



Tens of Thousands of Prisoners were Given Amnesty or Shortened Sentences in Iran, why?

Iran's preeminent leader has absolved or sanctioned a diminishing of jail terms for "tens of thousands" of detainees, including some seized in recent anti-government rallies. According to nuances revealed in an official state-run media account, the exonerations approved by Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Sunday came with conditions, stating that the decision would not significantly affect any of the countless double nationals detained in Iran. Some people have been charged with "corruption on earth," a deadly offense that has resulted in the execution of four protesters, and these criminals would not be granted clemency. Those who have spied for foreign intelligence services or are associated with organizations hostile to the Islamic Republic are also among those who have not received pardons. According to the Iranian news organization Farsnews, only those that express remorse and confirm no repeat actions will be released.

It seems as though these caveats upon release for these detainees are a form of propaganda as it does not address the majority of circumstances for other prisoners. Iran's prisons and courts were already overwhelmed before the protests began. Hadi Ghaemi, the executive director of the Center for Human Rights in Iran, stated the amnesty would clear up some of the most minor cases for judicial authorities to focus on higher-priority prosecutions. After the death of Masha Amini in mid-September of last year, protests spread across Iran. Many of the protestors were killed or detained. The uprising was directed first against these rules and then against Iran's leadership as a whole. Iran needs to focus their efforts on the change to a new secular system and policies to be put in place the people are protesting, for basic human rights, and this will allow them to build trust with the Iranian citizens and grow toward a better path of governance.

These protests in Iran sparked from the death of a young Iranian woman Mahsa Amini at the hands of the morality police in September of 2022. Iran has not seen such protests since the 1979 revolution. These protests have been very disruptive for the Iranian government and have threatened their control over the country. According to the Human Rights Activists News Agency, around 20,000 people have been detained in connection to these protests. Outside of the hanging executions, there have also been reports of 500 people being killed during the crackdown, which includes 70 minors. At least 100 of the people being detained faced possible death sentences. Iran has been criticized, by organizations like Amnesty International, for designing these brutal reactionary measures to intimidate protestors. Iran acts violently toward their protestors for a variety of reasons, including the government's fear of losing power and control, the desire to maintain religious and political orthodoxy, and a desire to suppress dissent. Additionally, the Iranian government has a long history of using violence to intimidate and silence its citizens, particularly those who oppose its policies. Rather than implementing these convoluted systems that breed violence in their community, these pardons are a limited showcase of a facade of justice and peace. These releases are not a sign of shifting attitudes in the Iranian government, but rather a simple solution to a logistical problem the Iranian courts were facing. The brutal suppression of protests is likely to continue.