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Family of slain Iranian protester wants answers

By Reza Sayah, CNN

March 22, 2010 -- Updated 1803 GMT (0203 HKT)

**Parents want son's killer**

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

Parents of slain protester wants to know who killed their son

They have not spoken to the international media until now, fearing their safety

Iranian authorities have said they are investigating

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(CNN) -- The images of Neda Agha Soltan's death on the streets of Tehran transformed her into an icon for Iran's opposition movement.

But very few know of Ramin Ramezani, who was killed five days before Neda during last year's post-election demonstrations in the Iranian capital.

"I always say Neda is the miracle of the century," Ramin's mother Zahra Ramezani told CNN by phone. "Neda was destined to be known to everyone. If Ramin isn't known to everyone, that's OK."

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's landslide re-election on June 12, 2009, had sparked the biggest protests in Iran since the 1979 revolution.

The following Monday, hundreds of thousands marched to Tehran's Azadi square, calling the vote a sham. Ramin was among the crowd. [Watch YouTube video of the chaos that day](#)

Ramin was on leave from military duty, back in Tehran to celebrate his 22nd birthday, just six days away. His parents told CNN that he had voted for Mir Hossein Mousavi, the opposition candidate who had energized young Iranians with promises of a freer society, more

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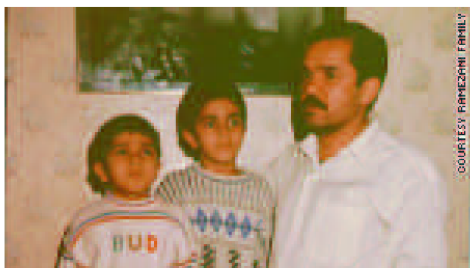
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rights for women, and better relations with the West.



Ramin, pictured in the center of this undated family photo, was one of the first demonstrators killed during the June 2009 protests.

Around 6 p.m. that day, Ramin called his parents and told them not to worry, they said. He said he'd be home later that evening.

An hour later, just blocks away from Azadi square, violence erupted at a base for the Basij, Iran's pro-government militia. Protesters surrounded the building, shattered its windows with rocks, and set fire to several rooms.

Amateur video from the scene showed several armed members of the Basij on the rooftop apparently firing shots.

It was here, Ramin's parents said, that their son was killed. A single bullet entered the right side of his chest, tore through both his lungs and killed him within minutes, his parents said.

There was no way to know who fired the shot. It is widely believed that Ramin and several others who were killed on June 15 were the first casualties of the opposition movement's protests.

When Ramin didn't show up at home, the Ramezani family stayed up all night trying to reach him. Zahra Ramezani said she called Ramin's cell phone every hour but no one answered.

As soon as he said 'remains' there was chaos in our home.

--Zahra Ramezani, mother of slain protester

The following day they received a brief call from a man who did not identify himself.

"He said, 'If you want your son's remains,' and as soon as he said 'remains' there was chaos in our home," said Zahra Ramezani. "We were all hitting ourselves, screaming and shouting."

For Ramin's parents the nightmare was just beginning. Over the course of a week, they said they searched for Ramin's remains in five hospitals. They pleaded with officials at two courthouses and the interior ministry to help them find their son's body. Authorities said they would investigate.

Finally, at a prison morgue, a prison official showed Ramin's father the picture of his son's remains on a computer screen.

"For about one hour I lost myself," Mehdi Ramezani said. "I was hitting myself in the face and the head, asking, 'Why is my son's naked remains on this monitor?'"

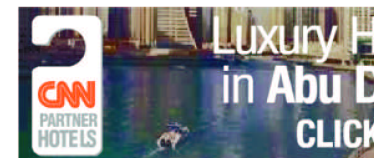
Mehdi Ramezani said an official at the prison morgue warned him to keep quiet about his son's death.

"They made me promise them not to cause a big commotion during his funeral," Mehdi Ramezani said. "They said it wouldn't be good for your future and the future of your children."

Calls to Iran's judiciary and security officials seeking comment were not returned.



Until now, Zahra and Mehdi Ramezani have never spoken to the international media. But



A passport image of Ramin Ramezani, whose parents say they just want his killers to be punished.

after keeping silent for more than nine months, they still don't know any more about how their son died.

"They still haven't told us anything," Zahra Ramezani said. "They said, 'We didn't shoot him.' Then who shot him?"

Human rights groups say around 80 people were killed during Iran's 2009 post-election protests, while Iran's government puts the number at about half of that. While Iran has charged prison officials with torturing to death some of those detained after the demonstrations, no one has been charged in any of the deaths during the protests.

Authorities in Iran have told CNN they are investigating the deaths, but the Ramezanis say they are losing hope.

Every Friday morning the Ramezanis visit Tehran's main cemetery where their son's gravesite sits just steps away from Neda Agha Soltan's. Ramin's parents say they don't want the attention Neda is getting. All they want is someone to tell them who killed these two young Iranians and why.

"A good and ideal government is for everyone, even those who oppose it," said Zahra Ramezani. "If they consider themselves servants of Iran, then they owe us something."

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Petaluma1

Petaluma1

Thank you for this story! It is extremely important to remember that this young man was brutally killed. The family need answers and the truth! My heart goes out to Ramin Ramezani, who needlessly lost his life, and to his family,

who will forever feel the loss of their son and brother.

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SoldierUS69

SoldierUS69

This USA2020 guy sounds like a card carrying member of Hezbollah or Hamas. The government of Iran is evil and the majority of the people of Iran want to change it back to a secular, non-religious, run government. As for the Palestinians their surrounding Arab Muslim neighbors have taken in fewer Pa ...more

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USA2020

USA2020

man, many of you pro israelies comments are so hateful. You are so racist. Me as an american is a shame that my tax money pay you lazy racist hateful crowd. Some of the hateful things you facist said was calling Palistinians "Fakestinians" and one of you facist said "hey should all be moved to the ...more

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USA2020

USA2020

Barry77 such ignorant little bigot you are. If I could see you, my fist would have meet your zion, stab backing, traitor's face. I bet you have your allegiances to your master Israel. People like you are a shame. Why don't you ship to Isreal, so you and your master can enjoy each others company.

6 days ago | [Like \(2\)](#) | [Report abuse](#)



Barry77

Barry77

Sometimes the truth hurts. I agree with you on one point. It is a shame that you are an American. You diminish us all. This has nothing to do with race. A religion is not a race. The Fakestinians are not a race. It has nothing to do with fascism. I doubt you actually know what fascism is. When ignor ...more

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askhow

askhow

Wow! I guess you can take the man out of the 6th century but you can't take the 6th century out of the man. These Middle easterners are so backward that so pre-historic that even when they are raised in this country they have kept their paranoia. This paranoia is fed by their backwardness. The r ...more

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flyingrhino

flyingrhino

who shot this guy? most likely CIA operatives involved in a mission to foment violence and mischief. or people they payed off. america is desperate to bring iran down. they've been trying since 81 to no avail. first they tried to perpetrate a costly 8 year long war hoping to break them. it did ...more

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Barry77

Barry77

He couldn't possibly have been killed by the Iranians. It must have been the Easter Bunny or Santa Clause. It could have been the Tooth Fairy, but I hear she has an alibi. LOL.

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ali23

ali23

You are just so ignorant that are mixing freedom fighters with fanatical religious assassins in Iran. You guys always try to justify you extremist believe that you have the right to kill and abuse because another country is doing worse. Go back and live in 1400 years ago in your tent. You moron you ...[more](#)

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USA2020

USA2020

To people that say their never was or will be a Palestinians. What do you propose to do with the six million palestiniens living there. So you just going to squeeze them to sea. Bulldoze their Getto, kill their father, starve them, gas chamber them. So what is the case. Can we have a peaceful soluti ...[more](#)

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Barry77

Barry77

They should all be moved to the actual Palestinian state, Jordan. There they can kill, main, and destroy each other without interference from Israel. But they will have to give up on the 60+ years of welfare they have been receiving. The survivors, if any, will need to get actual jobs.

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arabsunni

arabsunni

Iran is a great country and they will have the nuclear technology ,,,the israelis who don t like it can go back to russia or poland where they belong they still have time ,,,the danger in the M/east comes from the fanatics in telaviv not tahrán

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Barry77

Barry77

Iran interferes with the Fakestinians every day by supplying these Islamic terrorists with weapons and training. The Jews have been on the land for thousands of years, much longer than the Arabs who invaded their land around the ninth century. If anyone should go home it would be the Arabs going bac ...[more](#)

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ali23

ali23

Palestinans are arabs and they are surrounded by Arab countries who can help them, but they all choose not to lift a finger because they know what kind of people they are. Busy yourself with your own country. Iran has nothing to do in Palestine. If you get involved you are not much different than US ...[more](#)

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USA2020

USA2020

To people that say their never was or will be a Palestinians. What do you propose to do with the six million paliestinians leaving there. So you just going to squeez them to sea. Bulldoze their Getto, kill their father, starve them, gas chamber them. So what is the case. Can we have a peaceful solut ...[more](#)

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Barry77

Barry77

Sure we can have a peaceful solution. The Fakestinian terrorists need to recognize Israel, renounce violence, find a peaceful religion that doesn't call for the destruction of the Jews (and everybody else that doesn't believe the lies of Islam), and move back to the real Palestinian homeland in Jord ...[more](#)

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arabsunni

arabsunni

the bellydancer of egypt is arresting the opposition leaders everyday ,,nobody talks about that ,,iran have the right to defend herself and they will have the nukes ,,israelis are too coward to attack them ,,are the americans ready to go to war yet another time to please the jewish looby ?that is ...[more](#)

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arabsunni

arabsunni

family of the slain american protester wants answers ,,watch out the zionists are trying to get you yet in another war ,,is iran a threat to the states ,,?no ,israel is

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Barry77

Barry77

You sound like a frightened child. Don't attack my country until we get nukes. The zionists are trying to get you... If we are ever to attack the evil iran, it would be much better for them if we attack it before they get nukes than after. Iran would end up as a large plate of radioactive glass.

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Abadan11

Abadan11

This government is not there to serve Iranian people, they are there to serve themselves and being in power. They are sucking all money and blood of inecent people.UN needs to pay more attention to this criminal government.

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arabsunni

arabsunni

funny,,,, it looks like if you are talking about israel

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chaharmahal

chaharmahal

Ramin you're my hero, you proved me your cause is just and right.

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Barry77

Barry77

That's right. Out of more than 300 million Americans, only one was stupid enough to stand in front of a moving bulldozer. I hope arabsunni can follow in her footsteps and be run over by the next bulldozer.

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arabsunni

arabsunni

Rachel corrie you are my hero ,you proved me the palestinian cause is just and right ,,and showed me that not all americans are brainwashed

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toto221999

toto221999

Why is it that when a Palestinian kid dies by a bullet from an Israeli soldier it is always justified, but when an Israeli dies it is blamed on terrorism. Why we justify occupation when the occupier is a friend. We should stand against occupation and the fact is that Israelis are the occupiers. You [...more](#)

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