

# (Video) Iran's Targeted Violence in Border Regions Exposes Ethnic Minority Killings

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PARIS, FRANCE, April 4, 2024

/EINPresswire.com/ -- The [National Council of Resistance of Iran \(NCRI\)](#)

Foreign Affairs Committee in an article reported that the Iran Human Rights Monitor website reported on March 26 that a 22-year-old kulbar had been killed by security forces two days earlier on the Baneh border.

Soran Abdi is the latest known fatality from routine attacks upon subsistence porters by security forces and the military. Kulbars operate mainly in the Kurdish border region in Iran's northwest, transporting a range of goods through mountainous terrain and into chronically impoverished communities.



Minorities such as the Kurds and Baluch have borne the brunt of that effort, with both groups being overrepresented in Iran's annual death penalty statistics while also being targets of particular repression during and immediately after the uprising.

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NCRI

Similar operations exist along the country's southeastern border with Pakistan, mostly focusing on fuel and mostly being carried out by ethnic Baluch.

The Iranian regime derogatorily labels individuals depending on this means of survival as “smugglers.” This dehumanization, coupled with their minority status, superficially justifies brutal assaults that frequently result in fatalities.

The surge in these attacks appears to be correlated with the regime's heightened authoritarian crackdown, which

began following nationwide protests in late 2022, particularly in regions where the Kurdish and Baluchi populations have been notably vocal and radical in challenging the regime's grip on power.

This information is underscored in a recent report submitted to the United Nations Human Rights Council by a fact-finding mission to investigate the regime's repressive measures.

As Iran Human Rights Monitor noted, Soran Abdi's death on Sunday coincided with the injury of at least three other kulbars in separate incidents.

These include a 16-year-old named Milad Hosseini who was reportedly transported to hospital but whose prognosis was not immediately known. Abdi was en route to a medical facility when he succumbed to multiple gunshot wounds, leaving behind a pregnant wife.

A day earlier, another kulbar named Peyman Ahmadi was also shot dead when security forces opened fire on an entire group at a border crossing in Kermanshah Province.

Less than three weeks earlier, a group of five kulbars was shot at close range after being verbally threatened, while on the other side of the country, a Baluch fuel porter was killed under similar circumstances. On March 21, security forces opened fire on a vehicle carrying several fuel porters without warning, causing the death of 25-year-old Hamidollah Barahui and the injury of three others.

At least 37 fuel porters were killed by military forces last year, according to human rights organizations. Statistics regarding kulbars are somewhat more obscure, but just between March



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and September 2023, there were reportedly around 85 deaths from a variety of causes including climbing accidents, weather-related disasters, and direct fire from security forces.

It remains to be seen whether the total number of injuries and fatalities will be worse for one or both of these groups in 2024, compared to 2023. But if the rate of reporting from March indicates a broader trend that will continue through the spring and summer months, this seems likely.

Meanwhile, the persistence of that trend may be influenced by several factors including the extent to which authorities remain on edge over the enduring threat of unrest in the run-up to the second anniversary of the clerical regime's most significant single uprising.

The regime's initial effort to suppress that uprising saw the killing of approximately 750 protesters, according to the [People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran](#), and the arrest of 30,000 others.

Nine men have been executed as a direct result of their participation in the protests, while dozens of other death sentences are reported to be pending.

Meanwhile, the overall rate of executions for a wide variety of offenses has remained significantly elevated for well over a year, with more than 850 death sentences having been implemented throughout 2023.

Human rights defenders have highlighted a connection between the rate of executions and the regime's aim of terrorizing the public into silence.



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Since the 2022 uprising, the acceleration of attacks upon minorities has not been limited to the Kurds and Baluch. Still, it has also included attacks on religious minorities as the regime has sought to re-assert the hardline fundamentalist identity underpinning the nation's forced veiling laws.

Last week, Agence France Presse reported that the gravesites for between 30 and 45 members of the Baha'i faith had recently been destroyed, in keeping with longstanding discriminatory practices that follow Baha'is in both life and death.

This, of course, comes after several reports of arrests and multi-year prison sentences based on vague charges such as "assembly and collusion against national security" through the practice of their faith.

On March 26, it was reported that a similar charge of "acting against national security" had been leveled against a woman named Laleh Sa'ati, apparently based solely on the fact that she has converted from Islam to Christianity.

Although the regime's constitution officially recognizes Christianity, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism as being legal to practice, any action seen as promoting a non-Muslim religion is considered a criminal act and a threat to national security.

Consequently, more than a month after her February 13 arrest, Sa'ati was sentenced to two years in prison, along with a travel ban.

The regime's relentless repression of ethnic and religious minorities, alongside the escalation of attacks in the aftermath of the nationwide protests in 2022, vividly portrays its desperate bid to stifle dissent and cling to power.

With the international community increasingly scrutinizing its role in exacerbating the ongoing Middle East crisis, a surge in human rights violations is not only expected but demands heightened international vigilance and decisive action.

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Shahin Gobadi  
NCRI

+33 6 61 65 32 31

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