



Solidarity with Iranian women

The Female Faculty Network at the University of Twente stands in solidarity with Iranian women in recognition of increasing waves of political protests sparked across Iran after the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini, who had been detained by Islamic Republic of Iran's morality police for allegedly not adhering to Iran's strict dress code (wearing a headscarf), and died in custody on 16 September 2022.

Mahsa Amini's death sparked massive protests across Iran against repressive government policies, the morality police, the discriminatory treatment of women and other marginalized groups and basic human rights violations over decades. Protestors took to the streets and to various social media networks to express their anger and spread awareness of the situation in Iran. The hashtags **#MahsaAmini** and **#امینی_مهسا** have trended on Twitter since the protests began. Iranian women have posted videos on social media cutting their hair as a symbol of the protests. The government has sought to curb dissent by shutting down the internet and restricting access to communication channels such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and LinkedIn. The IRI government has responded to the protests with violent crackdowns

that have left at least 200 dead (a conservative estimate as of 4 October 2022) and hundreds more injured.

After more than three weeks since Mahsa Amni's death, the situation in Iran has not improved, and there are severe conflicts between the protesters and police forces. The demonstrations have grown in more than twenty cities within Iran, where Iranian women are accompanied and supported by Iranian men, husbands, fathers, sons, relatives, and friends. There have been more than 150 national rallies to support women, life, and freedom – in Europe and all over the world, where people came out in support of the Iranian women's rights movement. **Concern has grown over the latest violence at Tehran's Sharif University of Technology** (one of the country's most prestigious higher education institutions) where, local media reported, riot police confronted hundreds of students, with officers using teargas and paintball guns and carrying non-lethal steel pellet guns. Many students were arrested and taken away in police cars or ambulances or detained in unknown locations, as parents and others came to rescue them.

We want to raise awareness of the current protests of Iranian women, for the inequalities, injustice and lack of freedom that they have been facing for decades, and call for solidarity. We understand that this situation has been incredibly distressing for Iranians at UT. The FFNT condemns the actions of the IRI regime against their citizens and stands with the Iranian community in their fight against police brutality and oppression. We want to be more understanding and mindful of our Iranian colleagues' and friends' well-being, especially now.

We can only imagine how powerless, paralyzed, fearful, anxious and angry you may be feeling, and how worried you must be by the news. We understand that as the internet and social media back home are not always working well, more pressure is being put on you living abroad, trying to reach your beloved ones. We understand how little you are probably sleeping at night these days. We understand that you may not be able to focus, not functioning well, and are unable to carry out business as usual.

Besides our solidarity and emotional support, **we call for the stakeholders at the University of Twente to come together and reflect** on their position and policies towards collaborating with Iran and Iranian Universities, as the sanctions really affect students and colleagues – individuals – rather than the government. Iranians should be considered as individuals, rather than as representatives of their governments.

Statement of solidarity with women in Iran from the international community of women (and their allies) in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)

The community of Women in STEM are drafting a statement of solidarity. The goal is to showcase support from Women academics for the grassroots efforts of the Iranian women and scholars who are fighting for their basic rights. We are hoping this statement will raise interest within our professional societies to do more in supporting Iranian women scientists and students in continuing their education.

[Here you find the draft statement.](#) Everybody is welcome to send their endorsement for the solidarity statement All authors and signatories represent themselves and not their institutions or employers.

[You can also sign this Amnesty International petition.](#)
(Please choose to sign the Dutch or English petition.)

With kind regards,

[FFNT board](#)

