

The American Psychoanalytic Association supports the people of Iran in their demonstrations and desire to express themselves freely.

The American Psychoanalytic Association supports the Iranian citizens in their reclamation of human dignity, healthy psychological development, and freedom of expression as protests in that country come in response to the recent death in custody of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini. She was arrested by the morality police on September 13 for allegedly not wearing a hijab following Iran's strict dress requirements. In the days following her death, journalists, lawyers, and civil activists have joined in protests against this fresh assault on their humanity.

Hundreds of Iranians have been arrested and killed. The number of victims increases day by day. The American Psychoanalytic Association wants our colleagues in Iran to know that we hear you and support you in your fight for basic civil liberties and in your demand for fundamental human rights. We offer these words from the great Iranian poet, Sa'adi, in support of your efforts:

Human beings are members of a whole,
In the creation of one essence and soul;
If one member is afflicted with pain,
Other members uneasy will remain.

From a psychoanalytic perspective, these attacks undermine the ability of women to think freely and enjoy bodily autonomy. When people are not allowed to think, to express themselves, and to control their bodies, it undermines their capacities, leads to physical illnesses, fractures families, and takes the creative and competitive edge out of their society or country. Everyone loses.

Further, the American Psychoanalytic Association hopes the events unraveling in Iran will encourage others to engage in self-reflection and empathy for the Iranian people. What happened to Mahsa Amini could quickly occur in other countries where women's rights are severely restricted. Recently, women have been deprived of basic rights in Pakistan and Afghanistan—places where women can remember a period of progress and growth.

The American Psychoanalytic Association supports the Iranian people in their efforts to reclaim their civil liberties. We ask the Iranian authorities to respect their people's rights of expression and peaceful association. Not only will it help individual Iranians, but it will help Iran grow and prosper.

The American Psychoanalytic Association is the oldest and largest professional organization for psychoanalysts in North America, representing 3,000 members, 34 approved training institutes, and 39 affiliate societies throughout the United States.

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