**Charges:** *Baghy*  
**Status:** Sentenced to death by Branch 26 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court on 25 November 2024.<sup>230</sup>



**Name:** Abolhassan Montazer  
**Age:** 65  
**City:** Tehran  
**Charges:** *Baghy*  
**Status:** Sentenced to death by Branch 26 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court on 25 November 2024.<sup>231</sup>

226 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/6933/>

227 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7303/>

228 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7312/>

229 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7312/>

230 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7312/>

231 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7312/>



**Name:** Mohammad Taghavi Sangdehi  
**Age:** 58  
**City:** Tehran  
**Charges:** *Baghy*  
**Status:** Sentenced to death by Branch 26 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court on 25 November 2024.<sup>232</sup>



**Name:** Ali Akbar Daneshvarkar  
**Age:** 57  
**City:** Tehran  
**Charges:** *Baghy*  
**Status:** Sentenced to death by Branch 26 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court on 25 November 2024.<sup>233</sup>



**Name:** Eido Shehbakhsh (Baluch)  
**Age:**  
**City:** Tehran  
**Charges:** *Baghy*  
**Status:** Sentenced to death by Branch 28 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court on 4 February 2023, upheld by the Supreme Court in October 2024.<sup>234</sup>



**Name:** Abdolrahim Ghanizehi (Baluch)  
**Age:**  
**City:** Tehran  
**Charges:** *Baghy*  
**Status:** Sentenced to death by Branch 28 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court on 4 February 2023, upheld by the Supreme Court in October 2024.<sup>235</sup>



**Name:** Soleiman Shehbakhsh (Baluch)  
**Age:**  
**City:** Tehran  
**Charges:** *Baghy*  
**Status:** Sentenced to death by Branch 28 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court on 4 February 2023, upheld by the Supreme Court in October 2024.<sup>236</sup>

232 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7312/>

233 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7312/>

234 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7122/>

235 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7122/>

236 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7122/>



**Name:** Abdolghani Shehbakhsh (Baluch)  
**Age:**  
**City:** Tehran  
**Charges:** *Baghy*  
**Status:** Sentenced to death by Branch 28 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court on 4 February 2023, upheld by the Supreme Court in October 2024.<sup>237</sup>



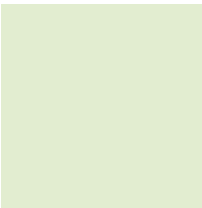
**Name:** Yousef Ahmadi (Kurdish)  
**Age:**  
**City:** Sanandaj  
**Charges:** *Baghy*  
**Status:** Sentenced to death which was upheld in January 2025.



**Name:** Abdolhakim Azim Gorgij (Sunni Baluch)  
**Age:**  
**City:** Mashhad  
**Charges:** *Baghy*  
**Status:** Sentenced to death by Branch 4 of the Mashhad Revolutionary Court which was upheld by Branch 39 of the Supreme Court in July 2024.<sup>238</sup>



**Name:** Abdolrahman Gorgij (Sunni Baluch)  
**Age:**  
**City:** Mashhad  
**Charges:** *Baghy*  
**Status:** Sentenced to death by Branch 4 of the Mashhad Revolutionary Court which was upheld by Branch 39 of the Supreme Court in July 2024.



**Name:** Taj Mohammad Khormali (Sunni Baluch)  
**Age:**  
**City:** Mashhad  
**Charges:** *Baghy*  
**Status:** Sentenced to death by Branch 4 of the Mashhad Revolutionary Court which was upheld by Branch 39 of the Supreme Court in July 2024.

<sup>237</sup> <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7122/>

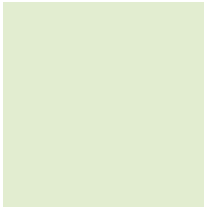
<sup>238</sup> <https://t.me/haalvsh/23126>



**Name:** Farhad Shakeri (Sunni)  
**Age:**  
**City:** Mashhad  
**Charges:** *Baghy*  
**Status:** Sentenced to death by Branch 4 of the Mashhad Revolutionary Court which was upheld by Branch 39 of the Supreme Court in July 2024.



**Name:** Issa Eid Mohammadi (Sunni)  
**Age:**  
**City:** Mashhad  
**Charges:** *Baghy*  
**Status:** Sentenced to death by Branch 4 of the Mashhad Revolutionary Court which was upheld by Branch 39 of the Supreme Court in July 2024.



**Name:** Malek Ali Faddayi Nasab (Sunni)  
**Age:**  
**City:** Mashhad  
**Charges:** *Baghy*  
**Status:** Sentenced to death by Branch 4 of the Mashhad Revolutionary Court which was upheld by Branch 39 of the Supreme Court in July 2024.



**Name:** Edris Ali (Kurdish *kolbar*)  
**Age:** 33  
**City:** Urmia  
**Charges:** *Efsad-fil-arz* (espionage for Israel in relation to assassination of Farkhrizadeh)  
**Status:** Sentenced to death by Branch 3 of the Urmia Revolutionary Court in June 2024.<sup>239</sup>

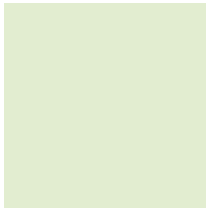


**Name:** Azad Shojayi (Kurdish)<sup>240</sup>  
**Age:**  
**City:** Urmia  
**Charges:** *Efsad-fil-arz* (espionage for Israel in relation to assassination of Farkhrizadeh)  
**Status:** His death sentence was announced by the Judiciary's news agency on 5 November 2024.<sup>241</sup>

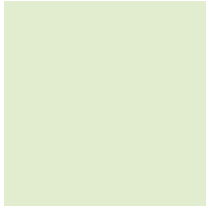
239 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/6753/>

240 <https://kurdistanhumanrights.org/fa/news-fa/executions-fa/2024/11/05/p37993>

241 <https://www.mizanonline.ir/fa/news/4802396/> - زمان رسیدگی به پرونده چای‌دیش مشخص شد سه نفر در - زاد به اعدام محکوم شدند تقاضای عفو الهی محمدی و نیلوفر حامدی در حال بررسی است 80% 2% پرونده شهید فخری



**Name:** Rasoul Ahmad Rasoul (Kurdish)<sup>242</sup>  
**Age:**  
**City:** Urmia  
**Charges:** *Efsad-fil-arz* (espionage for Israel in relation to assassination of Farkhrizadeh)  
**Status:** His death sentence was announced by the Judiciary's news agency on 5 November 2024.<sup>243</sup>



**Name:** Naser Bekrzadeh (Kurdish)<sup>244</sup>  
**Age:** 25  
**City:** Urmia  
**Charges:** *Efsad-fil-arz* (espionage for Israel)  
**Status:** Sentenced to death by Branch 3 of the Urmia Revolutionary Court in October 2023.<sup>245</sup>



**Name:** Shahin Vasaf (Kurdish)  
**Age:** 28  
**City:** Urmia  
**Charges:** *Efsad-fil-arz* (espionage for Israel)  
**Status:** His death sentence was announced by the Judiciary's news agency on 5 November 2024.<sup>246</sup>



**Name:** Hamid Hosseinnejad Heidarlanlu (Kurdish)  
**Age:**  
**City:** Urmia  
**Charges:** *Baghy*  
**Status:** Sentenced to death by Branch 1 of the Urmia Revolutionary Court.<sup>247</sup>



**Name:** Saman Mohammadi Khiareh (Kurdish)  
**Age:** 35  
**City:** Tehran  
**Charges:** *Moharebeh*  
**Status:** Sentenced to death by the Tehran Revolutionary Court.<sup>248</sup>

242 <https://kurdistanhumanrights.org/fa/news-fa/executions-fa/2024/11/05/p37993>

243 <https://www.mizanonline.ir/fa/news/4802396/> - زندگي به پر و نده چاي ديش مشخص شد سه نفر در - زمان - زاده به اعدام محكوم شدند تقاضاي - عفو - الله محمدی و - نيلوفر - حامدی در - حال - بر - سی - است 80% E2%80%8C پر و نده شهيد - فخری

244 <https://kurdistanhumanrights.org/fa/news-fa/executions-fa/2024/11/05/p37993>

245 [https://kurdistanhumanrights.org/fa/news-fa/prison-sentences-fa/2024/11/10/p38085?fbclid=IwY2xjawlSi59leHRuA2FlbQlxMAABHR6XoyOVEDTVu8Wb2Qkilb4DE-YMDDufv4ugcde01a8raeOBp75v95tXeQ\\_aem\\_Vg1GxX87hA9x2YAGWChAFQ](https://kurdistanhumanrights.org/fa/news-fa/prison-sentences-fa/2024/11/10/p38085?fbclid=IwY2xjawlSi59leHRuA2FlbQlxMAABHR6XoyOVEDTVu8Wb2Qkilb4DE-YMDDufv4ugcde01a8raeOBp75v95tXeQ_aem_Vg1GxX87hA9x2YAGWChAFQ)

246 <https://www.isna.ir/news/1403081612234/> دادگستری - آذر - یازدهم - غربی ۴ - منتهم - به - جاسوسی - بر - ای - اسر - انیل - به - اعدام

247 <https://kurdpa.net/fa/news/2024/10/2>

248 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7207/>



**Name:** Mohammad Amin Mahdavi Shayesteh  
**Age:** 26  
**City:** Tehran  
**Charges:** *Moharebeh*, *efsad-fil-arz* and blasphemy  
**Status:** Sentenced to death by Branch 15 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court.<sup>249</sup>



**Name:** Malek Davarshenas (Arab)  
**Age:** 23  
**City:** Ahvaz  
**Charges:** *Baghy*  
**Status:** Sentenced to death by Branch 2 of the Dezful Revolutionary Court in January 2024.



**Name:** Shahriar Bayat  
**Age:** 65  
**City:** Tehran  
**Charges:** Blasphemy  
**Status:** Sentenced to death by the Tehran Criminal Court on 14 February 2024.<sup>250</sup>



**Name:** Ali Abidavi (Arab)  
**Age:**  
**City:** Mahshahr  
**Charges:** *Unclear*  
**Status:** Sentenced to death by the Mahshahr Revolutionary Court on 21 January 2024.<sup>251</sup>



**Name:** Manouchehr Fallah  
**Age:**  
**City:** Tehran  
**Charges:** *Moharebeh* through destruction of public property  
**Status:** Sentenced to death by Branch 2 of the Rasht Revolutionary Court in February 2025.

<sup>249</sup> <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7196/>

<sup>250</sup> <https://www.iranintl.com/202501249871>

<sup>251</sup> [https://t.me/KHRO\\_ORG/476](https://t.me/KHRO_ORG/476)

## FOREIGN AND DUAL NATIONALS



**Name:** Ahmadreza Djalali  
**Age:** 50  
**City:** Tehran  
**Nationality:** Swedish-Iranian  
**Charges:** *Efsad-fil-arz*  
**Status:** Death sentence upheld.<sup>252</sup>



**Name:** Hatem Özdemir  
**Age:**  
**City:** Urmia  
**Nationality:** Turkish  
**Charges:** *Baghy*  
**Status:** Sentenced to death by Branch 3 of the Urmia Revolutionary Court. Upheld by Branch 9 of the Supreme Court in September 2024.<sup>253</sup>

<sup>252</sup> <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/4654/>

<sup>253</sup> <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/6931/>





**Iran Human Rights** is a non-profit, politically independent organisation with members and supporters inside and outside Iran. The organisation started its work in 2005 and is registered as an international non-governmental organisation based in Oslo, Norway.

**Abolition of the death penalty in Iran as a step towards the universal abolition of the death penalty is the main goal of Iran Human Rights.**

**IHRNGO has a broad network among the abolitionist movement inside and outside Iran:**

Besides supporters and collaborators among the civil society activists in the central parts of Iran, Iran Human Rights also has a wide network in the ethnic regions which are often not the focus of the mainstream media. In addition, Iran Human Rights has a network of reporters within many Iranian prisons, and among Iranian lawyers and the families of death-row prisoners. This enables Iran Human Rights to be the primary source of many execution reports in different Iranian prisons, as well as of reliable reports on the atrocities committed by the Islamic Republic in the nationwide protests. Iran Human Rights has been a member of the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty (WCADP) since 2009 and a member of its Steering Committee since 2011. Iran Human Rights is also a member of Impact Iran, a coalition of more than 13 Iranian human rights NGOs. Iran Human Rights' close collaboration with abolitionist networks inside and outside Iran makes it a unique actor in the struggle against the death penalty in the country with the highest number of executions per capita.

**IHRNGO's core activities include:**

**Fighting for abolition of the death penalty** through monitoring, reporting, empowerment of the abolitionist Iranian civil society and international advocacy.

**Promoting due process and rule of law** through raising the legal debate in Iran and encouraging legal reforms. Iran Human Rights

publishes a bi-weekly legal journal with contributions from Iranian lawyers, jurists, law students and religious scholars.

**Defending human rights defenders** by creating safer working conditions, giving voice to the imprisoned human rights defenders and supporting human rights defenders in danger.

### **IHRNGO's work in the past 17 years has contributed to:**

#### **Raising awareness about the situation of the death penalty in Iran:**

Through careful research, monitoring and continuous reporting, IHRNGO has given a more realistic picture of execution trends and provided a gendered perspective of the death penalty in Iran. The organisation is regarded as a credible source of information and its annual reports are points of reference for the international community,<sup>254</sup> the media,<sup>255, 256</sup> and civil society.

#### **Limiting the use of the death penalty in Iran through international campaigns and advocacy:**

IHRNGO activities have contributed to saving the lives of death row prisoners through focused domestic and international campaigns.

#### **Raising the national debate on the death penalty, and empowering and educating the abolitionist movement inside Iran:**

Iran Human Rights was the first NGO focusing on all death penalty cases in a sustainable manner. By publishing news, reports and interviews, and through its one-hour weekly TV program launched in 2015,<sup>257</sup> Iran Human Rights has contributed significantly to educating abolitionists and raising the national debate on the death penalty in Iran.

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254 <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/iran/20240717-SR-Iran-Findings.pdf>

255 <https://www.dw.com/en/iranian-prisoners-protest-against-rising-executions/a-70461437>

256 <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20240518-iran-hangs-two-women-as-surge-in-executions-intensifies-ngo>

257 <https://iranhr.net/fa/multimedia/#/all/all/1>



**ECMP** (Together Against the Death Penalty) is a not-for-profit organisation based in Paris, France. ECMP has been campaigning since 2000 for the universal abolition of the death penalty through advocacy, awareness-raising activities and by uniting international abolitionist forces.

### **FEDERATING ABOLITIONISTS FROM ACROSS THE WORLD**

**ECMP** is the founder and organiser of the World Congresses Against the Death Penalty. These events bring together more than 1,300 people representing the world abolitionist movement. Ministers, parliamentarians, diplomats, activists, civil society organisations, researchers and journalists come together every three years to strengthen their ties and develop strategies for the future.

**ECMP** also organises Regional Congresses to strengthen dialogue on the death penalty in key areas.

**ECMP** initiated the creation of the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty in 2002, which today has more than 180 members – including NGOs, bar associations, local authorities, unions – throughout the world.

### **STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITIES OF LOCAL ACTORS AND TAKING ACTION WITH THEM**

**ECMP** fights against the isolation of activists wherever the death penalty remains by supporting the formation of national and regional coalitions against the death penalty (in the Maghreb, sub-saharian Africa and Asia), as well as the creation of networks of abolitionist parliamentarians and lawyers.

**ECMP** supports local partners and actors to improve the efficiency and sustainability of the abolitionist movement and its advocacy impact by providing and promoting capacity development, facilitation, exchange of good practices, mutual transfer of expertise and networking.

## ADVOCATING FOR ABOLITION

**ECPM** conducts advocacy for the abolition of the death penalty, using targeted, context-specific approaches, and engaging in dialogue with relevant political stakeholders at national, regional and international levels.

**ECPM** provides material for advocacy and contributes to increased transparency and knowledge by documenting the realities of the death penalty and publishing fact-finding reports, thematic studies, country factsheets on the death penalty in law and in practice, and practical guides.

**ECPM** encourages States to increase their international commitments by carrying advocacy work at the heart of UN bodies (Geneva, New York) and intergovernmental, regional fora. The organisation is the first NGO devoted to the fight against the death penalty to have obtained consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 2016. The organisation also obtained an observer status with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) in 2018.

## TEACHING HUMAN RIGHTS AND ABOLITION OF THE DEATH PENALTY

**ECPM** leads a vast educational project on human rights and the abolition of the death penalty, promoting youths' abolitionist and civic engagement. The organisation carries out visits and participative presentations in middle and high schools with the participation of specialists and witnesses of the death penalty.

**ECPM** is a co-founder of the Teaching Abolition International Network, an informal grouping of associations promoting the exchange of good practices and the development of collaborative educational tools on the abolition of the death penalty. The Network is the organiser of the international drawing competition "Draw me abolition", designed to spark the interest of younger generations in the universal abolition through their creativity.

**ECPM** raises awareness among the public on the death penalty by organising events on key dates in the abolitionist and human rights calendar such as the World Day Against the Death Penalty, International Human Rights Day, International Women's Rights Day, Pride March, etc.



# ANNUAL REPORT ON THE DEATH PENALTY IN IRAN 2024

In 2024, at least 975 people were executed in Iran, a 17% increase from 2023, marking the highest number of recorded executions in more than two decades. The surge was driven by a record 503 drug-related executions, yet the UNODC remained silent, failing to address the alarming rise. The number of Afghan nationals executed dramatically spiked to 80, compared to 25 in 2023, highlighting the disproportionate targeting of marginalised groups. Baluch ethnic minorities were disproportionately represented among drug-related executions, and 9 out of 10 prisoners executed for affiliation with banned opposition groups were Kurdish. At least 31 women were executed, the highest number of women executed since 2008, and at least one child offender was hanged. Despite this, the abolitionist movement has been growing inside Iran, with the “No Death Penalty Tuesdays” campaign, initiated by prisoners, which marks the start of a social movement against the death penalty in Iran. With this report, we call on the international community to take urgent action to pressure Iran to halt executions and support the growing movement against the death penalty. Silence enables the Islamic Republic’s killing machine to continue — strong, consistent international pressure can help stop it.



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Iran Human Rights (IHRNGO) and ECPM have been working together since 2011 for the international release and circulation of the Annual Report on the Death Penalty in Iran. IHRNGO and ECPM see the death penalty as a benchmark for the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

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