

# For a society of “equality and freedom”, we support the Iranians

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*“Only the Iranian people are capable of laying the foundations for a new, modern society”: echoing a declaration signed by twenty organisations involved in the popular uprising in Iran, a large group of international academics, trade unionists and activists is expressing its support for this proposed alternative. (Mediapart)*

**We express our support for the declaration published in Iran on February 15 (see below).**

**This statement comes from 20 grassroots organisations involved in the current uprising: trade unions independent of the government, organisations defending the rights of workers, women’s, pensioners, students and human rights. This declaration is not confined to denouncing the bloody repression and the religious (or non-religious) despotism of the past. It also proposes a draft alternative.**

## **The Statement of Minimum Demands of Independent Iranian Unions and Civil Society Organization <sup>1</sup>**

To the Honorable and Open-Minded People of Iran:

On the forty fourth anniversary of the 1979 Iranian Revolution, the economic, political and social foundation of the country is shaken by a vortex of crises and disintegration. Thus, it is not possible to imagine a clear and achievable perspective for ending this situation within the framework of the current political superstructure. Thus, the oppressed people of Iran, freedom and equality-seeking women and youth have been giving their lives with unprecedented courage to turn the streets nationwide into historic and determinant battlegrounds for ending the current inhumane conditions. Despite the bloody repression by the government, for the past five months, they have not lay still for a moment.

The foundational protests that have upsurged today by women, university and high school students, teachers, workers, justice-seekers, artists, queers, writers and the majority of the oppressed people of Iran, in place after place, from Kurdistan to Sistan and Baluchistan provinces have attracted an unprecedented level of international support. These are protests that raise a banner of opposition to misogyny, gender discrimination, endless economic insecurity, enslavement of the labor force, poverty, misery, class oppression and oppression on the basis of nationality and religion. This is a revolution against any form of religious or secular dictatorship imposed on us, the majority of the Iranian people, during the past century.

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<sup>1</sup> English [http://www.iran-echo.com/echo\\_pdf/charte\\_en.pdf](http://www.iran-echo.com/echo_pdf/charte_en.pdf)

Farsi [http://www.iran-echo.com/echo\\_pdf/charte\\_fa.pdf](http://www.iran-echo.com/echo_pdf/charte_fa.pdf)

German [http://www.iran-echo.com/echo\\_pdf/charte\\_al.pdf](http://www.iran-echo.com/echo_pdf/charte_al.pdf)

These protests seek to uproot. They have risen out of the broader context of large and modern social movements and the uprising of an unbeatable generation that is determined to end a century of backwardness and marginalization of the ideal of creating a modern, prosperous and free society in Iran.

After two major revolutions in contemporary Iranian history [1906 and 1979 F.A.], now large and progressive social movements, the labor movement, the movement of teachers and retirees, the women's movement seeking equality, university and college students and the movement against the death penalty, all as a mass movement, and from below, are in a historic and determinant position to shape the political, economic and social structure of the country.

Hence, this movement is aimed at permanently ending the formation of any power from above, and marks the beginning of a modern and humane social revolution for the emancipation of the people from all forms of oppression, discrimination, exploitation, tyranny and dictatorship.

We, the undersigned unions and civil society organizations, focused on the unity and solidarity of social movements and demands, and focused on the struggle for ending the current inhumane and destructive conditions, see the realization of the minimum demands listed below as the first commands and results of the foundational protests of the people of Iran.

**We see these minimum demands as the sole path to building a new, modern and humane society in this country. We ask all decent people who care about freedom, equality and emancipation, at factories, universities, schools and neighborhood on the global stage, to raise the banner of these minimum demands:**

1. The immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners. An end to the criminalization of political, union and civil activities. Public trials for the perpetrators and agents of the repression of popular protests.
2. Unconditional freedom of speech, thought, press, organization, neighborhood and national unions and popular organizations, strikes, marches, social networks and audio and visual media.
3. The immediate repeal of issuance or execution of any form of the death penalty and Tailion Law [retaliation in kind F.A.]. Banning any form of mental or physical torture.
4. The immediate declaration of the complete equality of the rights of women and men in all political, economic, social, cultural and familial arenas. The unconditional repeal of all discriminatory laws against sexual and gender identities and orientations. The recognition of the rainbow "LGBTQ+" community. Decriminalizing all gender identities and orientations. Unconditional adherence to women's rights to control their own body and future and preventing the enforcement of patriarchal control.
5. Religion is a private matter for individuals and should not be present in political, economic, social and cultural laws and regulations.
6. Enforcing work safety, employment security and the immediate increase of the wages of workers, teachers, office workers and all employed and retired toilers, with the presence, intervention and agreement of the elected representatives of their independent and nationwide organizations.

7. The repeal of laws and any views that discriminate on the basis of nationality or religion. The building of proper support infrastructure for the just and equal distribution of governmental opportunities for the development of culture and the arts in all parts of the country and the creation of necessary and equal facilities for learning and teaching all the languages commonly spoken in our society.

8. Abolishing all organs of repression. Limiting the powers of the government. Direct and permanent intervention of the people in running the affairs of the country through local and nationwide councils. Removal of any governmental and non-governmental office holder by voters at any point should be one of the basic rights of voters.

9. The expropriation of the property of all natural and legal persons and governmental, parastatal and private institutions which have directly robbed or used government rent [government-granted monopolization of economic opportunities F.A.] to pillage the property and social wealth of the people of Iran. The wealth resulting from these expropriations should be immediately spent on modernizing and rebuilding the system of education, retirement funds, the environment and the needs of the regions and sectors of people that have been deprived and have received fewer opportunities during the reigns of the Islamic Republic and the [Pahlavi] monarchy.

10. Ending the destruction of the environment. Implementing foundational policies for reviving environmental infrastructures which have been destroyed during the past one hundred years. Turning parts of nature such as pastures, beaches, forests and mountainsides into the commons. These are parts of nature which have been taken away from the public in the name of privatization.

11. The prohibition of child labor. Providing for the lives and education of children irrespective of the economic and social status of their families. Creating public welfare through unemployment insurance, a strong social security for all individuals of legal age who can work and those unable to work. Education and health care should be free for all.

12. Normalization of international relations at the highest levels with all countries on the basis of justice, mutual respect, the prohibition of access to nuclear weapons, and the promotion of the effort to create world peace.

We believe that the above minimum demands are immediately realizable and implementable, given the existence of potential and actual underground wealth, and the existence of a conscious and capable people, a generation of youth and teenagers who are very motivated to have a happy, free and comfortable life.

The above demands set the general parameters of the demands of the undersigned. With the continuation of the struggle and solidarity, we will address them in more detail.

### **The Iranian signatories**

The Coordination Council for Educator Guilds of Iran

The Free Union of Iranian Workers

The Union of University Student Organizations of Allied Students

The Defenders of Human Rights Center

The Syndicate of Haft Tapeh Sugarcane Workers  
The Council of Protesting Petrochemical Contract Workers  
The House of Iranian Educators  
Bidarzani (Feminist Website)  
The Voice of Iranian Women  
The Independent Voice of Workers of the Ahvaz National Steel Group  
The Association of Defenders of Workers' Rights  
The Electrical and Steel Workers Guild of Kermanshah  
The Coordination Committee for Assisting the Creation of Labor Organizations  
The Union of Retirees  
The Council of Iranian Retirees  
The Organization of Progressive University Students  
The Council of Free-thinking High School Students of Iran  
The Syndicate of Alborz Province Painters  
The Committee for Creating Workers' Organizations in Iran  
The Council of Retirees of the Social Security Administration

### **The signatories of the statement of support published on [mediapart.fr](http://mediapart.fr)**

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