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Iran Sentences Four More To Death Over Mass Protests, Rights Groups Say

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Iran has sentenced four more protesters, including a woman, to death over mass demonstrations in January that posed one of the biggest threats to the country's clerical rulers in years, according to two human rights groups.

The authorities have so far executed seven people in connection with the protests, which were crushed in an unprecedented government crackdown that left thousands of people dead, rights groups said. Tens of thousands of others were detained or summoned for questioning.

Human rights defenders have repeatedly accused Iran of using the death penalty to instill fear in society in the wake of a wave of anti-government protests in recent years.

Branch 26 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court convicted the four protesters of carrying out acts on behalf of the United States and "hostile groups," the US-based Human Rights Activists News Agency (HRANA) and the Abdorrahman Boroumand Center, a British-based organization that promotes human rights in Iran, said in separate statements.

It was not immediately clear when the verdict was issued.

The four were accused of taking part in the antiestablishment demonstrations in the capital Tehran in January, chanting protest slogans, throwing objects at security forces, damaging public property, and

injuring a member of the paramilitary Basij force.

They were identified as Mohammadreza Majidi-Asl and his wife Bitā Hemmati. The others were Behrouz Zamaninejad and Kourosh Zamaninejad, two men who lived in the same apartment building as the couple.

First Female Protester Sentenced To Death

Hemmati is believed to be the first woman to be sentenced to death over the demonstrations that erupted on December 28, 2025, and continued for weeks.

Amir Hemmati, a fifth person and a relative of the married couple, was sentenced to five years in prison on the charge of “assembly and collusion against national security,” as well as eight months in jail for “propaganda against the regime.”

“The ruling contains vague accusations against the protesters, which do not meet the ‘most serious crimes’ threshold for capital punishment, interpreted as intentional killing,” the Abdorrahman Boroumand Center said in its [statement](#) on April 14.

“The ruling failed to provide detailed evidence of each defendant’s role or to attribute specific acts to individual defendants,” the statement added.

HRANA said in an April 13 [statement](#) that “reports concerning possible coerced confessions are among the issues that, according to legal experts, may raise serious questions about the judicial process.”

“No information has been released regarding the defendants’ access to counsel of their choosing, the details of the court sessions, or their conditions of detention,” it added.

At least 1,639 people were executed in 2025, including 48 women, according to the Norway-based Iran Human Rights (IHR) and the Paris-based Together Against the Death Penalty (ECPM), one of the highest rates in the world.

Apart from the seven people executed so far this year over the protests, another 26 others have been sentenced to death, according to IHR.

“Whenever public protests occur, individuals who participated are often under various forms of pressure, torture, and abuse, forced to confess to certain actions,” Naeimeh Doostdar, an Iranian journalist and human rights advocate based in Sweden, told RFE/RL’s Radio Farda.

Doostdar said the aim of the death sentences is to intimidate Iranians.

"If citizens come to believe that even chanting slogans, throwing stones, or similar actions could ultimately result in severe punishments like the death penalty, then -- according to the authorities' perspective -- they will likely become more fearful and refrain from participating in future protests," she said.

In Iran, different crimes are judged by different courts. Rape and murder cases are handled by the criminal courts, while revolutionary courts are responsible for issuing severe sentences to those found to have criticized the authorities.

Responsible for most of the death sentences issued in recent years, the revolutionary courts are not transparent, rights defenders say, and judges are known for the extraordinary abuse of their legal powers, denying lawyers access to convicted individuals, and allowing exhausting interrogations using torture to coerce suspects to confess to crimes.

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