



[Iranian Authorities Step up Enforcement of Mandatory Hijabs for Women](#)

Iranian authorities are continuing their campaign to enforce the country's strict dress code for women, with new measures including the installation of cameras in public areas and on highways to catch those who disobey the code. The government has also warned businesses and car owners to comply with thousands of messages as part of the campaign to boost enforcement. Those who urge women to take off their headscarves may face jail time. The actions are part of a broader campaign against women who disobey the dress code and come after months of protests, some of which were sparked by the murder of Mahsa Amini, 22, who was imprisoned by Tehran's morality police for alleged dress code violations. She died while in police detention, sparking a nationwide uprising and protests against Iran's clerics. In the subsequent crackdown, security forces are estimated to have killed 500 individuals and imprisoned more than 20,000, according to Human Rights Activists News Agency (HRANA). Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the supreme leader of Iran, granted a general amnesty for some detainees in February. In March, Iran's court said that some 22,000 persons imprisoned during the protests had received pardons.

Rights advocates, however, claim that the government never produced proof that every person had been freed. According to rights organizations and many recently pardoned prisoners who talked with The Washington Post, some demonstrators were required to post bail or sign papers apologizing for their claimed offenses to be eligible for the amnesty. The pardons, according to Shiva Nazarahari, an activist who works with the Volunteer Committee to Follow-Up on the Situation of Detainees, an unofficial network both inside and outside of Iran, were given in part to lessen pressure on the government due to the outrage from both domestic and international sources over the mass arrests. According to Nazarahari, they were also made public to assist Iran's already overcrowded prisons in accommodating the influx of thousands of new detainees.

Authorities have already increased enforcement of the required dress code for women, including in schools, on university campuses, at companies, and in public areas, even as they worked to quell the protests and free several inmates. For instance, from March 6 to April 5, police shut down at least 458 establishments, including hotels, restaurants, and leisure centers, because staff members or clients were donning an "improper" hijab, according to HRANA. These crackdowns are not new in Iran, which has a long history of oppressing women and human rights activists. However, the current wave of protests and government actions has sparked renewed international attention and condemnation. The United States and other Western countries have expressed concern over the human rights situation in Iran, and some have imposed sanctions on Iranian officials. The Iranian government has responded to these criticisms by accusing Western countries of interfering in its internal affairs and promoting "immoral" behavior. Iran's leaders have also sought to rally support from other Muslim countries, portraying their efforts to enforce Islamic dress codes as a defense of Islam and Muslim values.

But despite the government's efforts, many Iranians are pushing back against the dress code and other restrictions on their freedoms. The protests that erupted after Mahsa Amini's death were not the first to challenge the Iranian government's repressive policies, and they likely will not be the last. Some Iranian women have taken to social media to share photos and videos of themselves without headscarves or with loosely draped headscarves, in defiance of the dress code. These women are part of a growing movement that seeks to challenge the government's authority and demand greater freedoms and rights for all Iranians. Despite the risks, many Iranians continue to speak out against the government's repressive measures, including the newly passed laws targeting the country's dress code. The Iranian government has long been accused of human rights abuses, including the suppression of free speech, the mistreatment of prisoners, and the use of torture and execution as a form of punishment. The recent crackdown on protesters and dissidents has only served to reinforce these accusations, and many are concerned about the future of human rights in Iran. Some activists have called for international pressure to be placed on the Iranian government to end its repressive policies and respect the rights of its citizens. However, there are also concerns that international pressure may be counterproductive, pushing the Iranian government to double down on its repressive measures in response. The situation in Iran is complex, and any efforts to address human rights abuses must be carefully considered and executed.

One potential strategy is to engage with the Iranian people directly, rather than relying solely on diplomatic channels. This could involve supporting civil society groups and human rights organizations in Iran, as well as providing tools and resources to help Iranians communicate freely and safely online. Another strategy is to work with the Iranian diaspora community, which has been vocal in its opposition to the regime in Iran. This community has the potential to play a significant role in advocating for human rights in Iran and providing support to those who are at risk of persecution.

Ultimately, the situation in Iran is a reminder of the ongoing struggle for human rights and democracy around the world. While progress has been made in many countries, there are still those who seek to suppress the rights of their citizens and maintain their grip on power through violence and intimidation. As the Iranian government continues its efforts to suppress dissent and maintain control over its citizens, it is up to the international community to stand in solidarity with those who are fighting for their basic human rights. Whether through diplomatic pressure, grassroots activism, or other means, we must continue to work toward a world where all people can live free from fear and oppression.