

# THE FACTS: MAHSA AMINI AND THE PROTESTS IN IRAN

WHAT IS HAPPENING, WHY IT IS HAPPENING AND  
HOW YOU CAN ENGAGE

## BACKGROUND

Women in Iran have been forced to wear the hijab - head cover, since the Islamic revolution and the early 1980's. The hijab law has been enforced by the country's "morality police" for over four decades, ever since the Islamic revolution.

Iranian women and protesters are in the streets fighting for the choice to wear the hijab or not.

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## MAHSA AMINI

In mid-September 2022, a 22-year-old Iranian-Kurdish woman named Mahsa Amini was arrested by the morality police in Tehran because she was not wearing her hijab properly.

The morality police detained Amini and, while in their custody, she died. Authorities attributed her sudden death to a heart attack, however CT scans of Amini's body showed that she experienced a brain hemorrhage. [1] Eyewitness accounts, as well as footage and images of Amini after she was arrested also support the more likely explanation that Iran's morality police physically beat Amini while she was detained.



## THE DEMONSTRATIONS AND GOVERNMENT CRACKDOWNS:

The arrest and beating to death of a young woman for not wearing her hijab properly has ignited a new found energy and resolve among the people of Iran to speak truth to power. People across Iran have been risking their lives to participate in daily protests against the country's hijab laws. Iran's protests are led **by women and girls, supported by men and boys, athletes and artists, poor and rich, urban and rural citizens, students and workers, and other diverse communities.** There have been protests in about **135 Iranian cities across nearly every Iranian province since September.**



- Many Iranian women have publicly removed and then burned their hijabs as part of the protests. Iranian men are walking side by side the women, they are starting the bonfires. In response to the protests, the government in Iran has largely cut off access to the internet for most of its 80 million citizens to prevent them — and the world — from watching its violent crackdown on peaceful protestors. It has banned all social media sites including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp, Telegram, and Skype.
- University students have led protests in at least 136 universities in Iran.
- Some of the labor force have gone on strike.
- High school girls have started their acts of defiance by taking off their hijabs, walking out of school, and singing about freedom.
- The Iranian government has unleashed a brutal crackdown on all demonstrators, resorting to shootings, beatings, teargas, abductions, and arrests. Due to the limited availability of internet, the actual numbers of those injured, abducted, arrested and killed are not easily ascertainable, but as human rights monitoring groups continue to provide the latest estimates, we will share that information on [HERE](#). Among those killed, arrested, or missing are women, men, children, students, civil activists, physicians, lawyers, professors, and journalists.

**"WOMAN, LIFE, FREEDOM"  
ZAN, ZENDEGHEE, AZADI**

زن زندگی آزادی

**-A COMMON CHANT HEARD ACROSS IRAN AND THE GLOBE.**

## **US GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO DATE**

- ✓ **President Biden publicly sided with the protesters in his speech to the United Nations last week.**
- ✓ **The US Treasury Department has issued a general license, which authorizes certain transactions which would otherwise be prohibited under sanctions, “to advance our efforts and commitments to ensure that the Iranian people can freely access information online.” [2]**
- ✓ **The Treasury Department has issued sanctions on Iran’s morality police as major protests continue nationwide. [3]**
- ✓ **The Treasury Department is also sanctioning the head of the morality police, Mohammad Rostami Cheshmeh Gachi, and Haj Ahmad Mirzaei, who served as the head of its Tehran division during Amini’s detention and death. [4]**
- ✓ **On Oct. 6, U.S. announced fresh sanctions against Iranian officials in punishment “for the continued violence against peaceful protesters and the shutdown of Iran’s Internet access.” [5]**
- ✓ **On Nov. 2, Vice President Kamila Harris announced United States’ intent to work with its partners to remove Iran from the UN Commission on the Status of Women.[6]**

## HOW YOU CAN ENGAGE AND ACT

The people of Iran cannot win their freedom without the support and help from the West. Here is what you can do to support the citizens of Iran in their quest for human rights:

- Join our **Stand Up for Iran's Girls** Campaign
  - Iran's girls are risking everything to secure their fundamental rights – for themselves, and for everyone in Iran. They are taking unimaginable risks and standing up against insurmountable odds – bullets, batons, and prison bars. You can stand up for them. Share their goals. **Sign our petition**. And call on President Biden to stand up for them.
- **Use social media** to amplify the voices of people in Iran.
  - **Show your support via your own personal posts on all social media platforms** - Make sure to use the hashtags #MahsaAmini, and #IranProtests, and tag major news outlets and celebrities.
  - **Repost footage of protests to all social media platforms** – The Islamic Republic of Iran regime is blocking its citizens' access to the internet. Iranians have to use VPN and other dangerous methods to get content out. When we re-share the videos/photos that do get out, we are helping to amplify the voices of Iranians. They want and need us to help get their stories out and bring to the attention of world leaders.

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## FOR MORE INFORMATION

- **Biden's Support for Iran Protesters Comes After Bitter Lessons of 2009**
- **Bonfire of the Headscarves**
- **Briefing with Senior Administration Officials on the Administration's Efforts to Advance the Free Flow of Information For the Iranian People**
- **How protests in Iran over Mahsa Amini's death 'forever moved the debate' over women's rights**
- **"She was tortured": Mahsa Amini's family speaks out amid Iran protests**