

# Briefing: For peace, democracy and human rights in Iran



## Background

- Mass street protests in December and January reflected the widespread dissatisfaction with the ruling theocratic dictatorship for the majority of the people in Iran.
- The response of the regime, to shoot protesters resulting in an estimated 6,000 deaths and thousands more injured and arrested, was condemned worldwide.
- The attack upon Iran by US and Israeli forces on 28 February has so far resulted in over 1500 civilian casualties as well as the assassination of many of the Islamic Republic's leaders.
- While US and Israeli forces claim to be using precision technology casualties have included 168 children and teachers at one school alone, as well as major strikes upon civilian infrastructure including clinics, hospitals and World Heritage Sites.
- Worker's protests and industrial strikes are routinely met by the regime's brutality. Trade unionists are routinely charged under fake accusations of 'espionage' or 'endangering national security' and are often subject to brutal treatment, including torture.
- Trade union activity in Iran is banned and dangerous. However, independent trade union activists continue to operate, despite the extremely dangerous backdrop of reprisals from the regime.
- Several leading figures have been subjected to repeated and extended terms of imprisonment - including Esmail Abdi, the Secretary General of the Iranian Teachers' Trade Association (ITTA).
- Trade unionists account for the largest contingent of Iran's political prisoner population - with ITTA activists believed to comprise the largest number among them.

## Human rights abuses

- The so called 'morality police' have been resurrected, resuming street patrols, arresting and beating women with increasing ferocity to enforce 'hijab', the Islamic headscarf. Many Iranian women continue to resist the reactionary dictates of the theocratic regime and the Women, Life, Freedom movement remains a force in Iran.
- To suppress criticism during the current war against Iran the regime has said that anyone protesting will be treated as "the enemy", meaning that the regime is stepping up its campaign of intimidation.
- In 2025, Iran once again topped the global ranking and surpassed all other nations in the number of executions, with over 1,000 reported by the end of September.
- The theocratic regime is discredited and despised in the eyes of the people. Over the last few years, it has intensified oppression and an atmosphere of fear.

## International Response

- The Committee for the Defence of the Iranian People's Rights (CODIR) has been co-ordinating calls for the release of all political prisoners in Iran and an end to arbitrary arrest and torture.
- At the present time CODIR is calling for an immediate ceasefire to protect the Iranian people from further harm and a negotiated end to the conflict initiated by the US and Israel.

- The IndustriALL Global Union - which represents more than 50 million workers across mining, energy, and manufacturing sectors in more than 141 countries - has expressed its solidarity with workers at oil and gas fields in Southern Iran, who had recently launched coordinated strikes demanding better pay and conditions of service.
- In Britain, the RMT union has expressed solidarity with the striking Iranian workers.
- The National Education Union (NEU) has actively campaigned for the release of imprisoned teachers in Iran including their counterparts in the ITTA.
- The European Union (EU) and its member states have urged the Iranian authorities to stop the violent crackdown against peaceful protests, cease resorting to arbitrary detention as a means of silencing critical voices, and release all those unjustly detained.
- UN experts have strongly condemned several recent executions and warned that executions following flawed trials were tantamount to arbitrary deprivation of life under international law.

### Priority Demands

- An immediate and comprehensive ceasefire in the ongoing war with a negotiated settlement.
- The immediate and unconditional release of all detained due to participation in protests, trade union activism, and independent journalism with an end to executions and the use of the death penalty.
- Iran to recognise the right to free independent trade union activity without fear of arrest or persecution pursuant to the relevant provision in the Iranian Constitution as well as ILO Conventions 87 and 98.
- Iranian government to immediately cease all violence against protesters and ensure full and open investigations against the perpetrators of such abuses.
- Iranian government to end the practice of 'vetting' all prospective parliamentary and presidential candidates for all future elections and lift all bans on opposition political parties and their activities.

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Liberation organises public meetings to raise awareness of current events and stimulate action. We run seminars, webinars and other educational activities. We work with UK parliamentarians to influence UK foreign policy and engage at an international level through the UN Human Rights Council. We publish a quarterly journal, and comment and analysis on relevant matters on our website, giving voice to progressive popular organisations in the Global South.