

Iran executes two men accused of blasphemy for ‘insulting Islam’

Iranian authorities have executed at least 150 people this year alone, according to human rights organizations.

Iran on Monday executed two men convicted of blasphemy, the country’s judiciary announced, carrying out a rare death sentence for such a crime.

The judiciary’s Mizan news agency said in a report that Yousef Mehrad and Sadrollah Fazeli Zare were hanged in Arak prison in central Iran over crimes including insulting the religion of Islam and the prophet and promoting atheism. According to the report, the duo ran several anti-religious social media accounts and both men had “clearly confessed to their crimes.”

Mehrad and Zare were arrested in May 2020 after authorities accused them of running a Telegram channel called “Criticism of Superstition and Religion,” which, according to the authorities, spread ideas deemed insulting to Islam. In 2021, a court in Arak convicted the two men of blasphemy charges and sentenced them to death.

Rights groups say the two faced months of solitary confinement and were denied access to a lawyer and family visits. Their alleged confession to their crimes is also believed to have been extracted under torture.

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