



# URGENT ITEM AGENDA MATERIAL

Government Code Section 54954.2(b)  
Rules of Procedure Chapter III.C.5

**THIS ITEM IS NOT YET AGENDIZED AND MAY OR MAY NOT BE  
ACCEPTED FOR THE AGENDA AS A LATE ITEM, SUBJECT TO THE  
CITY COUNCIL'S DISCRETION ACCORDING TO BROWN ACT RULES**

**Meeting Date:       October 11, 2022**

**Item Description:   Resolution in Support of the Women Fighting for Freedom in  
Iran**

This item is submitted pursuant to the provision checked below:

- Emergency Situation (54954.2(b)(1) - majority vote required)**  
*Determination by a majority vote of the legislative body that an emergency situation exists, as defined in Section 54956.5.*
- Immediate Action Required (54954.2(b)(2) - two-thirds vote required)**  
*There is a need to take immediate action and the need for action came to the attention of the local agency subsequent to the agenda for this meeting being posted.*

Once the item is added to the agenda (Consent or Action) it must be passed by the standard required vote threshold (majority, two-thirds, or 7/9).



## **TIME CRITICAL AGENDA MATERIAL**

**Council Meeting Date:** October 11, 2022

**Item Description:**

This council item will refer to the Council to send a letter containing a resolution in support of the women fighting for freedom in Iran. Send a copy of the Resolution to Senator Dianne Feinstein, Senator Alex Padilla, Congresswomen Barbara Lee, and President Joe Biden.

**Reason for Time-Critical:**

The fight for women's freedom in Iran is already in action, and the Iranian government continues to respond with further violence against protesters. Therefore, sending support is urgent, and we must act swiftly.

**Time-Critical Items.** A Time-Critical item is defined as a matter that is considered urgent by the sponsor and that has a deadline for action that is prior to the next meeting of the Council and for which a report prepared by the City Manager, Auditor, Mayor or council member is received by the City Clerk after established deadlines and is not included on the Agenda Committee's published agenda.

The author of the report shall bring any reports submitted as Time Critical to the meeting of the Agenda Committee. If the Agenda Committee finds the matter to meet the definition of Time Critical, the Agenda Committee may place the matter on the Agenda on either the Consent or Action Calendar.



## Women, Life, Freedom

CONSENT CALENDAR

October 11, 2022

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
From: Councilmember Ben Bartlett (Author), Councilmember Kate Harrison, Councilmember Sophie Hahn, and Mayor Jesse Arreguin (Co-Sponsors)  
Subject: Resolution in Support of the Women Fighting for Freedom in Iran

### RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a resolution in support of the women fighting for freedom in Iran. Send a copy of the resolution to President Joseph R. Biden, Vice President Kamala D. Harris, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, Senator Dianne Feinstein, Senator Alex Padilla, and Congressman Barbara Lee.

### CURRENT SITUATION

On Sept. 16, 2022, 22-year-old woman Mahsa Amini died in the custody of Iran’s “morality police.”<sup>1</sup> Amini had been visiting the capital city of Tehran with her family when she was arrested for allegedly violating Iran’s *hijab* (headscarf) law. Enacted after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, through which the current theocracy came into power, the *hijab* law is a repressive and arbitrarily enforced act, which requires all women within Iran’s jurisdiction to wear a *hijab* and loose-fitting clothing in public, regardless of religion or nationality. Punishment for a woman who does not follow this law spans from lashes to imprisonment.<sup>2</sup> In Amini’s case, the “morality police” imprisoned her for allegedly wearing her *hijab* too loosely.<sup>3</sup> Amini died in custody three days after her arrest. The Iranian government claims Amini collapsed as a result of heart failure and later died in a Tehran hospital.<sup>4</sup> However, according to medical experts, a CT scan shows that she suffered from bone fractures, cerebral hemorrhage and brain edema —

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<sup>1</sup> Mona Tajali, *Analysis | Iranian Women Have Been Protesting Mandatory Hijab for Decades*, *The Washington Post*, Oct. 2, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2022/10/03/iran-protests-hijab-women-mahsa-amini/>.

<sup>2</sup> Melissa Horvath, et al., *Iran's Headscarf Politics*, Middle East Institute, Oct. 4, 2022, <https://www.mei.edu/publications/irans-headscarf-politics>.

<sup>3</sup> *Iran: Death of 22-Year-Old Mahsa Amini*, Warsaw Institute, Oct. 3, 2022, <https://warsawinstitute.org/iran-death-22-year-old-mahsa-amini/#:~:text=The%20young%20woman%20was%20arrested,been%20trying%20to%20cover%20up>.

<sup>4</sup> Reuters, *Who Was Mahsa Amini, Whose Death Sparked Iran Protests?*, Jerusalem Post, <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/iran-news/article-718359>.



all of which are head traumas.<sup>5</sup> Medical officials also noted in released images that her chest showed “bilateral diffuse alveolar hemorrhage and damage due to aspiration pneumonia, secretion retention, and superimposed infection” — all of which are compatible with acute respiratory distress syndrome due to brain trauma.<sup>6</sup>

Amini’s death sparked anti-government protests in dozens of cities across Iran, calling for an end to the compulsory *hijab*, *sharia* (Islamic canonical law) and the current regime.<sup>7</sup> In response to the protests, the Iranian government has blocked or severely restricted access to information and communication platforms, including the Internet and social media, citing “security reasons.”<sup>8</sup> The regime has also taken violent action against protesters. On Oct. 6, Amnesty International published a report finding that on Sept. 30, “Iranian security forces unlawfully killed at least 66 people, including children, and injured hundreds of others after firing live ammunition after Friday prayers.”<sup>9</sup> The death toll in Iran continues to grow, with recent estimates reaching as high as 154.<sup>10</sup>

The world continues to closely follow the Iranian people's fight for human rights. The United Nations has even called for an independent investigation of Amini’s death, as they strongly condemn the use of physical violence against women and the denial of fundamental human dignity when enforcing compulsory *hijab* policies ordained by state authorities.<sup>11</sup> Additionally, the United States (the “U.S.”) has imposed sanctions against Iranian authorities, including the “morality police” and senior Iranian leaders for violently suppressing the peaceful protests.<sup>12</sup>

## BACKGROUND

Women in Iran are caught in a system of gender oppression through legal mandates that degrade them to an inferior status, dispossessing them of their fundamental rights.

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<sup>5</sup> *Mahsa Amini's CT Scan Shows Skull Fractures Caused by Severe Blows*, Iran International (Sept. 19, 2022), <https://www.iranintl.com/en/202209195410>.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

<sup>7</sup> *Supra* at n.1.

<sup>8</sup> Gül Demirci, *Who Is Mahsa Amini? Why Did Mahsa Amini Die?*, Expat Guide Turkey (Oct. 5, 2022), <https://expatguideturkey.com/who-is-mahsa-amini-why-did-mahsa-amini-die/>.

<sup>9</sup> *Iran: At Least 82 Baluchi Protesters and Bystanders Killed in Bloody Crackdown*, Amnesty International (Oct. 6, 2022), <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/10/iran-at-least-82-baluchi-protesters-and-bystanders-killed-in-bloody-crackdown/>.

<sup>10</sup> Ellie Kaufman, Mostafa Salem, Celine Alkhalidi & Kylie Atwood, *US Issues New Sanctions on Iran over Violent Crackdown on Protests and Internet Shutdown*, CNN (Oct. 6, 2022), <https://www.cnn.com/2022/10/06/politics/us-iran-sanctions/index.html>.

<sup>11</sup> Anisha Kohli, *Iran Protests over Mahsa Amini's Death: What to Know*, Time (Sept. 24, 2022), <https://time.com/6216513/mahsa-amini-iran-protests-police/>.

<sup>12</sup> *Designating Iran's Morality Police and Seven Officials for Human Rights Abuses in Iran - United States Department of State*, US Department of State (Sept. 22, 2022), <https://www.state.gov/designating-irans-morality-police-and-seven-officials-for-human-rights-abuses-in-iran/>.



For decades, Iranian women have conformed to a legal system that recognizes men as the managers of their households, requires women to follow given orders and requires women to obtain permission to participate in community activities. The forced wearing of a *hijab* serves as a symbol of the oppression these women face. Therefore, these protests do not call for an end to the *hijab* itself, but rather an end to repressive laws that *compel* women to wear a *hijab* or face punishment.

The current protests are not the first instance in which Iranian women have fought against the theocratic regime and *sharia* law. In 1983, with the original instatement of *sharia*, millions of Iranian women began fighting to reinstate their rights in all aspects of life. In the 1990s, women started the “Pink Revolution,” in which they tested the limits of the *hijab* law by “wearing makeup, colorful headscarves and long coats instead of chadors, and intentionally allowing their hair to peek out from under their scarves.”<sup>13</sup> Due to the overwhelming number of participants in the Pink Revolution, the morality police could not arrest every protester. Due to the success of this movement, the people of Iran formed additional peaceful protests and grassroots campaigns throughout the years. Organized resistance has only grown, providing the structural soundness of the current protests in Iran. From this historical perspective, it is important to recognize that Iranian women have fought tenaciously for autonomy and self-determination.<sup>14</sup> However, the Iranian government continues to enact laws that restrict women from being equal to their counterparts<sup>15</sup> and perpetuate the rampant danger women face due to their inequality in the eyes of the law.<sup>16</sup>

## RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

While the U.S. executive branch has responded to the Iranian government’s injustices, including sanctions, the U.S. can and must do more. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee is considering a bill to support global Internet freedom.<sup>17</sup> The Iranian government’s implementation of Internet blockages limits the Iranian people from keeping governments, human rights organizations and the public apprised of the daily atrocities that the protesters suffer. An effective global Internet freedom bill would overcome this

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<sup>13</sup> Kelly J. Shannon, *Perspective | Four Decades of Smoldering Discontent among Iranian Women Is Erupting*, Washington Post (Sept. 26, 2022), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/made-by-history/2022/09/26/iranian-women-uprising-against-oppression-history/>.

<sup>14</sup> *What Iranian Women Want the World to Know about Their History*, GIWPS (Oct. 8, 2021), <https://giwps.georgetown.edu/what-iranian-women-want-the-world-to-know-about-their-history/>.

<sup>15</sup> Mary Jane Maxwell, et al., *Before and after 1979: Women’s Rights in Iran*, ShareAmerica (Apr. 2, 2019), <https://share.america.gov/before-and-after-1979-womens-rights-in-iran/>.

<sup>16</sup> Melissa Horvath, et al., *Women in Iran: Political Representation without Rights*, Middle East Institute (Oct. 4, 2022), <https://www.mei.edu/publications/women-iran-political-representation-without-rights>.

<sup>17</sup> *US Congress Considering Global Internet Freedom Bill*, Iran International (Oct. 7, 2022), <https://www.iranintl.com/en/202210079270>.



# BEN BARTLETT

CITY COUNCILMEMBER, DISTRICT 3

obstacle, so it is crucial to pressure Congress to pass it. Therefore, the City of Berkeley should write directly to federal legislators, demanding that they advance the global Internet freedom bill and other bills providing aid to support the people of Iran in their fight for human rights. The City should also write to other government officials, like California Governor Gavin Newsom, who can put even greater pressure on the federal government to take further action. The attached resolution (Attachment 1) may serve as a baseline for such letters to government officials.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Staff time to write and send letters on behalf of the City of Berkeley.

## ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Not applicable

## CONTACT PERSON

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## ATTACHMENT

1. Resolution



## **Women, Life, Freedom**

RESOLUTION NO. ##,#### N.S.  
RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF BERKELEY IN SUPPORT OF THE  
WOMEN FIGHTING FOR FREEDOM IN IRAN.

Whereas the women of Iran are engaged in an existential battle, one that not only sheds the oppressive gender roles that exist under Islamic sharia law, but one that unites all levels of society in demanding freedom, equity, and justice;

Whereas the courageous women of Iran have led the resistance in the streets to stand in defiance of the so-called morality police, inviting their brothers, fathers, and partners to join their chants of “Women, Life, Freedom.”

Whereas the people of Iran have been suppressed under one of the most degrading, retrogressive, authoritarian and autocratic regimes that has, in the name of Islam, killed, jailed and held hostage millions of people during its 43-year reign;

Whereas the forces that separate and divide the Iranian people into gender, ethnicity and class are finally being met with the solidarity of a people as a united front, one that demands civility, respect, freedom of speech and freedom of expression; and

Whereas the Islamic Republic enforces and promotes terror and destabilizes the region through foreign and political intervention, including outright acts of terrorism;

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the City of Berkeley stands united with the courageous women of Iran crying “Women, Life, Freedom”;

Be it further resolved that the City of Berkeley extends this call to our Congress and demands the United States government fully support for this movement;

Therefore, it is further resolved that the City of Berkeley send a copy of this resolution to President Joseph R. Biden, Vice President Kamala D. Harris, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, Senator Dianne Feinstein, Senator Alex Padilla and Congressman Barbara Lee.