

SRC x Women's Collective Statement on Iran

On 16 September 2022, 22-year-old Kurdish woman Mahsa Amini died in police custody after being arrested by the morality police on 13 September and tortured for her headscarf being too loose. Since then, there's been an outpouring of anger among Iranian protestors, who oppose the oppressive regime. In Iran, hijabs must mandatorily be worn by women in public. Amini's family believe that Iran is attempting to cover up Amini's murder by claiming that she died of heart failure. Amini's death has sparked protests across the globe. In 1981, the hijab became mandatory, often viewed as a law to punish the women who participated in the 1979 anti-regime protests culminating in the Iranian Revolution.

Now, in 2022, Iranian women are taking off their headscarves and cutting their hair. When protestors marched to the governor's building in Saqqez following Amini's burial on 17 September, protestors were abused and at least 13 protestors were shot. On 18 September, at protests in the capital of the Kurdistan province Sanandaj, police used batons and teargas, with reported gunfire, to attack protestors. On 19 September, at 7 universities in Tehran male and female students rallied against the wearing of mandatory hijabs, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei.

On the Keshavarz Boulevard, a girl removed her scarf in protest and despite being pulled down and physically abused by the police, she refused to wear the scarf. As of 26 September, at least 450 people have been arrested in Mazandaran, Iran, and Iranian officials have stated that over 1200 people have been arrested overall. As of 26 September, the official death toll is 41 and the death toll provided by human rights groups is 76 (Iran Human Rights group), although these death tolls are uncertain. Amnesty International states that state forces have killed at least 4 children.

The Union of Islamic Iran People's Party supports the repeal of mandatory dress code. In retaliation to the protests, Iran has organised rallies defending the conservative values of the Islamic Republic, including the mandatory hijab laws. Government supporters have been denouncing intervention from foreign nations. President Ebrahim Raisi stated that they promised to "deal decisively with those who oppose the country's security and tranquillity." In Iran currently there are internet blackouts, inhibiting communication. According to NetBlocks, Iranian people are experiencing the "most severe internet restrictions since the November

2019 massacre”. The UNSW Women's Collective and SRC endorse the Iranian protesters and stand in solidarity with the people of Iran who are here, asking us to support a better future. We are deeply disturbed by the current oppressive regime in Iran and other Middle Eastern countries. We defend a woman's right to bodily autonomy, including the freedom to choose how she dresses. We are outraged that women in Iran are not only being denied this right but are also being tortured and murdered for it. We extend our greatest condolences to those affected by the situation in Iran, particularly the families of those who have suffered, and likewise, Iranian students and teachers within the UNSW community.

The UNSW SRC and Women’s Collective is proudly going to support them today and every day after that. We want to remind all Iranian students on and off campus that we will stand in solidarity with them. The UNSW SRC is hosting a Day of Action on Thursday, 6th October at the UNSW Kensington Campus, Quadrangle Building between 4 – 6 PM. We welcome you all to join us, to stand in support with the Iranian Student and Staff community and show your support to push for an international action to open communication with the people of Iran. Please reach out to us if you need support in this troubling time.

You can email us on src.president@arc.unsw.edu.au or womens.officer@arc.unsw.edu.au.

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