



Joint Letter - To President Biden on Iran: Fulfill Your Promise to Confront Authoritarianism

Joseph R. Biden, President of the United States
White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Cc: Antony Blinken, U.S. Secretary of State
Jake Sullivan, National Security Council Advisor
Linda Thomas-Greenfield, US Representative to the United Nations

Dear President Biden:

The death of 22-year-old Mahsa (Jina) Amini in state custody in Iran on September 13 has set in motion massive nationwide protests and strikes in at least 103 cities and towns across all 31 of Iran's provinces, with scores of protesters killed and many more injured.

Thousands of people have been arrested, including journalists, activists and artists. A number of recent detainees are facing grave custodial abuse and torture. On September 30, Islamic Republic security forces cracked down violently on protesters in Zahedan in Sistan and Baluchestan Province in southeastern Iran, killing dozens of Baluch-Iranians. On October 2, students at the prestigious Sharif University were under siege for hours, with security forces shooting at them and detaining them en masse. On October 4, it was reported that 16-year-old protester Nika Shakarami was killed by Iranian state security forces and forcibly disappeared. Many more deaths, injuries and arrests may be obscured by the government's internet black out.

The U.S. government's actions to date—expanding sanctions exemptions to allow Iranians to use

cloud computing and circumvention technologies, sanctions on Iran's "morality" police, support for a joint statement at UNHRC 51, and expressions of solidarity with the women and people of Iran—are significant and positive. But more urgently needs to be done by the world's leading democratic power to support the people of Iran, discourage further state violence, and address the long history of atrocities and impunity in that country.

The Iranian people need the support of the United States and the entire international community to attain their rights and freedoms. We call on you as president of the United States and your administration to:

- Continue to forcefully and publicly condemn, at the highest levels, the Iranian government for violence against women, protesters, and civil society activists; and call on the authorities to end the internet black out, call off the violent crackdown, allow for peaceful protests, and release all wrongfully detained individuals;
- Lead in concert with democratic allies at the United Nations in Geneva diplomatic efforts to establish an urgent special session immediately after the conclusion of UNHRC's 51st regular session to bring governments into a debate about addressing the current violent crackdown and Iran's ongoing human rights crisis;
- Lead in concert with democratic allies the establishment of an independent, impartial investigative mechanism at the UNHRC that investigates crimes committed against the Iranian people by their government and documented by UN human rights mechanisms over decades;
- Call on the Iranian government to respect the basic rights of its people and end state-sanctioned discrimination against women;
- Continue to work with private technology companies to ensure unfettered and cost-free access to the internet and communications technologies by the Iranian people, which continues to be hindered despite U.S. sanctions exemptions.

The Iranian people have a long history of protest against the systematic human rights abuses of their government. Protests have increased in intensity since the 2009 Green Movement, when Iranians demanding their political rights were violently suppressed. Between 2017-2021, nationwide protests were repeatedly responded to by lethal force while Iranians were disconnected from the global internet. There has been no accountability for atrocities by the Islamic Republic as far back as the 1980s, when thousands of political prisoners were executed.

President Biden, after you took office in January 2021, you traveled to Europe and told your democratic allies that "America was back" on the global stage and you vowed to wield American leadership to confront this "new moment of advancing authoritarianism." The Iranian people need you to fulfill that promise now before a new generation is subjected to the oppression and suffering of previous generations.

Sincerely,

Abdorrahman Boroumand Center for Human Rights in Iran

ARTICLE 19

Association for the Human Rights of the Azerbaijani People in Iran (AHRAZ)

Baloch Activists Campaign

Center for Human Rights in Iran

Committee to Protect Journalists

Human Rights Activists (in Iran)

Human Rights First

Human Rights Foundation

Impact Iran

Iran Human Rights Documentation Center

Justice for Iran

Kurdistan Human Rights Association-Geneva (KMMK-G)

Kurdpa Human Rights Organization

PEN America

Project on Middle East Democracy

Raoul Wallenberg Center for Human Rights

Rasank

Siamak Pourzand Foundation

United for Iran

Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO)

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