

# The Fatwa Against Rushdie

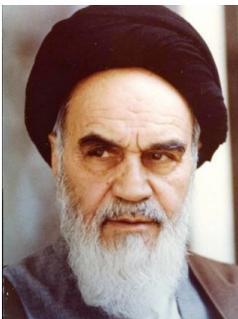
## Basic Definition:

A Fatwa is “an authoritative ruling on a point of Islamic law.”



## More Details:

- A fatwa is issued by a recognized **religious authority** in Islam. However, a fatwa is not necessarily "binding." The people who pronounce these rulings should be knowledgeable, and base their rulings in knowledge and wisdom. They need to supply evidence from Islamic sources for their opinions, and often, scholars come to different conclusions regarding the same issue.
- In the West, these are often seen as **condemnations** of people who have made some serious violation, and usually is **a death sentence**.

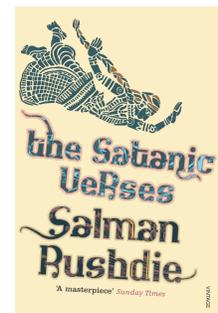


*"I inform the proud Muslim people of the world that the author of the Satanic Verses book which is against Islam, the Prophet and the Koran, and all involved in its publication who were aware of its content, are sentenced to death."*

Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini  
FATWA issued February, 1989

## Causes:

In 1988 Rushdie published his fourth novel, *The Satanic Verses*, which led to accusations of blasphemy against Islam and demonstrations by Islamist groups in India and Pakistan. The Iranian leadership issued a fatwa against Rushdie on 14 February 1989 - effectively a sentence of death - and he was forced into hiding under the protection of the British government and police. **The Iranian leadership believes that the book slanders the sacred Muslim prophet Mohammed.** There were also attacks on people involved in translating and publishing the book.



## Today:

**In 1998, ten years after the fatwa was issued, the Iranian government formally withdrew support for the fatwa.** However, today, the current spiritual leader in Iran said that the fatwa remains valid. Rushdie lived in hiding in Britain for many years. He is now able to live a more public life. 2009 marks the twentieth anniversary of the fatwa.

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