



NWSA Stands in Solidarity with Iranian Protestors

*we fight because we must
we rise up because there is no other path to freedom
except straight through the road of resistance
built by the hands of our oppressors*

The National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) is more than just an academic association. We are activists. We are freedom fighters. We are feminists. We are scholars. We understand that there are times when we must speak up because our silence will never protect us, and if we are not careful, our silence will always appear to be a sign of silent approval. We have never chosen and will never choose to stand with our oppressors. We are on the side of justice. We are on the side of liberation. And we stand on the side of oppressed people fighting to be free.

We have been watching what has been happening in Iran since September 16, when Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old Iranian woman, was arrested in Tehran by the Morality Police for “improperly” wearing her hijab. Amini was placed in detention, where she was beaten into a coma and later died. Since then, protests of solidarity have erupted all over the world, from Istanbul to Los Angeles. These are the moments—while the Iranian rallying cry “Women, Life, Freedom” is being heard worldwide and Iranian women and girls are cutting their hair and burning their hijabs in protest—when we must speak out. We add our voices to the collective, and we strongly condemn the detention and death of Mahsa Amini. We support the women and people of Iran as they work to resist and overturn the ongoing effort by the Morality Police to suppress Iranian women's right to freedom of expression and opinion. We support self-determination and stand by a woman’s right to choose whether or not they want to veil. We also condemn the violence committed by the Iranian government against peaceful protestors that have resulted in injury, detention of more than 1000 protestors, and the deaths of at least 41 people. Furthermore, we condemn the Iranian government's intentional suppression of information by shutting down mobile internet access, which is the most severe internet restriction Iran has implemented since 2019.

Additionally, we are compelled to add that as we are watching what is happening in Iran, we are also aware of what is happening right here in America on college campuses, in community centers, and in public and private spaces as politicians across the country are taking draconian steps to control our reproductive rights. We demand that they remove their hands from our wombs and their laws from our bodies. Women are not second-class citizens; despite what oppressive governments would like us to believe, and we do not accept second-class treatment.

We are now at the moment when everyone is being called upon to do something. The world is watching and will remember where we stood, who we stood with, and when we chose to speak up and out. At the same time, we want to remind our members that this is the moment to support but not appropriate the actions of Iranian women and girls for clout or likes or follows. Our goal is to stand with or behind them and not try to move in front of them.

NWSA understands that it is not enough for us to have discussions amongst ourselves within the protective silos of the Academy. We must speak out into the wind with a loud collective voice and say that Solidarity with Iranian Women is a Feminist Issue. We must stand together and add our voice to the collective call for peace, for justice, and for freedom.

Bending toward Social Justice,

Karsonya Wise Whitehead, NWSA President (2021-2023)

Beverly Guy Sheftall, NWSA President (2008-2010)

The National Women's Studies Association (NWSA)

We add here the link to the protest song that's been galvanizing the unrest. The singer, Shervin Hajipour, was arrested several days ago. In the song, Shervin notes that people are protesting:

*For my sister, your sister, our sisters
For embarrassed fathers with empty hands
For the sigh over an ordinary life
For the child laborer and his dreams
For this dictatorial economy
For this polluted air
For all those unstoppable tears
For missing the murdered kids
For the smiling faces
For the students and their future
For all the smart ones in prison
For the Afghan kids
For all the meaningless slogans
For the feeling of peace
For the sunrise after the long dark nights
For the girl who wished she was born a boy
...For Woman, Life, Freedom*

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