Iran Woman Gets 74 Lashes For 'Public Morals' Violation

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By AFP

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Iranian authorities have whipped a woman 74 times for "violating public morals" and fined her for not covering her head, the judiciary said.

"The convicted, Roya Heshmati, encouraged permissiveness (by appearing) disgracefully in busy public places in Tehran," the judiciary's Mizan Online website said late on Saturday.

"Her penalty of 74 strokes of the lash was carried out in accordance with the law and with sharia," and "for violating public morals," Mizan said.

All women in Iran have been required by law to cover their neck and head since shortly after the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Whippings for breaching the dress code are uncommon in Iran, although officials have increasingly cracked down on those defying the rules after the practice surged during anti-government protests that began in late 2022.

Those protests were triggered by the September 2022 death in custody of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old Iranian Kurd arrested for an alleged breach of the Islamic republic's strict dress code for women.

During the protests, female demonstrators cast off their headscarves or even burned them. Other women also began increasingy to flout the dress code, leading to a crackdown.

Kurdish-focused rights group Hengaw identified Heshmati as 33-year-old woman of Kurdish origins.

She was arrested in April "for publishing a photo on social media without wearing a headscarf," her lawyer Maziar Tatai told the reformist Shargh daily.

Heshmati was also ordered to pays a fine of 12 million rials (around $25) for "not wearing the Muslim veil in public", Tatai said.

Officials have installed surveillance cameras in public places to monitor violations and have shut businesses that breached the rules.

Iran's parliament has also discussed a bill that would toughen penalties for those breaching the dress code.