



Statement of Support with Iranian Women
October 31, 2022

The Association for Middle East Women's Studies (AMEWS) is an organization of scholars and individuals working on women and gender studies in the Middle East/North Africa and beyond. AMEWS stands in solidarity with the brave women of Iran who are leading the current revolution against the totalitarian regime in Iran. The revolution was sparked by the death of Zhina Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old Kurdish woman. The so-called morality police had arrested her for not wearing the hijab "properly," and she died in detention. Mahsa's murder fueled nationwide anger, and women took to the streets chanting "Women Life Freedom." Nor has the killing stopped: 17-year-old Nika Shakarami was chased by security forces and found dead 10 days later; 22-year-old Hadis Najafi was shot one hour after releasing a Tik-Tok video; 16-year-old Sarina Esmailzadeh was beaten to death after posting a tweet.

Iranian women have marched in the streets, burned their headscarves, and cut their hair to protest the ways their government controls society by policing women's bodies and lives in the name of religion. This is not a revolution against Islam but rather against the Islamic regime's betrayal of women's religious and constitutional rights. These women are not calling for the abolition of hijab, but rather demanding that it not be forced upon them. They are demanding their basic human rights: the right to choose, to live freely, and to feel safe in their country. They are not in need of saving; they are not in need of western intervention.

This feminist revolution is part of a long history of the Iranian people's struggle against their governments' tyranny and corruption. In 1979, women and men overthrew the Shah. When Khomeini took power, he declared Iran to be an "Islamic Republic" and forced women to wear hijab in government buildings and workplaces. On March 8, 1979, women led protests against the hijab mandate. Since that iconic moment, women have participated in many uprisings calling for democracy after widespread allegations of tampered presidential elections. They have protested crippling U.S. sanctions, price spikes, and international isolation. This feminist movement has shown the world that Iranian women will not stop fighting for their rights as they demand a reimagination of Iran.

Iranian women and men are calling for worldwide solidarity and NOT for intervention. They want us all to "Be our Voice." AMEWS calls on all people of conscience to join Iranian women and men in their denunciation of the Islamic Republic and demand that its brutality to its people stop.

In solidarity,
The AMEWS Board