

ITEM-19 LMM 25/10/2022 - SOLIDARITY WITH WOMEN OF IRAN

MOTION:

That City of Newcastle:

1. Acknowledges the women, girls and people of Iran who are protesting against Iran's significant discrimination against women and ongoing egregious human right violations.
2. Reaffirms its commitment to leading a just, inclusive, and socially cohesive Newcastle where democracy, equality, human rights, and the Rule of Law underpin our progressive City.
3. Stand firmly in solidarity with our local Iranian community members and their friends, families and loved ones, who are fighting for justice in the face of violence and oppression.
4. Reiterates the comments of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator the Hon. Penny Wong, who advised that the Australian Government has raised concerns regarding the tragic death of 22-year-old woman Mahsa Amini, and has condemned the deadly and disproportionate use of force against those protesting for women's and human rights in Iran.
5. Notes that Australian Government's, at all levels, stand with Iranian women and girls in their struggle for equality and empowerment.
6. Acknowledges local community members who arranged a moving protest on Saturday, 15th October in Newcastle showing their solidarity with the people of Iran, chanting "women, life, freedom" and highlighting the use of torture and imprisonment of young women protesters by the Iranian government and the deaths of more than 200 people since the protests began.
7. Calls on Iran to cease its oppression of women.
8. Reaffirms its staunch commitment to promoting gender equality and women's human rights, empowerment and ending violence against women and girls worldwide.

BACKGROUND

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/09/1128111>

IRAN: UN CONDEMNS VIOLENT CRACKDOWN AGAINST HIJAB PROTESTS

27 September 2022

Authorities in Iran must fully respect the rights of protestors calling for justice for Mahsa Amini, the young woman who died in custody after being arrested for allegedly violating strict dress codes, the UN human rights office, OHCHR, said on Tuesday. Later in the day, the UN chief said he was becoming "increasingly concerned" about reports of the death toll rising, "including women and children."



Protesters gather in Stockholm, Sweden, after the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini in the custody of Iran's so-called morality police.

OHCHR said it was very concerned about the continued violent response to the protests, as well as communications restrictions affecting phones, the internet and social media, Spokesperson Ravina Shamdasani told journalists in Geneva.

Ms. Amini, 22, was arrested by Iran's "morality police" in the capital, Tehran, on 13 September, for allegedly not wearing a hijab in full compliance with mandatory requirements. She fell into a coma shortly after collapsing at a detention centre and died three days later from a heart attack, according to the authorities.

In his statement released via his Spokesperson, UN Secretary-General António Guterres said he had been following events closely, and **he called on security forces to stop using "unnecessary or disproportionate force"**.

He appealed for restraint, to avoid any escalation: "**We underline the need for prompt, impartial and effective investigation** into Ms. Mahsa Amini's death by an independent competent authority."

OHCHR's Ms. Shamdasani noted that the Iranian Government had so far failed to launch an "adequate investigation" into the circumstances surrounding Ms. Amini's death.

WAVE OF DEMONSTRATIONS

Since her death, thousands have joined anti-government demonstrations throughout the country.

Security forces have responded at times with live ammunition, and many people have been killed, injured and detained in the protests.

VIOLENT RESPONSE TO PROTESTS

On Saturday, State media put the number killed at 41, she added. However, non-governmental organizations monitoring the situation have reported a higher number of deaths, including of women and children, and hundreds injured across at least 11 provinces.

“We are extremely concerned by comments by some leaders vilifying protesters, and by the apparent unnecessary and disproportionate use of force against protesters,” said Ms. Shamdasani.

“Firearms must never be used simply to disperse an assembly. In the context of assemblies, they should only be used in cases of an imminent threat to life or of serious injury.”

NUMBER OF ARRESTS UNKNOWN

Meanwhile, reports indicate that hundreds of people have also been arrested, including human rights defenders, lawyers, civil society activists, and at least 18 journalists. The Government has not announced the overall number of arrests.

Ms. Shamdasani reported that in the province of Gilan alone, the police chief said 739 people, including 60 women, had been detained during three days of protests.

OHCHR called on the authorities to ensure the rights to due process and to release all who have been arbitrarily detained.

‘PERSISTENT IMPUNITY’ FOR VIOLATIONS

“We are concerned that the disruption to communications services has serious effects on people’s ability to exchange information, to carry out economic activities and to access public services,” she continued.

“This undermines numerous human rights, notably the right to freedom of expression. We call on the authorities to fully restore Internet access.”

OHCHR also expressed concern over “the persistent impunity with respect to human rights violations in Iran”, including the recurring deaths of protesters due to the alleged use of lethal force by security forces in November 2019, July 2021, and May of this year.

“Our Office reiterates our call upon the Iranian authorities to fully respect the rights to freedom of opinion, expression, peaceful assembly and association, as a State party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,” said Ms. Shamdasani.