



**GOLA**

CHANGE



Iran is a beautiful country ruled by an ugly regime. They have taken us from a civilization which enshrined human rights in law as far back as the 6th century BC to a nation now deprived of the most basic rights.

But its poetry and its music and the souls of its people are beyond the control of that regime, however hard it tries to grasp them. Respect, peace and equality will come when we unite. Awareness is the first step towards change, and change will happen sooner or later. It is only a matter of time because when we unite, we will generate change together!

Until that time comes, I will shout, I will sing, and I will tell the truth. Join us in this journey of awareness and change.



# KHODAM BOODAM OONJA

## I Was There

If I talk about pain, it's because I know it well  
Yes I was there and saw it all with my very eyes  
From the forced hijab to the silenced tears in the  
absence of food  
To the deflowering of an innocent child  
In the eyes of rain

From that book of law that condemns women  
as inferior to men  
And the traditions that are buried in sorrow

From the little innocent girl who instead of  
going to school  
Is serving a sentence, imprisoned in a villain's bed

And the desperate mum who has no way but to  
pay her rent by working the streets  
Or the man who has had enough of pain  
And instead has decided to cut his own vein in shame

Or even the God's name that's been dragged through the  
mud and has become an excuse for deception

Yes I've been there and I've seen it all with my very eyes  
I have tasted the bitterness of this pain and that's why  
I'm retelling it

I offer myself and this song for the pain in your eyes,  
I offer it all for your defenseless souls

Once again we shall blossom and leave the cold behind

[The darkness will fade, there won't be any cold nights  
The sun will rise again, once and for all] x 2

## خودم بودم اونجا

اگه میگم از درد بدون که کشیدم  
خودم بودم اونجا همه چیزو دیدم

از اجبار پوشش تا بغض غم نون  
تجاوز به کل ها جلو چشم بارون

از اون حکم قانون که زن نصف مرده  
تا رسم و رسومی که لبریز درده

از اون طفل معصوم که جای دیستان  
تو حجله اسیره به آغوش شیطان

تا اون مادری که برای اجاره  
دیگه چاره ای جز خیابون نداره

یا مردی که از درد به جایی رسیده  
که از شرم سُفرش رگش رو بریده

یا حتی خدایی که اسمش فدا شد  
دلیلی برای دروغ و ریا شد

خودم بودم اونجا همه چیزو دیدم  
خودم طعم دردو چشیدم که میگم

منو این ترانه فدای نکاتون  
فدای نگاه بدون دقاتون

یه روزی دوباره من و تو بهاریم  
دیگه نسبتی با زمستون نداریم  
[میره این ساهی دیگه شب همیشه  
شروع میشه خورشید برای همیشه] x ۲

## Poverty and inequality are rife in contemporary Iran. Women and children often bear the brunt of social issues.

From a taxi window she watches children weave through traffic with their wares.  
Small hands press sponges to windshields.  
No schoolbooks for those small hands, until morning comes.  
She thinks of little girls in old men's beds, waiting likewise for dawn,  
and of the Old Man with the whole country in his bed.  
A driver tears by, foot down, manhood puffed up with money,  
dreaming of being the Old Man himself.  
Near here was a crash.  
They sifted the wreckage for survivors, and decided who to hang.



# JORME MAN

## My Crime

All those whom  
I have once been a companion to  
Have chained me down somehow since birth

Mother, sister, daughter or as a wife  
I have many roles yet my rights limited

[This pain is so deep that I can't breath,  
the lump in my throat so cruel  
My crime is that I'm a woman in the Middle East] x 2

How could you call me weak when I have faced  
all injustice with a valiant heart

Amongst all the threats and within all the walls  
My dignified soul has never given in

[This pain is so deep that I can't breath,  
the lump in my throat so cruel  
My crime is that I'm a woman in the Middle East] x 2

[Even though I'm weary, I will not be defeated  
I am the one who will rebuild this world  
once again] x 2

## جرم من

همه اونا که براشون همه کس بودم و هستم  
از همون روز تولد دست و پای منو بستن

مادر و خواهر و دختر یا به عنوان یه همسر  
نقش من زیاده اما حق من کمتر و کمتر

[نقسم گرفته از غم بغض من چه بی آمانه  
جرم من اینه یه زنم من توی خاورمیانه] ۲x

کسی که قلب بزرگش این همه ظلمو حریفه  
با کدوم شعور و منطق تو بهش گفتی ضعیفه

توی این همه حصارو وسط این همه تهدید  
روح مغرور من هرگز دست تسلیمو نبوسید

[نقسم گرفته از غم بغض من چه بی آمانه  
جرم من اینه یه زنم من توی خاورمیانه] ۲x

با تمام خستگی هام غیرممکنه بیازم  
[من همونم که میتونم دنیا رو از نو بسازم] ۲x

Discrimination against women is widespread, with conservative cultural norms often more extreme than the law itself. For example, there is no direct law in Iran forbidding women from riding bicycles or motorbikes, but local religious councils routinely enforce bans.

Linked and oiled and  
bound like a bicycle's  
chain are the rules  
and the laws and the  
men who apply them,  
turning beneath the  
Old Man's foot.

The wheels turn to  
keep her from riding.

When she leaves the  
taxi, she walks, weary,  
with her fist clenched  
in her pocket.



# JADOOYE AVAZ

## The Magic Of Singing

You can't imagine the hardship I had to overcome in order  
to take a sip from the well of singing  
But I endured it all without muttering a word  
You can't imagine the things I've been through

They said that my voice can't be the companion to melody and song  
They told me I don't have the right to sing any love songs

They wanted me to die in my silence,  
they wanted this voice to remain silent forever  
But I took my heart, and set it free from that prison

I sing for the world to know , thousands of men and women are silenced there  
Thousands of sweet melodies, thousands of sweet dialects

I gave up all the memories I had made, I dragged my voice towards freedom  
And although I'm now apart from my dear motherland,  
but at least my dreams have been realized

And now standing tall on the peaks of  
dreams and belief, I am drinking merrily  
from the magic well of singing  
The ecstasy I feel in singing these melodies makes my pulse soar

I sing for the world to know,  
thousands of men and women are silenced there  
Thousands of sweet melodies, thousands of sweet dialects

I gave up all the memories I had made, I  
dragged my voice towards freedom  
And although I'm now apart from my dear motherland  
[But at least my dreams have been realized] x 2

## جادوی آواز

واسه نوشیدن یک جرعه آواز  
نمیدونی چقد سختی کشیدم  
تحمل کردم چیزی نگفتم  
نمیدونی چه حرفایی شنیدم

بهم گفتت صدای تو نیاید  
بنشه همیستر شعر و ترانه  
بهم گفتت که من حقی ندارم  
بخونم یک کلام عاشقانه

میخواستن من میرم تو سکوت  
میخواستن این صدا هرگز نخونه  
ولی من دست قلم رو گرفتم  
نذاشتم توی اون زندون همونه

میخونم تا همه دنیا بدونن  
هزاران مرد و زن خاموش اونجا  
هزاران نغمه ی دلکوک و روشن  
هزاران لهجه ی شیرین و زیبا

گذشتم از تمام خاطراتم  
صدامو سمت آزادی کشیدم  
درسته دورم از خاک عزیزم  
ولی آخر به اون رویا رسیدم

حالا رو قله ی رویا و باور  
دارم می نوشم از جادوی آواز  
چنان سرمست قلم وقت خوندم  
که نبض میزنه با حس پرواز

میخونم تا همه دنیا بدونن  
هزاران مرد و زن خاموش اونجا  
هزاران نغمه ی دلکوک و روشن  
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گذشتم از تمام خاطراتم  
صدامو سمت آزادی کشیدم  
درسته دورم از خاک عزیزم  
ولی آخر به اون رویا رسیدم] x 2

**Women in Iran are not permitted to sing publicly, except as part of a choir or chorus.**

Beneath her breath is a song.  
She cannot sing here except in chorus, a link upon the chain.  
Women split the cup of melody sip by sip, no one thirst quite quenched.  
Motherland should not fight with Song; does a mother not sing to her children?  
Beneath her breath, the song grows stronger.



# BEHTARIN ABI

## The Best Blue

For a sake of a dream,  
her life was endangered  
She let go of any fear,  
she became the dawn in the darkness of the night

The night frightened by her love,  
crossed all her dreams out  
The old chain of superstition,  
tied itself around her hands

[The blue lady in love,  
is now somewhere above in the sky  
The color of her pride, is the brightest blue  
you will ever see] x 2

In the swamps of judgement,  
they cut the vein that kept her dream alive  
And covered her hopes with the dark veil of the night

[But she raised above the night blazing and burning bright  
And freed herself for the sake of her love  
amongst the flames] x 2

[The blue lady in love, is now somewhere above in the  
sky The colour of her pride, is the brightest blue  
you will ever see] x 2

## بهترین آبی

واسه دیدن یه رویا  
زندگیش پُر از خطر شد  
ترسو از خودش جدا کرد  
توی تاریکی ((سُخَر)) شد

شب وحشت زده از عشق  
خط کشید به روی رویاش  
کهنه زنجیر خرافات  
حلقه شد به دور دستاش

[دختر آبی عاشق  
حالا توی آسموناس  
رنگ زیبای غرورش  
بهترین آبی دنیاس] x ۲

توی مرداب قضاوت  
رگ رویاشو بریدن  
چادر سیاه شب رو  
سر آرزوش کشیدن

[اما اون شعله کشیدو  
شبو از خودش جدا کرد  
خودشو برای اون عشق  
توی شعله ها رها کرد] x ۲

[دختر آبی عاشق  
حالا توی آسموناس  
رنگ زیبای غرورش  
بهترین آبی دنیاس] x ۲

## It is strictly forbidden for women to attend football matches.

In 2019, Sahar Khodayari was sentenced to prison for trying to enter a stadium while disguised as a man. In protest at her sentence she set herself alight outside the courtroom, dying of her injuries a week later. She was known as Blue Girl, after the colour of her club, Esteghlal F.C

Seven years old, hair cropped close as the boys', she kicked for a brick goal drawn in chalk on streets like these. Esteghlal blue was emblazoned on her back. Now she kicks against a brick goal drawn in laws, and her long hair is covered by black.

But the blue moon hangs like a ball above the keeper's gloved hand.



# NASHEGI

## Euphoria

Tell me how many more lives should be taken  
Before your appetite for murder is satisfied  
Tell me how many more deaths  
For you to get your high your euphoria

You are sitting on your throne of blood and lunacy  
With the delusion that god is on your side  
With the delusion that you hold the hourglass of death  
Forever in your possession

[This horrid feeling will soon end  
And once again we are together as one  
Once again we rule the streets  
And we shall burn your roots] x 2

You give away the motherland's wealth as if it was nothing  
And your greed  
Has cost this land thousands of lives

You rejoice in people's death  
Our mourning is your muse  
In your mind every new tombstone  
Is a stepping stone for you to build up your estate

[This horrid feeling will soon end  
And once again we are together as one  
Once again we rule the streets  
And we shall burn your roots] x 2

## نعشگی

بگو چن نفر دیگه باید بزَن  
که ارضا بشه حس آدم کُشیت  
بگو چن تا مرگ دیگه کافیه  
واسه نَعشگی و واسه سَرخوشیت

نشستی روی تخت خون و جنون  
توهم زدی که خدا پُشتت  
توهم زدی شیشه ی عمر ما  
برای همیشه توی مُشیت

[به زودی تموم میشه این حال بد  
دوباره همه پشت هم با همیم  
دوباره خیابون میشه مال ما  
دیگه ایندقه ریشتو میزنیم] x ۲

همه ثروت سرزمین منو  
زدی چوب حراج و دادی به باد  
به کشور از اینکه تو غارتگری  
هزاران هزاران نفر کشته داد

تو خوشحالی از مرگ این آدمآ  
عزاداری ما برات شادیه  
تو ذهن تو هر سنگ قبر جدید  
واسه تاج و تختت یه آبادیه

[به زودی تموم میشه این حال بد  
دوباره همه پشت هم با همیم  
دوباره خیابون میشه مال ما  
دیگه ایندقه ریشتو میزنیم] x ۲

**Protests for civil and human rights, no matter how peaceful, are brutally suppressed by security forces. One of these was the 'Uprising of the Thirsty', a series of 2021 protests against water shortages. \* My home town of Isfahan, Zayandeh Rud was the site of the clashes.**

She turns onto Zayandeh Rud, where the Thirsty fought and fell.

No foreign Alexander did this, no new Nebuchadnezzar: it was their own dark shadows bit at them with bullets and tore tears from them with gas.

She walks.

Here stood the Old Man's black phalanx, his hard shaft upon the people.

But when its roots are burned that trunk will shrivel.



# KHODAVANDA

## Dearest God

Dearest god, have you seen the state of us?  
See how empty as a desert are some tables  
We are so desperate for a piece of bread  
that we have long forgotten you

I am ashamed to say  
That I have no choice but to admit  
Desperation has compelled our souls  
to put our pride on sale

Dearest god turn our empty  
tables into a fruitful garden  
Help us feel the sweet taste of contentment  
once again in our homes

For us happiness is just a dream  
even a moment of peace is a distant memory  
In this merciless prison of desperation  
our entire existence is in question

Without a dream to look forward to  
without a simple heartfelt desire  
The tale of our life is like a  
flickering candle in the hands of wind

Dearest god turn our empty  
tables into a fruitful garden  
Help us feel the sweet taste of contentment  
once again in our homes

For us happiness is just a dream  
even a moment of peace is a distant memory  
In this merciless prison of desperation  
our entire existence is in question

Oh how much I resent telling this bitter tale  
but I have to sing this pain away  
The desperation for a piece of bread has crushed my people  
I would be a cursed if I hold my peace

## خداوندا

خداوندا ببین اوضاع مارو تماشا کن کوپر سفره هارو  
چنان بیچاره ی په یقمه تونیم که مدتهاست می شناسیم شمارو

خوادم از گفتنش شرمنده میشم ولی باید بگم راهی نمونده  
غم نون روح مارو مفت و ارزون به حراج غرور ما رسونده

خداوندا کمک کن سفره هامون بشه دشتی پُر ازعطر خوش نون  
کمک کن طعم خوب زندگی رو بتونیم حس کنیم تو خونه هامون

واسه ما حس خوشبختی خیاله فقط یک لحظه آرامش محاله  
تو این زندون بی رحم غم نون تمام عمر ما زیر سواله

نه رویایی که باشه دلخوشیمون نه حتی آرزویی سهل و ساده  
حدیث زندگی ما شبیه په شمع نیمه جون تو دست باده

خداوندا کمک کن سفره هامون بشه دشتی پُر از عطر خوش نون  
کمک کن طعم خوب زندگی رو بتونیم حس کنیم تو خونه هامون

واسه ما حس خوشبختی خیاله فقط یک لحظه آرامش محاله  
تو این زندون بی رحم غم نون تمام عمر ما زیر سواله

چقد بیزارم از این قصه ی تلخ ولی باید من این دردو بخونم  
غم نون مردمو بیچاره کرده مته کفره اگه ساکت مونم

## The Iranian regime justifies itself as fulfilling a strict interpretation of Islamic law.

Does the minaret grow  
from those  
same roots?

It rises like a tree above  
her, but she cannot see  
the fruit it bears.

She thinks on barren  
tables, breadless deserts,  
the breathless years ahead.

Somewhere, the Old Man  
prays to his own image.

He does not see his  
people. He does not  
believe in them.





# BETARS AZ MAN

## Fear Me

You can't terrorize the people  
By executing the flower or the sparrow  
It's been a life time that the canary  
Has been singing of freedom from its cage

You may sound your victory trumpet marking death and destruction  
You may sound your victory trumpet like the chains of sorrow  
And yet you fear to encounter  
The butterfly is fleeing its cocoon

Fear me, as I am that butterfly  
Fear me, as freedom is my voice  
Fear me, you faint hearted gloom  
As the blood of that canary is in my vein

Fear me, as I am that butterfly,  
Fear me, as freedom is my voice  
Fear me, you faint hearted gloom,  
As instead of blood conviction is in my veins

Fear me, fear me  
As I have nothing to lose  
Fear me, fear me  
I want to create dreams with my conviction

The sea has seen eye to eye with the storm  
I have nothing to lose It is now time for you to see I want to create  
dreams with my conviction

I want to be the people and wear the law  
No longer a commoner  
I want to plant streams of light  
In the darkest grounds of our history

Fear me, as I am that butterfly  
Fear me, as freedom is my voice  
Fear me, you faint hearted gloom,  
As instead of blood conviction is in my veins

[Fear me, fear me  
As I have nothing to lose  
Fear me, fear me  
I want to create dreams with my conviction] x 2

I want to create dreams with my conviction

## بترس از من

با اعدام گل و قتل چکاوک فیتونی بترسونی کسی رو  
قناری عمریه از توی زندون میخونه نغمه ی آزادی رو

رجز میخونی از مرگ و مجازات رجز میخونی از زنجیر و میله  
تموم ترست از اینه ببینی که پروانه نمونده توی پیله

بترس از من، من اون پروانه هستم بترس از من که آزادی صدامه  
بترس از من شب ترسوی بزدل که خون اون قناری تو رگامه

بترس از من، من اون پروانه هستم بترس از من که آزادی صدامه  
بترس از من شب ترسوی بزدل که جای خون اراده تو رگامه

بترس از من بترس از من دیگه چیزی ندارم که ببازم  
بترس از من بترس از من میخوام با جراتم رویا بسازم

دیگه آب از سر دریا گذشته دیگه چیزی ندارم که ببازم  
دیگه وقتش رسیده تا ببینی میخوام با جراتم رویا بسازم

میخوام مردم بشم قانون بپوشم لباس رعیت و از تن درارم  
میخوام تو خاک تاریخ سیامون نهال روشنائی رو بکارم

بترس از من، من اون پروانه هستم بترس از من که آزادی صدامه  
بترس از من شب ترسوی بزدل که جای خون اراده تو رگامه

[بترس از من بترس از من دیگه چیزی ندارم که ببازم  
بترس از من بترس از من میخوام با جراتم رویا بسازم] x 2

میخوام با جراتم رویا بسازم

Capital crimes in Iran include  
homosexuality, adultery, and – if  
there is no clear crime – ‘spreading  
corruption on earth’.

Confessions are commonly  
elicited through torture, as in the  
case of Navid Afkari\*\*.

This song is for him, and for all  
others wrongfully  
executed in Iran.

Fear has made every house  
she passes a cage, but not  
because fear is within them.

Fear walks the street, dressed  
in black; Fear fills out the po-  
liceman's helmet. Fear builds  
prisons. Fear knots the noose.

Fear is itself fearful,  
for the Fearless will one day  
sweep it away.  
She goes up a concrete  
stairwell decorated with  
blue sky, hard angles  
made soft  
with sinuous trees  
and fluttering  
painted birds.



# MA ZIADIM

## We Are Many

Gone are the days when you could  
Lecture us with your stories of terror  
You know well  
You can't stay on that pulpit for much longer

For how long should we bear this pain?  
There is no way for us to stay silent this time.  
In the name of honouring the innocent blood  
of Aban  
We must take back our Iran

You are done for, we are many  
We are restless like a volcano  
The roar of the flood and the fury of the wind  
Your bullets are few, we are many

Your bullets are few, Your bullets are few  
Your bullets are few, we are many...

You are barbarians, we have roots  
You are on your way, we are here to stay  
Armed with the weapon of our love for Iran  
We will come for you soon

We are not waiting for a saviour  
We are not looking for others to come to our aid  
We must sing the song of victory ourselves  
Without reliance on the rest of the world

You are done for, we are many  
We are restless like a volcano  
The roar of the flood and the fury of the wind  
Your bullets are few, we are many

[Your bullets are few, Your bullets are few  
Your bullets are few, we are many... ] x 2

ما زياديم

گذشت اون روزگاري که بتوني  
واسه ما روضه ي وحشت بخوني  
خودت هم خوب ميدوني که ديگه  
نمي توني رو اون منبر بموني

آخه تا کی تحمل تا کجا در  
مخاله ايندفعه از پا بشنيم  
واسه حرمت به خون پاک آبان  
بايد ايرانمون پس بگيريم

قومه کارتون ما بي شماريم  
مته آتشفشاني بي قراريم  
خروش سيل و خشم تند بادي  
کلوله کم مياريدي ما زياديم

گوله کم مياريدي گلوله کم مياريدي  
کلوله کم مياريدي ما زياديم . . .

شما ها اجنبي ما ريشه داريم  
شما ها رفتني ما موندگاريم  
مسلح به سلاح عشق ايران  
به زودي جون به لب هاتون مياريدي

نه تو فکر کسی مثل يه منجي  
نه دنبال کمک از ديگروني  
سرد چشمن پروزي رو بايد  
بدون منت دنيا بخونيم

قومه کارتون ما بي شماريم  
مته آتشفشاني بي قراريم  
خروش سيل و خشم تند بادي  
کلوله کم مياريدي ما زياديم

[گوله کم مياريدي گلوله کم مياريدي  
کلوله کم مياريدي ما زياديم . . . ] x 2

The 2019-20 anti-government protests, also known as Bloody November, were the most severe and violent since the creation of the Islamic Republic in 1979.

As many as 1500 protestors were killed and in an effort to conceal the scale of the massacre many bodies were removed by the authorities.

Below her is a city of blinking lights.  
Do they rage or love where those lights flicker?  
In the unseen body all things are true, and the unseen bodies are without number.  
As she looks down from the overpass, so too does the Old Man gaze down from his pulpit.  
He counts his bullets, but he will not have enough when the lions shake their chains to earth.



# HAGHAME

## It's My Right

[Listen well, you night time, darkness  
This is me, tomorrow's sun  
I'm against the hijab  
No longer want the head scarf] x2

Its my right to feel the wind  
Blowing in my hair  
Its my right to live my life  
Free from any threats

You who are so afraid of my hair  
Who is the weakest?  
You who are not as daring as me

Listen well, you night time, darkness  
This is me tomorrow's sun  
I reject the hijab  
No longer want the head scarf

What I wear as attire  
should be a choice, it is not law  
It is nothing but a simple right  
So don't you threaten me

If the route to heaven  
Is through fear and oppression  
Then its just a delusion  
Rooted in a disturbed mind

Hear me out you night time, darkness  
This is me tomorrow's sun  
I reject the hijab  
No longer want the head scarf

Don't you threaten me  
This is me, this is who I am  
And I can see the day  
Your time is over

Listen well, you night time, darkness  
This is me tomorrow's sun  
I reject the hijab  
No longer want the head scarf

Don't you threaten me  
This is me, this is who I am  
And I can see the day  
Your time is over

[I can see the day] x2

## حقمه

[گوش کن ای شب ای سیاهی من همون خورشید فردام  
من مخالف حجابم دیگه روسری نمیخوام] ۲ ×

دیگه روسری نمیخوام

حقمه توی خیابون باد بیچه توی موهام  
حقمه بدون تهدید بگذره روزا و شب هام

تو که از موی سر من این همه واهمه داری  
من ضعیفم یا تویی که جرات منو نداری

گوش کن ای شب ای سیاهی من همون خورشید فردام  
من مخالف حجابم دیگه روسری نمی خوام

انتخاب نوع پوشش به سلیقت نه به قانون  
این به حقه خیلی سادس منو از چیزی نترسون

اون بهشتی که مسیرش زوره و ترسه و اجبار  
یه توهم پلیده از یه اندیشه ی بیمار

گوش کن ای شب ای سیاهی من همون خورشید فردام  
من مخالف حجابم دیگه روسری نمیخوام

منو از چیزی نترسون من همینم که همینم  
تو دیگه توممه کارت دارم اون روزو میبینم

گوش کن ای شب ای سیاهی من همون خورشید فردام  
من مخالف حجابم دیگه روسری نمیخوام

منو از چیزی نترسون من همینم که همینم  
تو دیگه توممه کارت دارم اون روزو میبینم

[دارم اون روزو میبینم] ۲ ×

**Since 1981 a modest dress code including the hijab (headscarf) has been compulsory for women in public. For decades, Iranian women have fought for freedom of choice, often risking long prison sentences for defying dress codes.**

Night's river is running dry, and in the wind before dawn she un-dams the river of her hair.  
Once she scarred her head with scissors, but she can not – will not – pass for a boy any longer.  
The road below was carved from concrete.  
Impossible to imagine that heaven's road can be gained through force.  
The lights of cars pierce the veil of night.  
Soon tomorrow's sun will lift it.



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**Special thanks to Ahmad Fakhr, Kiana, Debbie Lovejoy, Lou Cannon,  
James O'Driscoll for your full support and love.**

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\* These protests involved both farmers effected by water shortages and those without clean drinking water. Iran is in the midst of a huge crisis of dehydration, brought about by corruption and the mismanagement of resources.

\*\*Navid Afkari was a successful wrestler, who was arrested after participating in the 2018 protests and tortured into confessing to the murder of a security guard. Despite retracting his confession and protesting his innocence, he was hanged in 2020, becoming a symbol of the corrupt legal system.



