

The Right Honorable Ulf Kristersson
Prime Minister of Sweden

The Right Honorable Tobias Billström
Minister for Foreign Affairs for Sweden

February 15, 2023

Dear Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs,

We are writing to urge the Swedish Government to take action to support the courageous women of Iran, who have been risking their lives to protest for freedom and basic human rights, by summoning the Iranian ambassador and, in its capacity as President of the European Union (EU) Council, calling on other EU member governments to do the same on March 8, International Women's Day.

Women and girls in Iran, including ethnic and religious minorities, as well as the LGBTQI community, who all face severe and systemic discrimination in both law and practice, have been at the forefront of the anti-state protests that erupted in Iran in September following the killing of Jina Mahsa Amini, 22, in state custody after she was arrested for her alleged inappropriate hijab.

Many of these women and girls have been shot dead in the streets as they peacefully protested, blinded by the live ammunition used against them by state security forces, violently detained without access to counsel, and sexually assaulted and beaten while in state custody. Still, the women and girls of Iran have persisted in their demands for basic rights and freedoms.

We are asking Sweden and EU member states to act in unison on March 8, International Women's Day, by summoning the Iranian ambassador to demand that the Iranian government:

1. Stop repressing women and arresting and imprisoning women who are calling for basic rights and freedoms in Iran.
2. End the physical and sexual violence against women detainees and protesters.
3. Cease all executions of political prisoners and annul all death sentences against protesters.

For decades, courageous Iranian women, including lawyers, activists, journalists, writers, poets, actresses, and mothers of the victims of state violence, have been demanding justice, freedom, equality, and basic civil liberties for all Iranians.

Women political prisoners, some of whom have been jailed for years for engaging in peaceful rights activism, support this struggle for freedom even from behind bars, by calling for an end to the executions of protesters in letters smuggled out of the prison.

By summoning Iranian ambassadors on Women's Day, Sweden would signal to the Islamic Republic's authorities that it will not stand by indifferently as the Iranian government uses lethal force to crush peaceful protest.

We hope your government will take part in this simple action to show the Iranian government that the EU will stand with the women of Iran in their struggle for freedom and fundamental human rights.

Most respectfully,

Center for Human Rights in Iran
United for Iran
Justice for Iran
Iran Human Rights
Iranian Diaspora Collective
Siamak Pourzand Foundation
Iran Human Rights Documentation Center
Kurdistan Human Rights Association-Geneva
Association for the Human Rights of the Azerbaijani People in Iran
Kurdp Human Rights Organization
Rasank
Impact Iran
6 Rang (Iranian Lesbian and Transgender Network)
International Civil Society Action Network
Afghan Women's Organization for Equality
Afghan Women News Agency Organization
Afghan Women Network
Association of War Affected Women (Sri Lanka)
ECPM (France)
PAIMAN (Pakistan)
Women for Justice Foundation
Woman Center for Development and Culture (Albania)
Women's Peace Network (Myanmar)
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (Geneva)
Empatiku Foundation (Indonesia)
Coalition for Action on 1325 (Uganda)
Corporación de Investigación y Acción Social y Económica (Colombia)
Gender Equality Network (Myanmar)
Women Advocacy Coalition-Myanmar
Association Djazairouna (Algeria)
PEN America
Swedish PEN

PEN Germany
Danish PEN
Irish PEN
Fuuse
Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Rights
Peace Track Initiative
Equality Now