

Notice: Undefined index: et_header_layout in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1214

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IRAN: Anniversary of Amini's killing: USCIRF publishes a new FORB Report

IRAN: Anniversary of Mahsa Zhina Amini's killing: USCIRF publishes a new FORB Report

USCIRF (15.09.2023) – – The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) marks the one-year anniversary of Iranian security forces' killing of **Mahsa Zhina Amini** for wearing "improper hijab." Amini's death on September 16, 2022 sparked nationwide protests in Iran against mandatory

hijab laws and a host of other religious freedom abuses. Iran's government, in response to these protests, has relentlessly targeted minority communities including Baha'is, Christians, and Sunni Muslims. It has also cracked down on women and girls who peacefully dissent from the government's enforcement of its interpretation of Islam.

"On this solemn anniversary, the U.S. government must recommit to supporting Iranians risking their lives to demand freedom of religion or belief," said USCIRF Commissioner **Susie Gelman**. *"The U.S. Department of Treasury should continue to issue general licenses; clarify sanctions compliance laws through FAQs; and identify safe, legal, and effective avenues of support for Iranian defenders of religious freedom. In addition, the U.S. Congress should reauthorize the bipartisan Lautenberg Amendment, a family reunification program providing a legal path for resettlement for Iranian religious minorities fleeing government persecution."*

Iran's government has **responded** to peaceful protests with brutal violence, including against minors. Iranian security officials have beaten to death girls as young as 16, and **sexually assaulted** boys of similar age. The government has intimidated Christians, telling leaders of the Assyrian Christian community not to support protests. It has arrested scores of Sunni religious leaders including those calling explicitly for a peaceful dialogue between protestors and the government. Iranian officials have also **escalated** a campaign of arrests of Baha'is, including four of the seven members of the former Yaran-e-Iran, leaders of the Baha'i community who each previously served a decade in prison.

"Iran's arrests of religious leaders, particularly the re-

arrests of Baha'i leaders, is gravely concerning," said USCIRF Commissioner **Eric Ueland**. *"The Biden administration must lead further multilateral sanctions efforts to hold Iran's leaders accountable for these contemptible and inexcusable violations of religious freedom. It also should support a United Nations Security Council resolution to refer the matter of Iran to the International Criminal Court."*

Earlier this week, USCIRF released a **report** detailing religious freedom conditions since the protests. In its 2023 **Annual Report**, USCIRF recommended the U.S. Department of State redesignate Iran a "Country of Particular Concern" for systematic, ongoing, and egregious religious freedom violations. In January 2023, USCIRF convened a hearing on **Religious Freedom and Women's Rights in Iran**. USCIRF's **Frank R. Wolf Freedom of Religion or Belief Victims List** includes nearly 200 victims currently detained in Iran.

Photo:UGC/ AFP via Ghetty

Further reading about FORB in Iran on HRWF website

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