**Iran Women Protests in 2022**

Since 1983, Iranian law has required women within Iran to wear hijabs in public places regardless of nationality or religion. Hijab enforcement laws have been more strict, with more regulations developed to the point criminal punishment would be preferred for anyone breaking the Hijab law. Iranian women are legally liable whenever they violate the hijab laws. In 2018, the rules shifted further so that women who failed to adhere to the hijab laws would not be imprisoned or detained but were required to attend Islamic educational classes (Maranlou, 2022). During sessions, women sign consent to follow the law under coercion. The women also participate in the morality police’s ‘decency in dressing’ sensitization sessions targeting women.

The Morality Police’s enforcement of the hijab laws follows their subjective interpretation. This has often caused resentment among women pushing for the abolition of the law. There have been protests in the streets and on social media calling for the removal of the law. Initially, the demonstrations were subtle, often with women choosing a dress code other than Hijab to negotiate for their freedom of expression. Generally, the 2022 Iranian women’s protests began after the controversial death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini in police custody for breaking the Hijab law.

**The Protests**

Mahsa Amini’s death triggered protests all over Iran since September 16, 2022. The demonstrations have primarily consisted of women protesting the cruel acts of the country’s ‘orality policy under whose watch Mahsa died under unclear circumstances. Amini was arrested earlier for violating the mandatory hijab dress code requiring women, regardless of religious affiliation, to conceal their hair and neck using a headscarf (Issawi & Bansinath, 2022). It was not clear where she was taken after the arrest; the police later falsely claimed she had had a heart attack while in custody, claims which her family refuted. Later, pictures of her almost lifeless body lying in a hospital bed where she had been in a coma for three days emerged online. According to medical officials’ reports, the most probable cause of her death was complications due to head injuries. After her death, there have been violent protests all over Iran.

Women and some men joined protests and took to the streets in large numbers across the country. They chanted slogans like “Death to the dictator” as they took off their hijabs, tattered their headwraps, and waved them in the air (NPR, 2022). Further, some women burned their hijabs and jubilated while the fare raged on the hijabs. Women also took scissors and cut off their hair in Iran. Beyond Iran, some women in other countries cut off their hair in support of the protests, most notably Abir Al-Sahlani of the Swedish European parliament, who cut her hair while speaking at the E.U. assembly (Ifteqar, 2022). In addition, thousands of women mourners who attended Amin’s funeral took off their headscarves under the watch of police officers. In Iranian Universities, students have participated in protests by chanting and taking off their hijabs; some universities were closed indefinitely due to the unrest.

**The Effects of the Protests**

Police responded to the protests using tear gas, paintball guns, and nonlethal steel-pellet guns to control the angry protesters. Protesting university students were injured due to police brutality, while others were arrested for causing chaos. In some instances, students have been taken to mental institutions to reform them. As of October 14, authorities have detained over 3,000 protestors nationwide. Furthermore, thousands have been injured, and more than 224 people have died, primarily due to gunshot wounds meted by Iranian police; the statistics include about 23 children killed in the protests (Issawi & Bansinath, 2022). Women have also been threatened with sexual assault to subdue protests. The government instituted a social media blackout to curb the spread of news on the protests; this complicated efforts to ascertain the actual fatalities from the dissents. There have been calls from all over the world to end the Hijab law. Public opinion within Iran generally supports the repealing of the law. There is growing hope that the authorities will heed the calls.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, Iranian women have historically participated in revolutions to protest the Hijab law. ‘Morality police’ enforce the oppressive rule; any woman found without Hijab is arrested, and others are forced to apologize publicly to teach other women about ‘decent’ dressing. The death of Mahsa Amini on September 16 has seen intensified protests all over Iran. Women have protested by chanting, walking in public places without Hijab, some waving their headscarves in the air, while others have set their hijabs on fire. Several people have been injured, with others killed in the protests. However, there is continued optimism that the protests will be effective in eventually ending the oppressive hijab rule.

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