



October 19, 2022

Honorable Antony Blinken  
Secretary of State  
United States Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken,

On behalf of the 1.7 million members of the American Federation of Teachers, I deplore the ruthless actions by Iranian authorities in response to widespread peaceful protests for fundamental change in streets, on school campuses, and in communities across the country, resulting in hundreds of deaths, and thousands of injuries and arrests.

We have ample evidence -- from news reporting, to social media videos, to eyewitness interviews -- all showing authorities unlawfully using excessive and lethal force against protesters. We have watched security forces deploy shotguns, assault rifles, and handguns against these peaceful protesters, led by incredibly courageous women and young people, seeking a voice.

As a union of K-12 educators and higher education faculty, we are deeply concerned about reports of violent crackdowns at universities across Iran. We've seen reports of secondary students arrested at school and Iran's Education Minister has admitted that children are being taken away to psychological centers for re-education.

We are still witnessing the arbitrary arrest and detention of union leaders, including teachers and others for practicing their fundamental right to strike.

Over the last decade, the AFT has frequently joined with human rights and labor organizations, and the Iranian people themselves, in their demands for civil and political, as well as economic, social, and cultural rights. Once again, we fear authorities will look the other way, even as the outrage pours in from around the world.

We appreciate that Nada Al-Nashif, acting U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, has called for justice in the case of young Mahsa Amini, whose death at the hands of the Morality Police has sparked these most recent weeks of unrest. However, we believe

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The **American Federation of Teachers** is a union of professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.

American Federation  
of Teachers, AFL-CIO

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AFT Teachers  
AFT PSRP  
AFT Higher Education  
AFT Public Employees  
AFT Nurses and Health  
Professionals

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555 New Jersey Ave. N.W.  
Washington, DC 20001  
202-879-4400  
[www.aft.org](http://www.aft.org)

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PRESIDENT

Fedrick C. Ingram  
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the time has come for a broader, more comprehensive investigation into Iran's years of brutal crackdowns, arrests, and killings of peaceful protesters.

We call on the United States to support the opening of a U.N. Commission of Inquiry, to ensure that Iranian security forces can no longer silence Iranian citizens with impunity, for merely seeking their universal freedoms.

"Women, Life, Freedom"

Randi Weingarten  
AFT President

cc: Education International