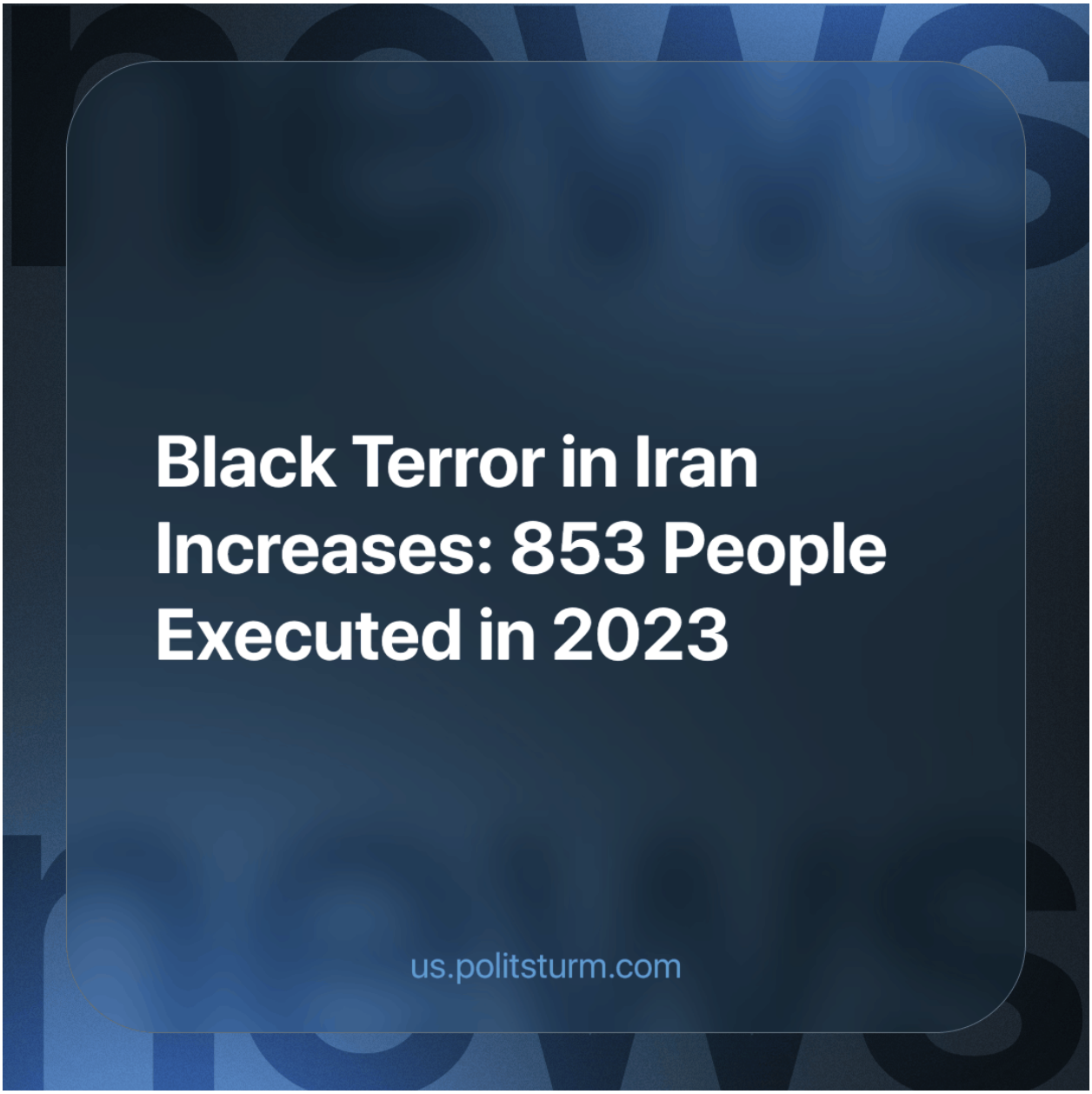
Black Terror in Iran Increases: 853 People Executed in 2023



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Iran is home to the highest number of known executions in the world, after China - 853 people. These states effectively use the death penalty to maintain their class rule. It is a tool at their disposal to mainly terrorize the working people, not their fellow capitalists (although sometimes it is actually used against capitalists who do not adhere to class discipline) [1] [2].

The increased use of capital punishment often coincides with periods of unrest and dissent. There's no doubt about this. Executions in Iran have risen by 48% since 2022, a year marked by protests against the oppression of women. Nevertheless, drug-related offences constituted the majority (56%) of recorded executions—not political offenses [3].

In addition, Iran's ethnic minorities, particularly the Baluchi minority, have been disproportionately represented in drug trafficking charges, accounting for 20% of recorded executions, despite making up only about 5% of Iran's population [3]. Why is this?

The answer lies in the fact that Baluchis are predominantly Sunnis, not particularly favored by the Persian-dominated Shiite theocracy, which has led to horrendous underdevelopment. As a result, unemployment in Sistan-Baluchistan province, the Baluchi heartland, is five times the national average. At least 45% of the population lives below the poverty line. [4].

And the fact that drugs are a commodity under capitalism - a very profitable commodity at that - has led able-bodied proletarians in Baluchistan, who are unable to find employment because of the aforementioned national and religious prejudices, to engage in smuggling as a means of subsistence.

It is therefore clear that even a brief examination of the social and economic basis of the death penalty in Iran poses a challenge to the fundamental features of capitalism.

· The tendency to maintain a reserve army of labor, resulting in a constant percentage of proletarians to be desperate for any means of survival including criminal ones.

· National oppression and religious prejudice that keeps marginal provinces underdeveloped and allocates resources to the dominant nation instead of the locals.

· No regard for the lives of the proletarians, they are cherished only for their ability to create value for the capitalists, i.e. they are expendable if need be.

Even in the most "free" and "democratic" republics, where the official death penalty is abolished, a type of death penalty is still enacted against the workers perpetuated in the form of social murder. Countless individuals are condemned to death through poverty, starvation, homelessness, and inadequate access to healthcare through no fault of their own - a result of the very same causes outlined above. These systemic injustices result in preventable deaths on a massive scale, illustrating that the abolition of the official death penalty under capitalism does not equate to the end of state-sanctioned violence against the working class. Given these essential features of bourgeois rule, the death penalty as a tool in the ongoing class struggle could

only become obsolete with the abolition of classes by the mighty hand of the worldwide working class.

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