'The Islamic Republic Of Execution': Iran Executed At Least 8,000 In 20 Years

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Using execution as a means of suppressing dissent has a long history in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Iranian officials appear to have only one solution for all problems from drug trafficking to social protests: Execution. The Islamic Republic has been using execution as a solution and a preventive measure.

Hours after executing two prisoners, Saber Sheikh Abdollah and Diako Rassoulzadeh, on July 14, the West Azarbaijan Province Justice Department said in a statement: "It is a firm policy of the Judiciary to be decisive and teach people a lesson at this time of change."

The Judiciary claims that it has been undergoing a "change" since Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei appointed Ebrahim Raeesi as Judiciary Chief in February 2018.

During the 18 months he has been in office as Judiciary chief, his supporters say his main mission has been campaigning against financial corruption. But the issuance of a large number of execution orders during this period indicate that Raeesi's mission during this "period of change" has been one of suppressing dissent.

For a long time, execution has been a tool for maximum suppression of dissent in Iran.

Reports by Amnesty International and the Iranian Human Rights Organization reveal that 8,071 executions have taken place either in public or behind the walls of prisons between the years 2000 and 2019.

The Iranian Human Rights Organization has also reported 600 executions in Iran between the years 2010 and 2013, that might not have been reported.

Based on a review by Radio Farda, the year 2015 was an exceptional year with nearly 1,000 executions. This was the year when Iran had just signed the nuclear deal with world powers and was supposed to open up to the West.

These figures have put Iran on top of the list of countries with the highest number of executions during the past two decades, a fact that justifies Iran's nickname on social media as the Islamic Republic of Execution.

During the evening of Tuesday July 14 and Wednesday July 15 [**over 5 million Iranian social media users**](https://en.radiofarda.com/a/internet-access-disrupted-in-iran-as-uproar-rises-against-executions/30726488.html) and many non-Iranians used the hashtag #DontExecute in Persian to protest the Iranian government's decision [**to hang three young men**](https://en.radiofarda.com/a/internet-access-disrupted-in-iran-as-uproar-rises-against-executions/30726488.html) who were arrested during and after the nationwide anti-regime protests in November 2019.

Currently, only 20 countries issue death sentences to punish criminals. Based on an Amnesty International report in May, the Iranian regime is responsible for more than one third of all executions in the world and ranks second after China. Nevertheless, international human rights watchdogs have always insisted that the actual number of executions in Iran is more than the figures announced by the government.

Although most executions are about drug trafficking, a review of capital punishment orders in various periods reveal that executions have been used in Iran as a means of suppressing dissent and have always been on the agenda of judiciary and security organs.

The most well-known cases of execution in Iran took place in the summer of 1998 when [**more than 3,800 political prisoners were killed**](https://en.radiofarda.com/a/amnesty-international-demands-un-investigation-into-iran-mass-killings/30273966.html)during a short period according to the memoirs of -then- acting Supreme Leader Hossein Ali Montazeri.

Also Amnesty International has reported that at least 115 people were executed in Iran following the post-election unrest in 2009. For Iran watchers, those executions were meant to convey the regime's political message to the opposition.

Last week, death sentences issued to three young men who took part in the November 2019 protests were confirmed, several others were indicted for "fighting Allah and spreading corruption on earth". These are accusations that can entail death sentences. Two other activists were also executed in Kurdistan Province in the same week.

According to Hangaw Human Rights Organization in Kurdiatan, 13 Kurd activists were executed in prisons in April and 12 others in January, February and March.

Observers say with the rise in executions, the Iranian judiciary is sending the message that the regime's only answer to disobedience in the past, present and future is execution.