Solidarity with the protest movement in Iran!

Statement of the Executive Bureau of the Fourth International
Since 16 September Iran has been thrown into turmoil by widespread protests against the policies of the ruling clique. They were triggered by the brutal murder of the young woman Jîna (Mahsa) Amini, who was beaten to death by the "morality police". The duration and the expansion of the demonstrations to all parts of the country and almost all strata of the population testify to a deep-seated discontent and anger that goes beyond rejection of the regime's deeply restrictive dress code for women. The causes also lie in a social plight that has been worsening for years for large sections of the population and in massive repression.

Unlike previous unrest, such as the rebellion against electoral fraud (2009) or protests against rising fuel prices (2019), the rallying cry in the forefront is "Down with the Islamic Republic!" After a month of protests the movement is still going strong and spreading.

Compared to past decades, the social hardship among the population is even greater today. More than half of the population lives below the subsistence level and can only survive with a lot of difficulties. Health care has become even more inadequate than it already was. The ecological damage is enormous, with severe water shortages, desertification and deforestation affecting the rural population particularly, and high levels of air and water pollution in the cities.

What is striking and enthusing is that the movement is led by young women, including school students. This is fed by the history of women's struggles and movements in Iran since before the days of the 1979 revolution. Popular support is

based on a now widely shared hatred of the regime and of the corrupt theocratic clique that dominates and exploits the country, enriching itself to the point of becoming dollar billionaires.

The fact that the movement has lasted for so long and on such a broad scale, despite the harsh repression, can only be explained by the anger felt above all by the younger generations. Broad sections of the students and pupils who are resisting their confinement and taking to the streets for a different life.

The second specificity of today's wave of protest is that it has spread from Jîna (Mahsa) Amini's home city in Kurdistan throughout the country. This is why the Kurdish chant "Jin Jiyan Azadi" translated to Persian as "Zan Zendegi Azadi" has become the main slogan of the movement today. In Kurdistan, the rejection of the theocratic regime and the struggle for self-determination have a long tradition and are being expressed with force. What is new is the scale of the protests in Baluchistan, where social oppression and massive poverty are the worst in the country. The repression there manifested itself, for example, on 7 October when more than 100 people were shot dead during a demonstration in the provincial capital Zahedan.

And a third prominent feature should not be overlooked: For a week now, calls for a political strike have been increasing, something that has not happened for more than 35 years, since the crushing of workers' councils and left organisations. A first section of the oil industry in the southern Khuzistan province has been on strike for a week, evoking memories of 1979, when the oil workers' strike was the prelude to a nationwide general strike. However, the leaderships of the main independent unions are almost without exception in prison.

It is solely up to the people of Iran to determine their own

destiny, with full democratic rights and gender equality, with religious freedom and secularism, defending the rights of all minorities and working for social and economic justice.

We therefore call for:

– Broadening the international support of all progressive and left-wing forces for the protest and revolt movement in Iran against the religious dictatorship, for the defence of democratic freedoms, and for the dismantling of the police and militias that repress the individual freedoms notably of women.

– Expressions of internationalist solidarity such as messages from women's movements, trade unions, student associations and so on to give political and moral support to the movement. We encourage trade unions to discuss with their counterparts practical forms of solidarity; universities to call on their counterparts to protect the lives and freedom of their students; women's and student movements to make links with movements in Iran.

– Support for public demonstrations of solidarity with the movement on the call of the progressive forces in the Iranian communities in exile, this is crucial.

– An end to all repression in Iran and for human rights organisation to monitor the crimes committed by the state in their repression of the population.

– For the right to humanitarian visas primarily for persecuted women and girls and LGBTIQ people, fleeing the repression in Iran.
Woman, life, freedom!

Zan, Zendegi, Azadi

Jin, Jiyan, Azadi

18 October 2022

Executive Bureau

Reprinted from https://fourth.international/en/566/middle-east/475

Photo: Uprising in Tehran Sept 2022 Copyright Darafsh / Wikimedia commons