



The Società Italiana delle Storiche (Italian Society of Women Historians) is following the recent events in Iran with admiration and concern in equal measure: admiration for the courage of women of all ages, who are challenging on the front line a regime that does not hesitate to respond with brutality; and concern about the violent repression taking place. The violent killing of twenty-two-year-old Kurdish-Iranian Mahsa (Zhina) Amini on 16 September, by the morality police (*Gasht-e Ershad*, the death squad), because she did not comply with the strict dress code of the Islamic Republic, has made the oppression of women by the Iranian patriarchal system particularly visible internationally.

Whereas the Islamic Republic systematically violates human rights, in the case of women the legal system grants them a value that is half that of a man when testifying in court, in terms of compensation in cases of injury and violent death and in matters of inheritance. At the same time, it is difficult for Iranian women to get a divorce and even more so the custody of their minor children. They are also discriminated against when trying to enroll in some university faculties because of the "blue quotas" that guarantee greater opportunities for their male peers.

The killing of Mahsa Amini sparked protests first in the province of Iranian Kurdistan and then in 80 locations throughout the country. Chanting the slogan 'women, life, freedom' (*zan, zendeghi, azadi*), many women marched without wearing their hijab, occupying public space to claim their freedom of choice. These are the most important demonstrations since the 1979 revolution, much more so than the ones in 2009 and 2019, because this time they started from the provinces and are spreading throughout Iran; moreover, this time the demands for freedom by the middle classes are united with the economic grievances of the lower classes.

The death of Mahsa Amini has become the spark to denounce a regime that constantly violates human rights, freedom of expression, the rights of women, of LGBTQI + subjects, of ethnic and religious minorities, but also a leadership incapable of managing public affairs.

After an initial time when some deputies proposed to review and even abolish the morality police, repression has been set in motion: 1,200 people have been arrested, 76 demonstrators have died, Internet has been slowed down, Instagram and Whatsapp have stopped working. Despite the ferocity of this repression, the protests do not appear to be any less intense and, in a domino effect, are also involving several European capitals.

The Società Italiana delle Storiche (Italian Society of Women Historians) declares its total solidarity with all men and women who, despite the harsh repression of the last few days, continue to demand the respect in Iran for fundamental freedom, equality and social justice and the end of an oppressive patriarchal system. In particular, SIS stands in solidarity with the women and men who did not hesitate to rise up united against the death of Mahsa Amini. The resilience of women has emerged on several occasions throughout the history of the country and their recent tenacity bears witness to an awareness and strenuous desire for change that must now be supported internationally, following the lead coming from the Iranian streets and from the protests springing up all over the world from communities from the Iranian diaspora.